

**A More Sincere Brahms: An Exploration of Widening Expressive Possibilities in the  
Opus 120 Clarinet Sonatas.**

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Submitted: February 13, 2015

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Chosen Format of Documentation: Research Paper

Presentation Date: March 24, 2015 at 13:30

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**Research Question**

What might documentary and sounding evidence of the performing styles of Johannes Brahms and his contemporaries reveal to modern performers about amplifying expression via increased tempo flexibility in Brahms's Opus 120 Clarinet Sonatas. Given this evidence, what ideological and practical factors might inhibit modern performers from incorporating this evidence in their own interpretations today?

## Rationale and Relevance of Research

As a performer, the question of performance liberty is a generally difficult one, and one that becomes increasingly laborious when dealing with particular genres and composers. In a sense it has become a balancing act: on the one hand, performers are invested in fidelity (though the precise definition of this can vary drastically, which will be discussed further on) and on the other hand we value expressive freedom (which in our modern age separates live musicians from electronic MIDI sounds). For this particular research project, the focus will be on Brahms's Opus 120 Sonatas for clarinet and piano. To explain briefly the rationale behind exploring performance liberty with regard to these particular Sonatas, it is necessary to mention that most modern clarinetists study the Brahms repertoire throughout their institutionalized education, and many continue to live with these works for the entirety of their career. The Opus 120 Sonatas are a staple in clarinet repertoire, and as such there is a great deal of opinion surrounding the interpretation and performance of these great works. Often times, issues of interpretation are met with controversy, and there are many highly charged opinions regarding how performers should play these works, resulting in increased pressure on performers. I have had the great pleasure to perform these works with a number of fantastic pianists, and while the joy of studying these gems never ceases for me I have found one issue to be consistently controversial throughout all of my collaborations: namely, that of tempo flexibility. Out of the many elements that made each performance of these works unique, the most difficult to try to agree upon was the question of how much liberty to take as performers - particularly with regards to *rubato*.

I thus set out to discover what documentary and sounding evidence of the performance styles of Johannes Brahms and his contemporaries might reveal to modern performers about the relationship between notation and tempo flexibility in these Sonatas. There has been much research done on what many might call "Brahms performance practice," and there is specific evidence relating to expressivity suggesting that Brahms may have even encouraged freedom of expression by marking it in his scores with hairpin *crescendi*. With this evidence in mind, as one delves deeply into the plethora of Brahms research available to modern performers, it is overwhelming to realize that it is not so much a question of whether or not freedom of expression/ tempo was "allowed," whether it was a common stylistic element of Brahms's time, or whether it was tolerated or even encouraged by the notation of the composer; all of this will be firmly established by a variety of historical sources. Rather, the question becomes why, despite the vast amount of supporting evidence, modern performers so scarcely and reluctantly implement this freedom into their performances. It is the goal of this research to explore the historical evidence available to modern performers pertaining to expressivity in Brahms performance, as well as the factors that may contribute to the reluctance of modern performers to implement such evidence into their own performances. The goal is to achieve a newfound approach to the performance of the Opus 120 Sonatas, and offer this evidence to other modern performers who may struggle with the question of expressivity when performing Brahms.

## **Research Process**

The exploration of this research question will consist of the examination of a variety of sources including documentary and sounding evidence of the performance styles of Johannes Brahms and his contemporaries. This exploration will also delve into ideological and technological factors that have contributed to differences in perspective and expectations between nineteenth- and twenty-first-century musicians, and how these factors might contribute to the reluctance of modern performers to implement historical evidence into their own performances. These findings will then be integrated into my performances of these Sonatas in a practical way by experimentation, which will be documented and reviewed.

## Introduction and Contextualization of Research Question

Despite the vast amount of historical evidence pertaining to expressivity in the performance styles of Brahms and his contemporaries, many modern performers seem reluctant to implement this evidence in their own performances of Brahms's music. The root of this reluctance is multifaceted, and several prongs must be discussed in order to establish an understanding of our typical modern approach to playing Brahms. Firstly, and perhaps mainly, there has been a significant shift in the relationship dynamic between performers and composers from Brahms's time to our own. The growth of the hierarchical role of composers, which ultimately places performers in an inferior role as those whose job is nothing more (in the extremes of the pursuit of 'authenticity') than to communicate as successfully as possible the intentions of the composer, has placed a stranglehold on performance freedom. While the concept of fidelity has existed in some form since Brahms's time, the extent to which it pervades our modern performance process is drastically different from that of the nineteenth century. This shift in the relationship between composer and performer represents a major shift in musical ideology, and the establishment of the composer's wishes as the absolute and highest pursuit of musical scholarship and performance has been detrimental to the role of the performer. This change in hierarchy is fundamental to understanding what modern Brahms style is, because it is in stark contrast to the freedom with which documentary evidence suggests Brahms and his contemporaries played.

Secondly, the establishment throughout the late nineteenth/early twentieth century of the score as the definitive embodiment of a musical work has widened this gap between performers and composers, and has resulted in a far more text-centric approach to performance than that which existed in Brahms's time. This has been exacerbated by a few factors, including the growth of the field of musicology and the development of recorded sound - both of which contributed to the commercialization of music as a fixed object and the diminution of the importance of live performance. As a result, the credibility afforded to performers when interpreting these idealized sources has been limited to such an extent that now as modern performers we often debate whether or not we should be taking any interpretative license at all. Thirdly, the growth in popularity of this text-centric ideology, exemplified by the extremes of the Historically Informed Performance movement, has been influential throughout the modern musical community. This ideology has greatly influenced the role of performers, and continues to be highly divisive. Despite having originally posited itself as a means of expanding performance possibilities in protest against the strictures of modernist performance practices, the Historically Informed Performance movement is often accused of having only intensified the belief that scores and instructive performance texts such as treatises contain hidden messages for performers, thereby further perpetuating the very modern notion of text-centricity.

Apart from the modern ideological factors that contribute to our reluctance to employ greater expressive freedom in our interpretation of Brahms's music, there are more practical and anachronistic factors as well. To begin with, we are living in the era of recorded sound. This is significant because it substantially affects our expectations regarding the level of clarity, consistency, and downright technical flawlessness we expect from all modern performances. The de-

velopment of recorded sound discouraged mistakes, encouraged composers to write more difficult music, and contributed to the marketability of music as an object. There are many elements to explore here, and later on I will do so in more detail, but for now suffice it to say that the expectations placed on performances today, both from audiences and musicians alike, is very different from Brahms's time. This contributes to our approach to playing nineteenth century music because we do so with twenty-first century ears. We expect such a level of technical precision that in many cases it is our utmost goal. Unfortunately, when perfection is the main aspiration, other things get lost along the way, and expressive freedom and nuance seem to be among the first of these casualties. Additionally, evidence will show that the level of ensemble standards to which we hold ourselves is drastically different from that of the nineteenth century. All of these aspects will be explored in much more detail later on as they relate to specific pieces of historical evidence.

There will also be an analysis of documentary and sounding historical evidence, with particular emphasis on differences in style and expectations between Brahms's time and our own. There is a vast amount of documentary evidence from Brahms's contemporaries that speaks to his own style as a performer: accounts by his students Fanny Davies and Florence May, for example. There is also sounding historical evidence available: not only of Brahms's contemporaries who lived long enough to record multiple times, but also of Brahms himself. The single 1889 cylinder recording of Brahms is of great importance when trying to better understand his way of playing, and when corroborated with recordings of his contemporaries it provides not only a glimpse of his particular approach to expression, but it implicates that approach in his wider historical context as well. Although of poor quality, as is understandable for the date of the recording, it is still very informative. The documentary and sounding evidence that will be examined is not only significant when appraised separately, but even more so when used in tandem.

The findings will then be implemented in a practical way into my own performances of the Sonatas. I will work closely with a colleague of mine; experimenting with elements and stylistic tools that are derived from the collected evidence, with the goal of implementing them into my own performance. These experiments will be particularly focused on the issue of tempo flexibility in order to see what type of results are yielded when musicians attempt to let go of modern ideology and approach in their Brahms performances, and strive instead to embrace those elements of the past that differ the most from modern mainstream tastes and values. All of this said, it is not by any means a goal of this research project to recreate the past, or to try to create what some might call an 'authentic' performance. I simply wish to perform, using the available historical evidence and a newfound awareness of the ideological and societal differences between Brahms's day and my own, with the most genuine interpretation possible, fully acknowledging that any historical evidence I implement is ultimately done so from a modern perspective. The purpose of this particular study is to inform my own decisions as a modern performer who, going forward, will continue to be under constant scrutiny for my musical choices and interpretation.

## General Historical Background

To begin, it is necessary to determine what, if any, major differences in style or expectations there may be between Brahms's time and our own. There has been a great deal of specific research done in this regard: historically-informed performers for example, have invested countless hours and resources in determining the differences between nineteenth- and twentieth-century instruments. We as modern musicians are nothing if not dedicated to, and sometimes obsessed with, the past. While this attribute has led to some pretty wondrous discoveries about past eras of musical performance, it is in itself somewhat anachronistic. While musicians during Brahms's time were certainly also interested in the past, like us too they played the music of the past—when they did so at all—in their own contemporary style. For example, as Florence May recalls:

[Brahms's] interpretation of Bach was always unconventional...and he certainly did not share the opinion, which has had many distinguished adherents, that Bach's music should be performed in a simply flowing style... he liked a variety of tone and touch, as well as a *certain elasticity of tempo*.<sup>1</sup>

Our modernist view of historical performance differs from this account in that many performers today strive to not only inform their understanding of past musical styles, but to recreate the way those styles may have sounded as well. This goal is in its very essence a modern concept, and one that is in fact antithetic to much of what is known about the roles of performers in the nineteenth century. There are several main factors that have contributed to the rise of this nostalgic branch of modern ideology, which are pertinent to understanding a very fundamental difference in musical ideology that separates modern musicians from those of the nineteenth century.

Here seems a natural juncture to briefly discuss one very common issue related to performance practice: period instruments. There are two well-established sides to this issue, both of which are wrought with controversy. Those who favour the exclusive use of period instruments often assert that, "Authentic performers must provide themselves with historically appropriate instruments and information on how these were played."<sup>2</sup> Those with this opinion may wonder at the validity or relevance of my research, as I do not play period instruments, but rather modern ones. Allow me to address this question outright. Clearly there are some rather important reasons for advocating the use of period instruments when playing music of a bygone time. As performers who are invested in fidelity it is no surprise that many of us wonder how music might have sounded when it was first performed, for surely this was closer to how the composer *wanted* it to sound. The next logical line of thought is to wonder whether there were any mechanical, sonic, or stylistic differences between the instruments used in those premieres and the ones we use now. Surely if we could duplicate these elements we would be able to create a more accurate representation of how the music in question may have originally sounded? As for clarinet models in

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader* (Yale University Press, 2000), 128. Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Pascall, *The Inaugural Lecture: Playing Brahms: A Study in 19th-century Performance Practice* (University of Nottingham, 1991), 7.

Brahms's lifetime, there was a large variety of evolving instruments available for nineteenth-century clarinetists to choose from, so it is likely that Brahms was working with a number of clarinet types. As Colin Lawson notes, "Evidence of various kinds indicates that the clarinet was originally far less standardized than we can imagine."<sup>3</sup>

Pascall argues that there is evidence to suggest that Brahms himself had conservative taste in instruments, because he continued to write for valveless horns after the valved horn had been invented. Pascall also asserts that, "as a pianist too Brahms preferred conservative sounding instruments for his private use."<sup>4</sup> In fact, the older piano Pascall mentions, an 1839 Conrad Graf, was a gift from his friend and mentor Robert Schumann, which perhaps had more sentimental than practical value to Brahms. In contradiction to Pascall's opinion, Styra Avins asserts that Brahms actually preferred the newest and most powerful pianos of his time for public performance.

I have found no suggestion that Brahms was enthusiastic about Streicher pianos, one of which he owned, except for use in the home...The letter record suggests strongly that Brahms had a decided preference for performing on what is essentially the modern grand piano, with a specific liking for Bechsteins and American Steinways...The idea that Brahms wrote his piano music [for]...the characteristics of Viennese pianos seems logical enough in theory, but is not supported by the evidence of Brahms's letters.<sup>5</sup>

Modern performers can certainly benefit from understanding the technical features and sonic affordances of the instruments that were contemporary to a composer; helping us to better understand the historical context of a given piece, and even specific passages that were written with the particularities of these instruments in mind. When it comes to clarinet playing in Brahms's time however, the thing we know for sure is that Brahms adored the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, and came out of retirement to write the Op. 114 Trio, Op. 115 Quintet and the Op. 120 Sonatas for him. We also know that Mühlfeld played a Baermann-Ottenseiner clarinet.

So why do I not play these Sonatas on a replica of Mühlfeld's clarinet? To put it simply, I do not believe that the magic, beauty, or validity of a performance can be reduced to the tools used by a musician. As Bernard D. Sherman so aptly stated in reference to modern musicians who play both period and modern instruments, "Such border-crossing has reinforced the insight that sound and style depend far more on the player than on the instrument. It also reminds us that the sounds we produce from period hardware inevitably reflect modern ears."<sup>6</sup> As a modern per-

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<sup>3</sup> Colin Lawson, *The Early Clarinet: A Practical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Pascall, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Styra Avins, *Performing Brahms* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11-14.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard D Sherman, "'Orchestral Brahms and 'Historically Informed Performance': A Progress Report," *Diapason* (October 2009), 35.

former my experiments will ultimately reflect modern tastes, whether I want them to or not. Therefore, those instruments that have evolved and adapted to suit these modern tastes are best suited to my research. There is also the argument that the issue of period instrumentation is a slippery slope: should we perform Bach's choral works with castrati, or early operas with men instead of women? On a wider scale, should we then also only perform Shakespeare with boys? It is no doubt a complex issue, and a multifaceted one. For the purposes of this discussion I wish only to demonstrate one point: that performers playing modern instruments have as equal a right to discuss issues of performance practice as those who choose to play on period instruments.



## Ideological Differences in the Performance of Brahms's music between the Nineteenth and Twenty-first Centuries

There are a variety of factors contributing to the modern aesthetics that apply to Brahms performance. The first major difference to be examined is the expectation of text-fidelity that is imposed on modern performers. Nineteenth-century musicians were certainly concerned about fidelity, and the issue of composer intent is not a new one. Evidence suggests however, that while nineteenth-century musicians were indeed concerned with these issues, their main preoccupation was in communicating the soul of the work, as if they were in a sort of spiritual communion with the work and its creator: a fundamentally different goal than that which we strive for today. The common nineteenth-century theme of spirituality as related to fidelity in performance requires above all else a deep and emotional connection with the music; and while the execution of the notation is necessary for this fidelity, what is far more essential is that which transcends the notated page and transports listeners to the divine. Mary Hunter compiles an excellent review of such themes in her article, “‘To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer’: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics.”<sup>7</sup> She points out that while there was a thematic mistrust of performers as appropriate stewards for divine musical works in nineteenth-century writings, there is an equally prevalent theme of attributing a level of spiritual connection and genius to the role of performer:

Despite the abundance of evidence for the conceptual “disappearing” of the performer, however, the view that submissive obedience and self-obliterating fidelity became during this period the only, or even the principal, desirable model for interpretative performance is one-sided...failing to account for the actualities of performance, *which clearly included more interpretative freedom than a modernist model would allow*... There was another kind of discourse about the act of bringing works to life, one in which the performer's role was considered to demand genius and in which the performer—even, or especially, the interpretative (as opposed to the improvising virtuoso) player— *was regarded as a fully fledged artist on par with the composer*.<sup>8</sup>

In this sense, the nineteenth-century performer was considered much more equal to the composer than in our modern view. Indeed, and more specifically to Brahms's own lifetime and personal circles, Walter Hübbe—who often hear Brahms in the 1850's in Hamburg—made just such a note in reference to Brahms's own piano playing:

He does not play like a consummately trained, highly intelligent musician making other people's works his own (like, for instance, Hans. v. Bülow) but rather *like one who is himself creating, who interprets the works of the masters as an equal*, not merely reproducing them, but rendering them as if they gushed forth directly and

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Hunter, “‘To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer’: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol 58, No. 2 (Summer 2005)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 361. Emphasis added.

powerfully from his heart.<sup>9</sup>

So what then has contributed to this shift in ideology? There are several factors, but first-ly let us look at the growth of musicology and its perpetuation of the concept of the work as a fixed object rather than something that only exists in communicative performance. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has much to say about this in his online book *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance*. He points out:

The rise of musicology, from about 1800, coincides (and it can hardly be coincidence) with a relatively rapid change in attitudes to music... a piece became less a sequence of sounds that pleased the ear and more a creative statement of a gifted mind. It became a work: the outstandingly gifted composer became a genius.<sup>10</sup>

Leech-Wilkinson describes a number of commercial, intellectual, and spiritual advantages for this shift. The one that has the most relevance to the present discussion is the newfound establishment of music as a fixed object in its textual form. As notation was developing and becoming increasingly detailed throughout the Medieval and Renaissance periods, “works and scores became increasingly synonymous.” From the nineteenth century onwards, the burgeoning field of musicology established itself as being responsible for “ensuring that published scores presented precisely the notes put down by the composer. As a consequence, performers in the twentieth century were increasingly expected to follow that notation strictly and without deviation.”<sup>11</sup> Rather than balancing fidelity and creativity as “two sides of the same coin,”<sup>12</sup> performers now have a more singular goal of committing themselves to the text as a definitive object—exactly as it is written. This is a far cry from the nineteenth-century concept that, as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel states, “If... art is still to be in question, the executant has a duty, rather than giving the impression of an automaton... *to give life and soul to the work in the same sense that the composer did.*”<sup>13</sup> Our contrasting modern view which delineates between the composer/work and performer has increased, if anything, over the years, and is — as Leech-Wilkinson points out — very much still a factor today: “Musicology is still, for the most part, operating with the notion that works are one category of music and performances another.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader* (Yale University Press, 2000), 122. Emphasis added.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* (London: CHARM, 2009), Chapter 1, Paragraph 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 1, Paragraph 5.

<sup>12</sup> Hunter, 363.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 362. Emphasis Added

<sup>14</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, Chapter 1, Paragraph 6.

Another contributing factor to this divisive distinction between composers and performers has been the development of a text-centric ideology of performance. This ideology is perhaps best demonstrated in Richard Taruskin's explanation of the *Werktreue* concept, or in other words, fidelity to the musical work: "Before there could be a notion of *Werktreue* there had to be a notion of the reified *Werk* — the objectified musical work-thing to which fidelity is owed."<sup>15</sup> This concept "regulates not only our musical attitudes but also our social practices... On performers it inflicts a truly stifling regimen by radically hardening and patrolling what had formerly been a fluid, easily crossed boundary between the performing and composing roles."<sup>16</sup> There are practical commercial benefits to this concept of course. Once music began to be defined fundamentally as a "work" in the form of a score, it was far more marketable. Suddenly composers had something that they could sell that represented their work— something other than a live performance. This had a significant effect on performers: "The score gradually became authoritative, and 'the music' was to be found within it. Performances, as a consequence, were not so much the music any more, but rather were attempts to do the music justice: a performance could never be as good as the piece being performed."<sup>17</sup> There are a number of problems with this, of course, but the most pertinent here to performers is the fact that, "by tying our view of a work to a composer's intentions we are putting ourselves in a position in which we can only fail to perform the work."<sup>18</sup>

Furthering this hierarchy was the development of recorded sound. As recording technology developed, composers were able to commit their work not only to a single text, but to a single definitive performance as well. It became possible to market an even more fixed version of a particular work which was understood to be representative of the composer's wishes. This in turn supports the idea that the most important version of a piece of music is contained in the score as the vehicle of the composer's intentions, and not in a performer's interpretation of that score. By following this text-centric ideology, which places the score at the centre of our musical universe, we often commit ourselves to what Taruskin describes as "performances of unprecedented formal clarity and precision" and are overwhelmed as performers by a "reluctance to make the subtle, constant adjustments of tempo and dynamics on which expressivity depends, for those can have no sanction but personal feeling."<sup>19</sup> So why is this text-centric ideology so dangerous for modern performers? Indeed, it has been a part of our livelihood and an accepted reality for as long as modern performers have been alive, and there is perhaps little hope of changing it now. Why then, with the ultimate goal of expanding expressive possibilities in Brahms's clarinet

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<sup>15</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Text & Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, Chapter 2, Paragraph 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, Paragraph 11.

<sup>19</sup> Taruskin, 167-168.

Sonatas, is it pertinent to point out the patently clear? It is important to ask such questions for one very obvious reason: namely, because our modernist text-centric ideology greatly influences the way we view all music, and anachronistically imposes our modernist worldview on works of other eras, including those of Brahms. It is very important therefore to be aware of this ideological discrepancy when approaching nineteenth-century music because if left unchecked it greatly impairs our ability to employ the expressive freedom that evidence suggests was central to the role of performers in Brahms's time.

The effects of recorded sound on performance however, were not limited to distancing composers and performers. As the recording industry developed, mistakes were more greatly discouraged; placing a higher value on accuracy from performers. As a result of this however, performers' priorities began to shift.

If accuracy comes first, spontaneity and originality are pushed into second place ...recording seems to have encouraged conformity and predictability... [and] has removed a 'vital' aspect of human musical performance. And musicians, in learning to play as more nearly perfectly as recordings, have done the same.<sup>20</sup>

The development of recorded sound was thus an incredibly significant advancement, and one that greatly affected modern expectations with regards to the level of clarity, consistency, and flawlessness expected from performers. Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Bernard D. Sherman, and Robert Phillip all assert that the difference in standards and mindset between pre- and post-recording eras is so significant that the development of recorded sound effectively splits musical performance into two historical groups: before recordings, and after. Modern musicians, Sherman states, "could not return to the pre-recording mindset even if we wanted to."<sup>21</sup> As musicians of the recording era, our standards are simply higher. We expect performances to be controlled in every respect, from accuracy and intonation, to rhythm. This is an important element of modern Brahms style, because it encourages accuracy and sterility and often results in timid interpretations in performance. In reviewing historical evidence from Brahms's time, one must keep in mind the vast difference in performance expectations between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries: differences that are in large part due to the rise of musicology, text-centric ideology, growing distinction between composers and performers, and recording technology. As modern performers are increasingly concerned with achieving note-perfect performances, the natural instinct can be to hold back rather than take risks that could potentially result in missing a note or two. Wrong notes may be unthinkable to us today, but in Brahms's time they were in fact very common.

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<sup>20</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, Chapter 2, Paragraph 7.

<sup>21</sup> Sherman, 35.

## Exploring Documentary Evidence

A variety of historical evidence pertaining to Brahms as a pianist refers to the fact that he regularly made mistakes in performance, particularly as he grew older and out of regular practice, but that his performances were always nevertheless magical. The Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick made the following remarks of Brahms's first Vienna recital in 1862:

He has a highly developed technique which lacks only the final brilliant polish, the final muscular self-confidence required of the virtuoso. He treats the purely technical aspects of playing with a kind of negligence...[but] his playing is always heart-winning and convincing...As little as I wish to gloss over the minor shortcomings, just as little do I wish to deny how insignificant they are compared with the irresistible spiritual charm of his playing.<sup>22</sup>

Charles Stanford, an English composer, made the following comments on Brahms's early performance of the B flat Piano Concerto:

His piano playing was not so much that of a finished pianist... The skips, which are many and perilous in the solo part, were accomplished regardless of accuracy, and it is no exaggeration to say that there were handfuls of wrong notes... But never since have I heard a rendering of the concerto, so complete in its outlook or so big in its interpretation. The wrong notes did not really matter, they did not disturb his hearers any more than himself.<sup>23</sup>

This evidence is not to suggest that accuracy was unimportant in Brahms's lifetime, or even unimportant to Brahms himself. It does show however that accuracy, while important enough to be given regular mention, was not by any means the highest aspiration of performance - particularly perhaps where the playing of composer-pianists was concerned. Here again we see the nineteenth-century theme of transcendent spirituality through performance. This evidence suggests that the most important aspiration for performances, judging at least from the perspective of these critics and listeners, lay in the magic of the performance— which these accounts suggest was sometimes achieved regardless of accuracy. The priorities and expectations of performance in Brahms's time were clearly much different than they are today.

With particular reference to the expressivity of Brahms's playing are the following accounts from his contemporaries. Albert Dietrich, a pupil of Schumann, recalls the “supremely artistic qualities of [Brahms's] playing, at times so powerful, or, when occasion demanded it, so exquisitely tender, but always full of character.”<sup>24</sup> Florence May notes that, “He never aimed at mere effect, but seemed to plunge into the innermost meaning of whatever music he happened to

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<sup>22</sup> Musgrave (2000), 122, 126.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 122.

be interpreting, exhibiting all its details and expressing its very depths.”<sup>25</sup> Fanny Davies's accounts however, are perhaps of the most significance, as they make mention of the more particular aspects of his expressivity. As a close contemporary of Brahms who heard him regularly and was involved in the English premieres of the Clarinet Trio Opus. 114 with Richard Mühlfeld and Robert Haussman, Davies's insights are particularly interesting. In *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* she provided the following remarks on Brahms as a pianist:

His touch could be warm, deep, full, and broad in the fortes...and his pianos, always of carrying power, could be as round and transparent as a dewdrop. He had a wonderful legato. He belonged to that racial school of playing which begins its phrases well, ends them well, leaves plenty of space between the end of one and the beginning of another, and yet joins them without any hiatus.<sup>26</sup>

Of particular interest, as it relates to the more specific issue of tempo flexibility, are Davies's comments on Brahms's expression markings, which gives some insight to modern performers as to how certain elements of Brahms's expressive notation might be approached:

He was most particular that his marks of expression (always as few as possible) should be the means of conveying the inner musical meaning. The sign, '<>', as used by Brahms, often occurs when he wishes to express great sincerity and warmth, *allied not only to tone but to rhythm also*. He would not linger on one note alone, but on a whole idea, as if unable to tear himself away from its beauty. He would prefer to lengthen a bar or phrase rather than spoil it by making up the time into a metronomic bar.<sup>27</sup>

This account of Brahms's approach to the hairpin marking is significant, and offers much insight to modern performers as an opportunity to increase expressivity within Brahms's music, whilst still following his notation. Davies suggests that when Brahms notated a hairpin, it was intended to add specific emphasis to a particular phrase or portion of a phrase, and that when he played these passages himself these moments were played with a great deal of expressive freedom and *rubato*. Davies's comment that “he would prefer to lengthen a bar or phrase rather than spoil it by making up the time into a metronomic bar” also answers a very common question for modern performers. When performers use tempo flexibility, how do we ensure that we do not alter the rhythm or timing of a phrase? The answer, according to Davies, is that we need not worry about this, for Brahms himself did not worry about making up the time so as to fit it all within a metronomic bar. Whilst this is but a glimpse of Brahms's playing, and is hardly a completely objective one, it offers a significant impression of how much freer expressivity was in Brahms's

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>26</sup> George Bozarth, “Fanny Davies and Brahms's late chamber music,” in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 172.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 172. Emphasis Added

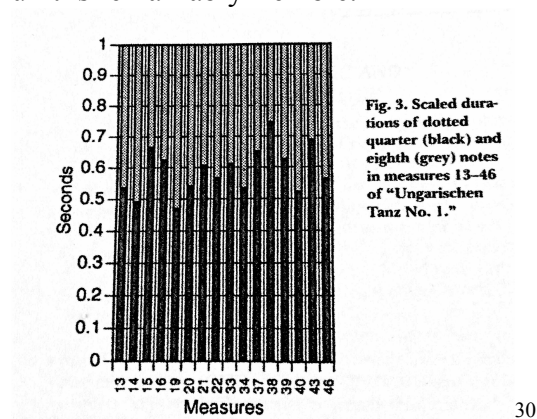
time, at least as compared to our own. This documentary evidence, however, is only part of the puzzle and should be contextualized by an examination of relevant sounding evidence.

## Exploring Sounding Evidence

We can learn much about the differences between our modern style and that of Brahms's time by listening to his recordings and those of his contemporaries. There is only one available recording of Brahms himself playing the piano, which until quite recently has been largely dismissed as being of too poor quality to provide much performance information. This brief excerpt of his *Hungarian Dance No. 1 in G Minor* however, has been restored, and much of the background noise eliminated, making the piano easier to hear [Sound example 1, below]. From this restored recording we are able to discern much in the way of rhythm, *rubato*, and overall tempo flexibility. Additionally, an analysis conducted by Johnathan Berger and Charles Nichols explores this recording and includes sound pressure graphs, graphs of note durations, and scaled durations of rhythmic relationships. This analysis provides a technical and objective examination of Brahms's performance, and speaks to his own rhythmic expression and tempo flexibility as a performer.

[Sound Example 1: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/xf1t0kcu40r03tp/SoundExample1.m4a?dl=0>]<sup>28</sup>

In their analysis, Berger and Nichols “compare various temporal aspects of the performance,” and they use graphs to indicate the proportion of these different rhythmic units. In the opening section of the recording, the dotted quarter - eighth note rhythm is recurrent. Berger and Nichols provide graphs of this rhythmic relationship, and note in their analysis that, “While the overall durations of the three large phrase groups that incorporate dotted quarter- and eighth-note measure groups...do not differ radically, the internal lengths and proportions of each measure unit is remarkably flexible.”<sup>29</sup>



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<sup>28</sup> Johannes Brahms, "Hungarian Dance No. 1 in G minor," from the accompanying CD of *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* Edited by Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman, (Compilation by Cambridge University Press, 2003) Produced by Eric Wen, track 28

<sup>29</sup> Johnathan Berger and Charles Nichols, "Brahms at the Piano: An Analysis of Data from the Brahms Cylinder." *Leonardo Music Journal* 4 (1994) 27.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.



In figure 3 above, taken from Berger and Nichols's analysis, the dotted quarter and eighth note values are represented as a percentage of one measure, which visually demonstrates the discrepancy in note lengths that can be heard on Brahms's recording.

We see that the general tendency towards under dotting becomes apparent. The eighth note exceeds the duration of its preceding dotted quarter note in measures 14 and 19 and approaches the duration of a quarter note in measures 20, 34 and 40. Brahms gives the dotted quarter note its full value only once, in measure 38. This rather surprising feature of the performance runs contrary to our expectation based on the persistent and intuitive tendency for performers to extend the longer duration at the expense of the shorter rhythmic value.<sup>31</sup>

Berger and Nichols also note an "augmentation of the second beat of measure 24, which effectively creates an added beat," and that, "the elongation of measure 30 occurs at the end of a six-bar phrase...suggesting a *ritardando* at the end of this phrase." In summation they assert: "In addition to Brahms's liberal *rubato* and some protracted *fermatti*, the performance lapses into improvisation at a number of points." Berger and Nichols conclude their analysis by asserting: "we provide a glimpse of a composer of enormous stature taking leave of the score in his own performance."<sup>32</sup>

Another, albeit less technical and more musical, analysis of this recording has been done by Michael Musgrave, which corroborates the above information nicely. "One immediately notes a very marked sense of rhythm in which Brahms appears to straighten out the dotted quarter-eighth pattern of the main idea...into almost two quarters (and likewise on the repeat), thus emphasizing the end of the phrase."<sup>33</sup> The elongation to which Musgrave refers is precisely that which is displayed in figure 3 above, from Berger's and Nichols's analysis: here we can see that the note lengths are close to equal, supporting Musgrave's comment that the rhythm is augmented to sound like two quarter notes. Musgrave also notes that, "Brahms does not play at a steady tempo but distinguishes the ideas by slight, or sometimes very marked, change... it clearly relates to Davies's description of a strongly defined outer framework, and flexibility within the phrase..."<sup>34</sup> George Bozarth also analyzes the recording, and notes its corroboration with written accounts of Brahms's playing: "The sound, though dim, is full-bodied, the performance fiery and

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<sup>31</sup> Berger and Nichols, 27.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 29, 30, 26, 30.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Musgrave, "Early trends in the performance of Brahms's piano music" in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 306-307.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

bass-rich, which is what one would expect, given the descriptions we have of Brahms piano playing.”<sup>35</sup>

Bozarth also notes that, “What is most interesting, of course, is all those things he does which transcend the notated page: for instance, playing the left hand slightly ahead of the right (this is clearest in the opening phrases)...”<sup>36</sup> This is difficult to hear upon initial listen, but after repeated listenings one can hear that the left and right hand voices pull slightly apart. The flexibility with which Brahms plays this excerpt then, particularly with regards to the dislocation between the left and right hands, indicates that there was perhaps not only a difference in linear ensemble coordination between musicians, but also between voices within the piano part. This begs the question: is the rhythmic dislocation heard on this recording in fact an indication of Brahms’s priorities of expression and phrasing over what a modern performer might view as cleanliness? Clearly there is much more flexibility possible here than a typical modern performer might assume. In Joseph Joachim’s recordings this same element of independence between voices is prevalent. How does this flexibility apply to ensemble situations, then? If the pianist can play as freely as Brahms did, dislocating the right and left hand voices, which voice should the solo instrument line up with? Perhaps the more important thing to discern from these recordings is that Brahms and his contemporaries favoured the expression and direction of individual lines and phrases over linear ensemble clarity. The sounding evidence and analysis of Brahms’s recording thus support documentary evidence of Brahms’s flexibility in performance. The recordings also highlight just how vital sounding evidence can be to filling in the gaps left by verbal accounts.

[Sound Example 2: *Hungarian Dance no. 1 in G minor*, Joseph Joachim <https://www.dropbox.com/s/xtknrck72ag5t1v/SoundExample2.m4a?dl=0>]<sup>37</sup>

[Sound Example 3: *Hungarian Dance no. 2 in D minor*, Joseph Joachim <https://www.dropbox.com/s/e9yeui4v9sl8vl/SoundExample3.m4a?dl=0>]<sup>38</sup>

[Sound Example 4: *Romance in C major*, Joseph Joachim <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ms8mw-pi1k0ylfxz/SoundExample4.m4a?dl=0>]<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> George Bozarth, “Brahms on Record.” *American Brahms Society Newsletter* 5/1 (Spring 1987), 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Joachim, “Hungarian Dance No. 1 in G minor.” from the accompanying CD of *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* Edited by Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman, (Compilation © Cambridge University Press, 2003) Produced by Eric Wen, track 29

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, “Hungarian Dance no. 2 in D minor.” track 30

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, “Romance in C major.” track 3

In addition to this brief but informative excerpt of Brahms's own playing, there are several more excerpts of sounding evidence of Brahms's close contemporaries that speak to the general style of playing within Brahms's circle at that time. Of these, among the most important are recordings of Joseph Joachim, who was a close friend and colleague of Brahms. Joachim was involved in the premieres of Brahms's violin music: indeed the violin concerti were written for Joachim, and he was consulted regularly by Brahms while they were being composed. They worked closely together, and it is clear from their correspondence that Brahms had great respect for Joachim as a friend and colleague. Joseph Joachim's recordings of his own arrangements of this same *Hungarian Dance No. 1 in G minor*, [Sound Example 2, above] as well as the *Hungarian Dance No. 2 in D Minor*, [Sound Example 3, above] are also of great interest and relevance. Joachim plays with pronounced rhythmic flexibility, and greatly varies the tempo within measures and phrases. Joachim's recording of his own *Romance in C major* demonstrates these same qualities [Sound Example 4, above], indicating that the elements heard on these recordings were not merely a stylistic choice specific to the genre of the Hungarian Dance, but rather indicative of Joachim's general performance style.

Joachim's recordings also enlighten us as to differences in ensemble standards between the nineteenth century and today. There is a great amount of freedom on these recordings, not only within single voices, but between their relationships to each other as an ensemble as well. Joachim and the pianist line up at most critical structural moments, but there is a large amount of play between the voices within individual measures and even phrases between these structural seams. It seems almost as if the expressive freedom of each player exists in individual gestures or phrases, without worrying so much if each subdivision of the measure lines up exactly with the other player: they do eventually end up together again, but the primary concern here certainly seems to be local expressivity. There is also a great deal of temporal flexibility in both Joachim and Brahms's recordings which does not appear to be rooted in notation. This sounds very unusual to our modern ears, but it is a good example of the differences in ensemble standards, at least within Brahms's circle, between the nineteenth century and our own.

In Sound Examples 1-4, both Brahms and Joachim can clearly be heard hastening as well as slowing the tempo. This is an important element to keep in mind, since as modern performers we often equate *rubato* with merely a slowing of tempo, and not a quickening. Indeed, rushing today has a negative connotation because it implies a lack of control. In Brahms's recording of the *Hungarian Dance No. 1* it is very noticeable that he outlines the expressive hairpins described by Davies with both *accelerando* and *ritardando*. Likewise in Joachim's recordings of the *Hungarian Dance No. 1*, *Hungarian Dance No. 2*, and his *Romance in C major* there is a general theme of temporal flexibility which is revealed both through *accelerando* and *ritardando* throughout the pieces.

Many modern musicians are uncomfortable with the notion that great performers from the past may have used *accelerandi* as an expressive tool in their performances, since this has such a negative connotation. As modern performers, the idea of rushing implies a lack of control: a quality that is particularly discouraged in modern performances of Brahms's music. As Anna

Scott argues, modern scholars and performers seem at times eager to explain away those elements of Brahms's playing that do not fit into this modern Brahmsian obsession with control. "When Brahms is reported to have fallen short of this controlled ideal," Scott asserts, "it is almost always framed as a function of his transition from a youthful pianist who performed other composers' works to an aged composer whose works were performed by others."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, nowhere in Fanny Davies's accounts of Brahms playing is there reference to *accelerandi*, though we clearly hear it in his recording. This demonstrates that when dealing with a composer of such enormous stature, we have an amazing ability to excuse unwelcome historical evidence so as not to distort the grand image of the composer in question. It is far less desirable to make room for the possibility that what we hear on Brahms's recording is in fact symptomatic of his own performance style, because this would imply that Brahms himself played with a wild expressivity, including both rushing and slowing. The possibility that our modern interpretation of notation and historical evidence could vary so drastically from what we hear on recorded evidence is worrying for modern performers, because it indicates that what we deem to be 'historically accurate' may not be as accurate as we like to think.

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<sup>40</sup> Anna Scott, *Romanticizing Brahms: Early Recordings and the Reconstruction of Brahmsian Identity* (PhD Thesis, University of Leiden, 2014), 139.

## Practical Application and Analysis of Research Findings

For the sake of specificity and brevity it was necessary to limit our practical experiments to score-based parameters only. In other words, these interpretative experiments were confined to notated expressive markings, with particular emphasis on the hairpin marking ‘< >’. While the intention of the pianist and I was to focus on these hairpins however, the results of our experiments were not only limited to score-based parameters, as can be heard on the recorded evidence. Now, there must be some acknowledgement that even in the best Urtext editions of the Op. 120 sonatas there are several factors which make it impossible to know with absolute certainty which expressive markings were placed accurately by Brahms, and which have been inaccurately transcribed over time. It has largely been assumed that Brahms's scores are as close as possible to accurately reflecting the composer's exacting intentions and personal markings. This is due mainly to the fact that almost all of Brahms's music was published during his lifetime and under his influence. He was involved in the publishing process, the proofing process, and naturally therefore is thought to have corrected any discrepancies that may have occurred between the autograph and the final printed score. Such discrepancies were very common in music from this era, due largely in part to the way the printed music was manufactured. The completed score would go to an engraver, who then copied the score onto large metal plates that were then used to send the music to print. One of the problems with this system, however, is that since most engravers were not musicians, they copied the music as a visual work without understanding the performative intricacies or implications of the markings that they were copying. As a result of this lack of understanding of musical notation, the most typical errors in this process are related to notation that is of greatest importance to modern performers: namely, expressive markings. Often times, if space was tight on the plate hairpin markings would be inaccurately extended or misplaced during the engraving process. As asserted by Robert Pascall, “From autograph through the copying and engraving processes a text would deteriorate through the accumulation of uncorrected error and be improved by compositional revision, deterioration and improvement occurring concurrently.”<sup>41</sup>

Since Brahms was alive for the publication of most of his works, naturally it has been assumed that any mistakes in the engraving process would have been caught by the composer during the proofing stage. There is evidence however to suggest that Brahms himself was not in fact the most reliable editor, and that sometimes he would not proof his manuscripts very thoroughly or consistently. Camilla Cai makes some excellent observations with regard to this matter, noting that:

Brahms's revisions during this composing and publishing process could produce as significant a change as major alterations to Op. 119, no. 2, or as small an adjustment as a shortened *crescendo* symbol or added staccato. However, the evidence suggests that Brahms did not lavish such careful attention consistently, and many details of the first edition may stem from copyist's or engraver's

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<sup>41</sup> Pascall, 5.

alterations that Brahms failed to notice.<sup>42</sup>

Cai also notes that when Brahms did make adjustments to his works that “he shows great concern and care for the exact placement and quality of expression and tempo marks in these autographs, frequently correcting these elements by moving, changing, or deleting symbols and words, and especially altering the size of *crescendo* and *decrescendo* symbols.”<sup>43</sup> It is clear that Brahms was, as Fanny Davies states, “most particular that his marks of expression...should be the means of conveying the inner musical meaning”<sup>44</sup> of his works. Evidence suggests however that Brahms did in fact miss obvious errors in the proofing process, including the differing *crescendo* and *decrescendo* symbols to which he paid so much attention in his autograph.<sup>45</sup> For this reason modern performers must acknowledge that these markings, which we observe so religiously, may not be as accurate as we would like to think. So why then, conduct expressive experiments based on these very markings? The answer is simple: despite the editorial inaccuracies resulting from nineteenth-century music publication practices, modern performers *do* place a great emphasis on the score and all its details. Regardless of the fact that we cannot necessarily verify all of these exact markings therefore, they remain a good place to start. So in order to provide some score-based expressive experiments that the average modern performer can easily try, it only makes sense to base these experiments on those markings that, despite their possible inconsistencies, modern performers hold most dear.

In order to experiment with these findings in a duo performance setting it was necessary that both musicians be committed to exploring new possibilities of expressivity and tempo flexibility in the music of Brahms. It was thus necessary to not only work with a pianist who was interested in the historical evidence provided, but who was also willing to experiment with implementing this evidence into his or her own performance interpretation in spite of the overwhelming societal pressures to remain within the current narrow norms of expressive interpretation in Brahms’s music. As one might expect, finding a pianist with such initiative and the time to participate in such a project was no easy feat. It is a testament to the interpretative pressures facing modern performers that I was unable to find such a pianist in my local community, and so rather I made the decision to work with a close colleague of mine out of New York, Soyeon Park, who is currently a PhD candidate at the Manhattan School of Music. For this reason, the practical application of my findings was conducted over several recording sessions, rather than as a live presentation along with the rest of this paper.

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<sup>42</sup> Camilla Cai, “Was Brahms a Reliable Editor? Changes Made in Opuses 116, 117, 118 and 119.” in *Acta Musicologica, International Musicological Society* (1989): 83-85.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>44</sup> Bozarth (2003), 172.

<sup>45</sup> Cai, 93.

Several parameters were set out from the beginning of the recording project. Firstly, it was my intent to have the recording sessions be as close to live performances as possible. The reason for this is twofold: firstly, because Brahms's music was composed for live performance, in an era before studio recordings and in an era where many live performances were unrehearsed or under-rehearsed; and secondly, because in order to conduct expressive experiments in the spirit in which this research is intended (to move away from the modern style of heavily rehearsed, controlled, and coordinated expressive interpretation) it was necessary that the experiments occurred in the most natural setting possible. A live concert would be the most ideal place for this research, however it was not feasible for these experiments. Instead, Soyeon and I did our best to replicate a live performance setting in the studio. Most of our preparation for the sessions consisted of discussions about the research findings, with the exception of one thirty-minute rehearsal to get our bearings with the music. There was absolutely no rehearsal of interpretative or coordinative elements of performance, and no specific musical decisions were made prior to the sessions. Another important restriction that was set was that there was absolutely no mixing or editing or post-production work done on these recordings. As a result, these recordings are as fresh as possible. It is not so much a studio recording as a documented performance experiment. The idea was for the recording to be a fly on the wall in order to observe the experiments as they happened for later review.

The resultant recordings are thus also not of the typical clarity and accuracy we have come to expect of studio recordings. There are missed or early entrances, wrong notes, and other mistakes from which a modern performer would typically recoil, and would certainly not present to anyone as a finished product. However, in an effort to embrace the historical evidence presented above and to attune our expectations according to a more nineteenth-century standard of performance, these technical errors should be overlooked as secondary to the number one priority of these experiments: expressivity. In fact, one could consider these errors as being intrinsically linked to expressivity, as they in fact heighten the tension of the music in many places. If modern performers are willing to sacrifice clarity and accuracy for the ultimate goal of amplified expressivity, this is not indicative of a lazy or undedicated performance. Rather, this reveals extraordinary dedication to communicating the spiritual soul of the work, which in fact is indicative of loyalty to the music itself, rather than to one's own performance. This is actually in alignment with what we see as themes of spirituality throughout writings on performance practice from the nineteenth century.

It is worth noting that being willing to sacrifice accuracy for expressivity was not a natural decision for us. The fear of mistakes that consumes most modern performers is a difficult habit to break, and it is very difficult to be accepting of a performance that is anything less than note-perfect. However, we agreed going into these sessions that the focus was to be on expressivity, not on technical perfection, and that we would continue with our experiments regardless of mistakes that may occur. Regardless of this mutual acknowledgement, as two modern performers who are very familiar with modern standards of cleanliness, there were times when this obsession with accuracy overwhelmed one or both of us and resulted in an incomplete take. It is interesting to note that upon listening to the master recordings, in moments where one of us had felt

we had made a mistake too egregious to continue, the “big” mistake that stopped the music was often in fact almost inaudible on the recording. Overall however, I feel that we were fairly successful in trying to let the little mistakes go whilst focusing on the bigger picture of achieving a more expressive performance, and there is certainly no shortage of mistakes on these recordings to prove it.

As we strived to expand our expressive possibilities it became clear that sometimes this could only be achieved at the expense of the safe, timid playing which often helps us to achieve such high levels of technical clarity. This is not to suggest that it is impossible to play more expressively with a high level of technical accuracy, but is merely an acknowledgement that often as modern performers the expectation and aspiration is to achieve technical precision, and at times we do this at the expense of a risky, more expressive style of playing. Accuracy is a high priority for modern performers, and rightly so. For this specific research however, it was necessary that expressivity be first and foremost, even sometimes at the expense of accuracy. It is my belief however that as I continue to embrace this style of playing, my technique will catch up.



## Analysis of Recorded Results

To begin, I will discuss our experiments with Brahms's *Sonata No. 1 in F minor*, movement I: *Allegro appassionato*. In the following excerpts we experimented with the idea that the hairpins indicate not only dynamic change, but *rubato* as well. The term *rubato* as used throughout this analysis refers to both a hastening and slowing of tempo. Following Davies's assertion that Brahms's notation of hairpin markings were used to indicate expressive gestures "*allied not only to tone but to rhythm also*," and also that, "[Brahms] *would prefer to lengthen a bar or phrase rather than spoil it by making up the time into a metronomic bar*."<sup>46</sup> combined with the evidence heard on the recordings of Brahms and Joachim, we decided to use this evidence as a starting point for our experiments. Firstly, instead of treating the hairpins as often modern performers do, with tone rather than time, we experimented with interpreting these markings as indications to push tempo over the *crescendi* and hold back tempo over the *decrescendi*; and secondly, instead of "making up" the time we take away or add, we experimented with embracing a sense of freedom by not always reestablishing *tempo primo* after each expressive hairpin.

These two elements were the basis for all of our performances of the Sonatas; both in the excerpts of our specific experiments, and in complete takes. Where these hairpin markings became most interesting however, was in moments when they seemed to contradict other expressive markings, or produced discrepancies between the clarinet and piano parts. The first example of this occurs in Experiment 1, below.

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<sup>46</sup> Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman, *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 172.

### Experiment 1: *Sonata No. 1 in F minor, I: Allegro appassionato* mm. 202-226

{Complete score found in Appendix B}

Figure A

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Figure A shows a musical score for measures 214-226 of Sonata No. 1 in F minor, I: Allegro appassionato. The score is in F minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It features a piano (p) and forte (f) dynamic range. The first system (measures 214-216) is marked 'Sostenuto ed espressivo' and 'fp'. The second system (measures 217-220) is also marked 'Sostenuto ed espressivo' and 'fp'. The third system (measures 221-226) is marked 'f' and 'cresc.'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings (e.g., 3, 2, 3, 4).

### *Allegro appassionato* Take 1: Control Take

[Sound Example 5 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/y352jvlp705cto6/SoundExample5.wav?dl=0>]

In order to compare interpretations of the hairpin markings, we first established what the section would sound like as a more typical modern interpretation. In other words, how did the section sound when the hairpins were interpreted for dynamic value alone. To establish this, we did a 'control' take, Sound Example 5. Although we were not experimenting with the expressive markings, or interpreting them for temporal flexibility, there is still some natural temporal freedom in this take. This was not intended, and not part of the experiment, but this is a fair representation of what a controlled interpretation of this section sounds like, and there must be some acknowledgement that Soyeon and myself naturally play with a certain amount of expressive free-

dom (as do almost all musicians), even before adding any additional interpretative freedom to the equation.

*Allegro appassionato* Take 2: Hairpin *Rubato*, but with an effort to line up as an ensemble according to modern standards.

[Sound example 6, T4 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/61m0llx2rxyirj4/SoundExample6.wav?dl=0>]

The above figure ‘A’ is merely an excerpt of the take, while the score for the complete section of the take can be found in Appendix B. In Sound Example 6, we observed the hairpins in our parts by manipulating both dynamics and time, while still trying to maintain synchronicity. This proved very difficult, for as you can see in the score, the hairpins in this section sometimes exist solely in one voice, are extended to different lengths in each part, and in moments such as mm. 218 the clarinet and piano have contradicting hairpin gestures (the clarinet has a complete hairpin [ $< >$ ], indicating an *accelerando* and *ritardando*, whereas the piano has only a partial hairpin [ $<$ ], thereby indicating just an *accelerando*). These varying markings thus indicate different expressive gestures in each voice. At times one voice is pushing or pulling back the tempo, while the other voice has no marking, or a contrasting one. In this example there is a more freely expressive style than in the control take. Our attempts to still line up with one another however, according to modern standards of synchronous ensemble playing, in fact inhibits the extent to which the *rubato* in each individual part might be taken, and seems to hold back the momentum of the section slightly.

*Allegro appassionato* Take 3: Independent Hairpin *Rubato*

[Sound Example 7, T8 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ulvmz6p0fsgfcei/SoundExample7.wav?dl=0>]

The recordings of Brahms and Joachim examined earlier show that there was a drastically different level of ensemble clarity expected within Brahms’s circle as compared to that expected from chamber music performances today. Joachim’s recordings for example, demonstrate that ensembles of that era were not as strictly ‘in time’ with each other as modern standards dictate. There is great independence of expression as the violin and piano lines pull apart for sometimes measures at a time before lining up again. Sound Example 7 was intended to be an experiment in independent line shaping/*rubato*, following the same hairpin gestures seen above in Figure A and in the previous Sound Example 6. Here in Sound Example 7 the clarinet and piano each attempted to follow their individual lines regardless of what the other person was doing, without trying to line up with one another at each beat or subdivision of the bar. Following the hairpins, which appear in the clarinet and piano parts independently, creates a contrasting feeling of line shaping. In this take, one can hear how the two parts pull away from one another in mm. 215-218, and also in mm. 221-224. The resultant rhythmic and tonal dislocation between the voices adds an element of tension, dissonance, and resistance to the section, which ultimately makes the climax in mm. 224 (where the piano and clarinet both have a *crescendo* leading into this moment) that much more powerful. By observing these contrasting hairpin markings as indications to push and

pull both tone and time, this section sounds closer to the ensemble playing style heard on recordings made by Joachim.

### **Experiment 2: Sonata No. 1 in F minor, II: Andante un poco adagio mm. 23-41**

{Complete score found in Appendix C}

Another very interesting interpretative query regarding these expressive hairpin markings concerns their relation to dynamic values, and in particular, the places in the score where hairpin markings seem to contradict dynamics that are written in prose. For example, in the second movement of *Sonata no. 1 in F minor, II: Andante un poco adagio*, mm. 23-41 there are two instances where there is just such a contradiction. Firstly, it occurs in mm. 27-29, as shown in both the clarinet and piano parts of Figure B.

Figure B

mm. 27-29

This marking could be interpreted in two principal ways. The first option is that the performer must interpret the hairpin marking as a *crescendo*, and therefore assume that the ‘p’ marking following the hairpin in mm. 29 is intended to be a ‘*subito p*’, though not marked as such. In many cases, performers would insist that this is the most likely interpretation, however I would strongly suggest that there is another valid and perhaps more logical option. Knowing now that there is evidence to suggest that the hairpin markings can be used to indicate not only dynamic value, but rhythmic elongation/diminution as well, one could conclude that perhaps in places like this the hairpin and dynamic markings are indicating two different types of expression. Instead of assuming that the markings are both indicating dynamic change, one could interpret the dynamic values in prose here as being the key dynamic indicators, while the hairpins are actually indicative of tempo modification in the form of an *accelerando*. In this case, the overall dynamic would remain at a ‘p’ level, while the hairpin indicates a slight push in the tempo.

Another example occurs in mm. 35-37 of the clarinet part, as shown above in Figure C.

Figure C  
mm. 35-37



In this instance, the hairpin marking and the written *cresc.* are seemingly redundant: why is it necessary to indicate the *crescendo* two different ways? Additionally, the markings are perhaps contradictory, because the hairpin marking indicates that the *crescendo* should begin in mm. 35, whereas the *cresc.* indicates that the *crescendo* does not begin until mm. 37. This poses another interpretative question for performers, and is one that I believe is best answered by interpreting the hairpin marking and the dynamic markings in prose as two separate indications. To explore this question, we conducted Experiment 2 below.

#### Andante un poco adagio Take #1: Control Take

[Sound Example 8, T15 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/jwf2byrfwawwmr3/SoundExample8.wav?dl=0>]

The above excerpt, Sound Example 8, was intended as the control take for this section. In order to achieve what was intended to be a more typical modern interpretation, the hairpins were observed for dynamic change but not *rubato*. The  $p < p$  (mm. 27-29) and  $p < cresc.$  (mm. 35-37) sections were observed as *subito* dynamic markings.

#### Andante un poco adagio Take #2: Hairpin *rubato* and dynamic change

[Sound Example 9, T16 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/s00p7h945e5c3a9/SoundExample9.wav?dl=0>]

In Sound Example 9 the hairpin markings were observed as expressive *rubato* indications as well as dynamic indications, and therefore were followed for the push/pull of tempo as well as for *crescendo* and *decrescendo*. The  $p < p$  (mm. 27-29) and  $p < cresc.$  (mm. 35-37) are observed with a *crescendo*, following the hairpin, and then ‘*subito p*’ dynamic markings. Notable here is the dynamic difference between parts in mm. 37 when the clarinet continues to *crescendo* and the piano drops back down to the “p” marked in the score. This is a result of the observation of the hairpin markings as dynamic indicators in the measures where they seem to contradict the dynamic indications in prose (mm. 27-29 and mm. 35-37)



*Andante un poco adagio* Take #3: Hairpin *rubato* but not dynamic change

[Sound Example 10, T18 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/zvtp44pi4n2u53w/SoundExample10.wav?dl=0>]

In Sound Example 10 the hairpins were observed for *rubato* but not for dynamic change in the measures where the hairpins contradict the dynamic prose indications (mm. 27-29 and mm. 35-37). In these measures the prose indications were observed as the dynamic markings, while the hairpin markings were interpreted as temporal indications only. In mm. 27-29 for example, the clarinet and piano remain at a “p” dynamic level through the hairpin, while pushing the tempo according to the hairpin indication in mm. 27-30. In mm. 25-27, the ensemble remains at a “p” dynamic level through the hairpin, and then in mm. 37 the clarinet begins the *crescendo* from a “p” level, according to the *cresc.* marking. The piano remains at “p” throughout the section. This take offers an alternative interpretation to assuming ‘*subito*’ dynamic markings for sections in which the hairpin markings and dynamic prose indications seem to contradict one another. An interesting element in this take to note is that while the intent was not to observe the hairpins for dynamic change, there is still a natural tendency to get louder as the tempo is pushed, and get softer as the tempo pulls back.

**Experiment 3: Sonata No. 1 in F minor, II: Andante un poco adagio mm.1-22**

{Complete Score Found in Appendix C}

Figure D

The musical score for Figure D consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 7-14) shows a clarinet part on the top staff and a piano part on the bottom staff. The clarinet part begins with a melodic line marked 'espress.' and 'dolce'. The piano part has a complex texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, some marked 'p' and 'dolce'. There are yellow hairpin markings in the piano part, indicating a crescendo and decrescendo. The second system (measures 14-22) continues the piano part with more complex textures and dynamic markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Andante un poco adagio Take #4: Independent Hairpin Rubato

[Sound Example 11, T19 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/74l38jncygpo2m8/SoundExample11.wav?dl=0>]

Sound Example 11 was conducted as another experiment in independent line shaping/*rubato* between the parts. As shown in figure D above, in mm. 7-9 and mm. 11-12 the piano score contains hairpin markings, while the clarinet part does not. In this take the independent hairpin markings were observed for *rubato* as well as dynamic value. On the recording this interpretation resulted in a rhythmic dislocation between the parts that is audible in mm. 7-9 and 11-12. This dislocation, as the piano pushes the tempo and the clarinet remains steady, adds an element of tension to the phrase. As a result, the hairpin in mm. 17-19 that exists in both the piano and clarinet parts, and that pushes the tempo to the peak of the phrase in mm. 19, leads to a bigger more powerful resolution at the apex of the phrase (mm. 19 beat 1) and at the cadence.

**Non Score-Based Observations**

Sonata No. 1 in F minor mvt. I: Allegro appassionato mm. 153-191 Take #5

[Sound Example 12 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/2a13rbtrgylag37/SoundExample12.wav?dl=0>]

{Complete Score found in Appendix B}

Figure E

The image displays a musical score for measures 153-191 of the first movement of Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Allegro appassionato. The score is written for piano and clarinet. The piano part is in the lower register, featuring complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes. The clarinet part is in the upper register, featuring a more melodic line. Dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p' are present. Some notes in the piano part are highlighted with yellow underlines. The score is labeled 'Figure E' at the top left.

This take was done as an excerpt, but not as an intentional experiment with any markings in particular. While there is still observation of these hairpin markings as indicators for tempo flexibility, there is also an overall increase in expressivity and *rubato* throughout the take that is not limited to these particular markings. This recording demonstrates that while the main subject of the previous experiments has been interpreting markings, there has been a general stylistic evolution towards a more temporally-flexible style in our performances, quite apart from any specific notation. Part of the reason that this excerpt was recorded was because Soyeon and I both found throughout our recordings of the movement that we felt a tendency to rush throughout mm. 183-189. This was of particular interest because if one observes Figure E, the L.H. voice is not something that a pianist would normally rush through, as Soyeon indeed commented upon during our sessions. At a closer glance however, the lowest line in the piano score shows a rhythmic element that is effectively an *accelerando* already written into the L.H. of the piano part. For this reason, and due to the simple fact that technically-speaking this section is already quite difficult for the pianist and is not conducive to rushing, most modern pianists would definitely not rush this section. In fact the typical approach is to hold the tempo steady and allow the rhythmic notation to create the illusion of an *accelerando*. Indeed, that is often what modern performers are instructed to do when faced with notation like this. Soyeon and I embraced the syncopation of the lowest L.H. voice that seems to push the tempo however, and we went along with the feeling of hastening the tempo instead of trying to pull it back into a steady tempo. As a result, I believe there is a nice momentum to the phrase, which continues to move forward until the *diminuendo* in mm. 190-191.

Sonata No. 1 in F minor I: Allegro appassionato

[Sound Example 13 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/r8u422glcir42q3/SoundExample13.wav?dl=0>]

{Complete Score found in Appendix A}

Sound Example 13 is a complete performance of *Sonata No. 1 in F minor, I: Allegro appassionato*. The corresponding score can be found attached in Appendix B. In contrast to earlier sound experiments, this recorded performance was not made with a specific focus on any expressive markings, but rather as an appraisal of general performance style. This recording demonstrates ways in which the experiments done in small excerpts of this movement directly affected the overall performance of the complete movement. These experiments raised new ensemble issues and influenced large-scale stylistic elements of the performance. Clearly a complete recording of the movement will reveal details that short excerpts cannot: structural shape and definition, ebb and flow of time throughout, and the overall momentum of the movement. In Sound Example 12 it is noticeable that there is a strong underlying structure to the movement, which if anything I believe is enhanced, rather than obscured, by the freedom to push and pull the tempo. Gradations in tempo help to vary and contrast the character of thematic material throughout the movement, which reinforces the movement's underlying structural shape; while temporal variation in transitional passages also help to delineate structural boundaries. Despite this overall oscillation in tempo, there remains a strong forward momentum throughout the movement. This may be due in part to the fact that Soyeon and myself did not feel pressured to reestablish *tempo primo* immediately after a *rubato* passage, and as a result, whether we hastened or slowed the



tempo the effect was augmented naturally through momentum, and not interrupted by sudden returns to *tempo primo*. This can be heard consistently throughout Sound Examples 5-14. Of course we remained vigilant that there be an underlying *tempo primo* throughout the movement, but we were not concerned if it took a measure or two to reestablish this tempo, and therefore did not force any immediate returns to *tempo primo*.

*Sonata No. 2 in Eb Major, I: Allegro amabile*

[Sound Example 14 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/pa2h9nrky1h0my8/SoundExample14.wav?dl=0>]

{Complete Score found in Appendix D}

Sound Example 14 is a complete performance of *Sonata No. 2, I: Allegro amabile*. The corresponding score can be found in Appendix D. This recording provides interesting insights because there were no experiments conducted at all in this Sonata. Any elements from this research project that can be heard in this recording therefore are indicative of the development and transference of a more fundamental performative style, rather than the lingering results of any specific experiments within the movement. Notable throughout the movement are many of the same elements seen in Sound Example 13: temporal flexibility resulting in an overall ebb and flow throughout the movement, an underlying definition of structural shape and the delineation of boundaries, a variety of colours and time-feels between differing sections and thematic material, and an overall forward linear momentum to the movement. The presence of such elements in this recording indicate that this research project has resulted not only in an expansion of dynamic and temporal expressivity in those passages and works that served as the basis of our experiments, but that it has also contributed to a more fundamental and general stylistic shift in our performances of this repertoire. This is important, because it shows that my research findings are transferable across all of Brahms's music.

## Summary of Recorded Results

It is noticeable in reviewing all of our recordings that there is an overall tendency towards a more flexible style of playing, which is not merely limited to notational interpretation but also transfers to a more temporally flexible style overall. It is also valid to point out that even in the control takes there is a natural tendency to shape hairpins with time. Both the modern and experimental interpretations of these markings reveal an *accelerando* <, time at the apex of the hairpin, and a *ritardando* >. The difference between the control takes and the experiments is not the existence of this temporal flexibility, but rather the intensity of these expressive parameters. In the control takes there is only slight time taken at the apex of the hairpin and at the end of hairpins before tempo is quickly reestablished, whereas the experimental takes have a greater amount of time through the *accel.* <, more time at the apex, and then also time at the end of the hairpin before reestablishing *tempo primo*. There is also a difference in synchronicity/clarity of the parts between the control and the experimental examples; the control takes have a greater level of synchronicity and clarity, whereas the experiments reflect more dislocation between the clarinet and piano parts.

As an ensemble, increased levels of temporal flexibility required heightened awareness. Since both Soyeon and myself were playing with a greater variance in tempo, we had to listen more carefully in order to be able to respond to one another's expressive choices, even if that response was to allow the parts to dislocate and follow their own independent lines. Expressive/temporal independence thus did not decrease the level of ensemble awareness required, as some might assume, but rather heightened it. Increased flexibility helped us to solve practical problems as well: in the control take of Experiment 1 for example, to breathe anywhere in the section was difficult to manage without compromising the tempo and synchronicity. However, in the experimental takes, the breathing felt much more natural, as the pianist could slow the rolling of a chord while I took a breath. Of course the decision of where to breathe must make sense musically, but the increased temporal flexibility contributed to a much more natural phrasing, without the feeling that the music was being compromised in order to breathe. The short experiments in which Soyeon and myself tried different interpretations of hairpins have not only had a direct effect on the interpretation of these specific markings, but a general influence on temporal change as an expressive tool throughout the movement. As a result, the overall style of our performance as a duo ensemble has changed. This stylistic shift is evident not only in the experimental excerpts, but throughout the complete takes in Sound Example 12 and Sound Example 13. The complete take of *Sonata No. 2, I: Allegro amabile* reveals that the stylistic change resulting from this research project is applicable to the performance of the rest of Brahms's music, and not limited to the sections or movements in which specific experiments have been conducted.

I freely stipulate that all modern performers play with a certain amount of temporal flexibility, and that to some extent they interpret hairpins as temporal gestures as well as dynamic ones. Comparatively speaking therefore, what one might generalize as a 'modern' interpretation of these markings is simply a much narrower and more controlled spectrum of temporal flexibility: one that tends not to include acceleration, one that includes less expressivity in tempo, and

one in which performers are careful to reestablish *tempo primo* afterwards. Often when the tempo is pushed or pulled modern performers feel the need to make it up so as not to distort the overall tempo or rhythm of a phrase. This is an important difference between ‘modern’ approaches on one hand, and our experimental performances as well as those evidenced by historical sounding and documentary evidence on the other.

As stated earlier, our experiments were focused on the interpretation of notated hairpins. This is but one way however to implement greater expressive freedom in Brahms’s music. The practical application of my research findings in these experiments is just a beginning to what is effectively a large-scale personal stylistic change. The complete takes were recorded for the purpose of capturing the most natural interpretation of these Sonatas, with the hope that this would reveal something about how this research has influenced my own performance style in general. The resultant performances have in fact reflected a fundamental change in style and interpretation. It can be no coincidence that this shift towards a freer temporal style has revealed itself after careful exploration of and experimentation with the above research, and therefore it must be concluded that the research has in fact had a practical effect on my own interpretation as a performer. There has been a great increase in fluidity of phrasing in my playing, a more expansive range of expressive freedom, and an overall stylistic shift revealing greater artistic freedom and a natural interpretive flow that is less hindered by societal pressures.

## **Conclusion**

The process of exploring historical evidence of past performance styles will always be a difficult one. As modern performers we are separated from Brahms's time by more than one hundred years. The latter part of the nineteenth century, in which the Op. 120 Sonatas were composed, was one that witnessed wondrous innovation, including the invention of the phonograph, the light bulb, the radio, the first automobiles, and air travel. The twentieth century saw computers, space travel, and the internet. The world today is entirely different than the one Johannes Brahms was born into, and one that is full of technologies and opportunities that the composer could scarcely have imagined. As a result, we as modern performers have a completely different worldview than performers of the nineteenth century. This modern worldview influences our interpretation of everything, including music. It is therefore very important that modern performers seek and maintain a critical understanding of this worldview, particularly as it relates to our performance practices.

We have explored various ideological factors which have contributed to this worldview: our investment in text-fidelity and dedication to preserving the past, and the diminution of the role of performers. We have also explored intellectual and technological factors such as the rise of musicology and the development of recorded sound. All of these elements contribute to our modern ideology and ultimately alter the lens through which we view the world. As performers this worldview shapes our expectations, our goals and our livelihood. Only when aware of this inescapable fact can we begin to understand the ways in which it differentiates us from nineteenth-century performers. Put simply, our standards are higher: the musical world is more competitive, and opportunities for work as a performer are dwindling with the accessibility of recorded sound. Never before has there been such pressure on young musicians for accuracy as a baseline qualification for work. As modern performers trying to make a living, we do not get to choose the standards to which we are held - all we can do is strive for excellence. So much of what we do now is fettered with competition: Who can play the cleanest? Who has the most brilliant technique? Who has the most 'authentic' interpretation? The pressures facing modern performers are immense.

The ideological factors that differentiate us from nineteenth-century musicians also affect our ability to assess and implement historical evidence into our performances. With the pressures of fidelity, authenticity, and text-centricity, the risk of interpretative license is high. With the diminished role of performers in the musical community, and the belief that our job as performers is to 'do justice' to the composer and the score, our interpretative choices are constantly scrutinized. With such pressures facing performers, it is no wonder that despite vast amounts of historical evidence, many performers rarely implement this evidence into their performances. The simple truth is that performers in the nineteenth century were faced with different pressures than performers today. Of course there was a notion of fidelity in the nineteenth century, but this concept of fidelity was a spiritual one that called for performers to exercise as much creative genius and license as composers. Nineteenth-century musicians also played music of the past much less

frequently than we do today, and when they did so there was less pressure to recreate the work as it would have sounded in the era in which it was composed. Even most scholars who are in favour of recreating the sound of past music acknowledge that this is a thoroughly modern concept. As Pascall states:

During the 19th century, performances remained resolutely modern in style, and it was not until our own century that musicians asked the powerful question: if we are to perform the music of the past, should we not be using instruments and performing styles which were contemporary with the composition of the music?<sup>47</sup>

Modern performers are faced with a variety of questions when playing music of the past, many of which are not questions that nineteenth-century musicians would have asked. This fact must be kept in mind as a modern performer, and historical ‘accuracy’ must be pursued with the acknowledgement and understanding that when we play music from the past we nevertheless play it from a modern perspective. The documentary and sounding evidence that has been explored here reveals much about the performance styles of Johannes Brahms and his contemporaries. Most of all, it reveals just how different our modern style is from that of the nineteenth century. While we cannot change the fact that we are modern musicians who will always have this modern worldview affecting the way we interpret music, we can indeed be inspired by the past in order to make room for the possibility of change today.

The practical application of my research has showcased just this: it is possible to try new and exciting interpretations of familiar music. While my style of performing will always be innately modern, it is possible to embrace and incorporate stylistic elements from the past into modern interpretations. I believe that the resultant recordings show this to be true and reveal that there has been a demonstrable shift in my own performance style. While the specific experiments yielded interesting results, I believe that the more powerful revelation is seen in the complete recordings: in [Sound Example 12] and [Sound Example 13]. These recordings show that my research has had the desired effect of expanding my expressive palette and tools whether I was consciously experimenting or not. This demonstrates that the research findings are not only effective, but that they are highly transferable throughout Brahms’s music as well. There has been a significant increase in my own temporal flexibility, and thus expressivity, as a performer: one which I believe is a direct result of this research project, and one that will continue to inform my performances as I move forward with my career. This research has thus not merely yielded an end result, but rather a gateway through which I may continue to grow as a performer for years to come.

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<sup>47</sup> Pascall, 4.

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### Appendix A: Hungarian Dance no. 1 in G minor (excerpt)

Scanned from: Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman, *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 305-307.

#### *Early trends in the performance of Brahms's piano music*

305

Ex. 11.1 Brahms, Hungarian Dance no. 1 in G minor [W60 1]. Brahms's solo version as from bars 13 to 72 as a guide to his improvised recorded version.

13  
espress.  
19  
25  
mf  
8  
1  
sf  
\*



[illegible]

Ex. II.1 (*cont.*)

71

Measures 11 and 12 of the musical score. Measure 11 features a rapid ascending scale in the right hand and a single note in the left hand. Measure 12 features a descending scale in the right hand and a single note in the left hand.

# Appendix B: Sonata No. 1 in F minor, I: Allegro appassionato (complete score)

5

## SONATE

f-moll

Komponiert 1894

Opus 120 Nr. 1

**Klarinette in B** *Allegro appassionato* *poco f*

**Klavier** *Allegro appassionato* *poco f* *p*

6

12

18

*f* *dim.* *fp* *pp*

6

This musical score page contains measures 25 through 41. It is written for a voice part (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into four systems, each with a measure number at the beginning of the voice line.

- System 1 (Measures 25-29):** The voice line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including triplets in measures 27 and 28. The piano accompaniment also starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, featuring a bass line with triplets and chords in the right hand.
- System 2 (Measures 30-34):** The voice line continues with a melodic line, including a triplet in measure 32. The piano accompaniment features a more complex texture with chords and moving lines in both hands, including a triplet in the bass line in measure 32.
- System 3 (Measures 35-40):** The voice line ends with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a series of chords and moving lines, with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking in measure 38. The bass line includes fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 4.
- System 4 (Measures 41-45):** The voice line begins with a *dolce* marking. The piano accompaniment features a series of chords and moving lines, with a piano (*pp*) dynamic marking in measure 44.

47

*dim. pp*

*dim. pp*

53

*p ma ben marc.*

*p ma ben marc.*

57

*p*

*non legato*

*f*

*sf*

61

*f*

*f*

8

65 *f*

69

72

76

80

84

88

92

96

100

104

108

112

116

120

124

128

132

136

140

144

148

152

156

160

164

168

172

176

180

184

188

192

196

200

204

208

212

216

220

224

228

232

236

240

244

248

252

256

260

264

268

272

276

280

284

288

292

296

300

304

308

312

316

320

324

328

332

336

340

344

348

352

356

360

364

368

372

81

*cresc.* *f*

86

*f* *p* *p* 4

94

*pp* *espress.* *espress.* 3 4 5 3 2

100

*dolce* *pp* *pp sempre*



10

106

112

117

121

125

*f*

*f marc.*

*f marc.*

*f*

*ben marc.*

*f sempre e ben marc.*

This musical score is for a piano piece, spanning measures 106 to 125. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is written for a single piano instrument, with a grand staff consisting of a treble and a bass clef. The notation includes various musical elements such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and chords. There are several dynamic markings: *f* (forte) at measures 112, 117, and 121; *f marc.* (forte marcato) at measures 112 and 117; and *f sempre e ben marc.* (forte sempre e ben marcato) at measure 125. The score also features several triplets, indicated by a '3' over the notes, and some passages with fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic flow with some melodic lines in the treble and harmonic support in the bass.

129

133

138

143

147

*f*

*sf*

*p*

*espr.*

*dim.*

*p*

5 2 1

4 3

3

1

4 5

1

3

This musical score is for piano and voice, spanning measures 129 to 147. The key signature is B major (three sharps). The score is divided into five systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. Measure numbers 129, 133, 138, 143, and 147 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The piano part features complex textures with many triplets and sixteenth-note passages. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *sf* (sforzando), *p* (piano), *espr.* (espressivo), and *dim.* (diminuendo). The vocal line includes various melodic lines, some with slurs and ties, and some with specific articulation like *espr.* in measure 138. The piano part has several fingerings indicated, such as 5 2 1, 4 3, 3, 1, 4 5, 1, and 3.



12

153

*p dolce*

*dolce*

158

*dolce*

163

*dim.*

*pp*

*dim.*

*pp*

168

*p ben marc.*

171

*p ma ben marc.*

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

175

179

183

186

189

This musical score page contains five systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The systems are numbered 175, 179, 183, 186, and 189. The piano part features complex textures with triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The vocal line includes various melodic phrases and rests. The page is numbered 13 in the top right corner.

14

192

*f espress.*

196

3

*sf*

200

*ff* *sf* *sf* *f* *dim.*

205

*p cresc.*

*p*

210

*f*

3 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 2

*Sostenuto ed espressivo*

214 *fp*

*Sostenuto ed espressivo*

217 *p* *cresc.*

221 *f*

225 *f* *dim.* *p sotto voce*

230 *p sotto voce* *pp*

Appendix C: Sonata No. 1 in F minor, II: Andante un poco adagio

16

Andante un poco Adagio

*poco f*

Andante un poco Adagio

*poco f*

7

*espress.*

*p*

*dolce*

14

*f*

21

*p*

*pp*

*dim.*

*pp*

*p dolce*

*pp*



26

*p* *p*

30

*dolce* *pp* *dolce* *pp*

35

*p* *cresc.*

40

*p* *dim.* *p espr.* *dim.*

18

45

*più p*

49

*p espress.*

*dolce*

53

*espr.*

57

*p dolce*

*sf*

*p*

*pp leg. e dolce*



62



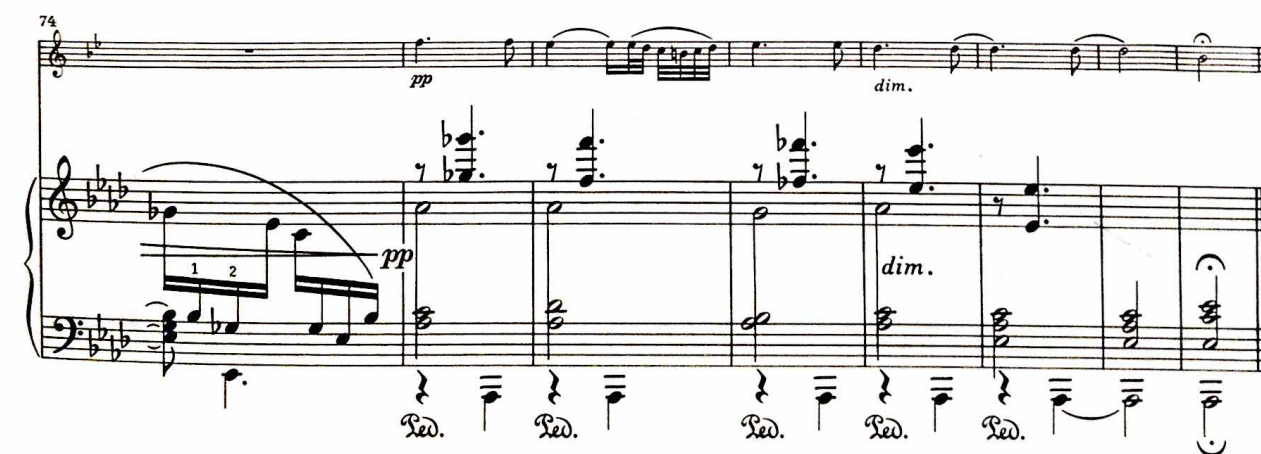
66



70



74





**Appendix D: Sonata No. 2 in Eb, I: Allegro amabile (complete score)**

34

# SONATE

Es-dur

Komponiert 1894

Opus 120 Nr. 2

**Klarinette in B**

**Klavier**

*Allegro amabile*

*p*

*Allegro amabile*

*p*

*più p*

*pp*

*dolce*

*p dolce*

*f*

18 *f* *dim.* *sotto voce* *p*

23 *pp* *pp*

28 *pp* *dolce* *dolce*

33 *dim.* *cresc.* *cresc.*

38 *f* *sf* *f* *fp*

Detailed description: This page contains a musical score for piano and voice, spanning measures 18 to 42. The score is written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The piano part is in the lower register, featuring complex chordal textures and melodic lines with various articulations and dynamics. The voice part is in the upper register, with lyrics written below the notes. The score includes several dynamic markings: *f* (forte), *dim.* (diminuendo), *sotto voce* (softly), *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), *dolce* (sweetly), *cresc.* (crescendo), *sf* (sforzando), and *fp* (fortissimo). The piano part includes many triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. The voice part has a melodic line with some rests and a final phrase in measure 42. The page number 35 is in the top right corner.

36

This musical score page contains measures 41 through 59. It is written for piano in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. Measures 41-44 feature a vocal melody with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a piano accompaniment with arpeggiated chords and fingerings (1 5, 2 1, 2 4). Measures 45-49 show the vocal line with a *p dim.* marking and the piano accompaniment with a *fp dim.* marking. Measures 50-53 continue the vocal melody with a *p* dynamic and the piano accompaniment with arpeggiated chords. Measures 54-58 show the vocal line with a *p* dynamic and the piano accompaniment with arpeggiated chords and fingerings (3, 5 4, 3, 2). Measure 59 is a final chord in the piano accompaniment.



38

83

*più p*

*pp*

*cresc.*

87

*poco f*

*f espress.*

*espress.*

*mf cresc.*

90

*f*

*espress.*

*fp*

94

*cresc.*

*f*

*p*

98

*p*

*molto dolce*

*f*

*p*

*rf*

*p dim.*

*molto dolce*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains measures 83 through 98. It is written for piano and voice. The piano part is in the lower staves, and the voice part is in the upper staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings. The dynamics range from *più p* (very piano) to *f* (forte). The tempo/mood markings include *cresc.* (crescendo), *espress.* (expressive), *poco f* (a little forte), *mf cresc.* (moderato-forte crescendo), *molto dolce* (very sweet), and *p dim.* (piano decrescendo). The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 83, 87, 90, 94, and 98 marking the beginning of new systems.



103 *p*

107 *più p* *pp*

112 *dolce*

116 *f* *dim.* *p* *p sotto voce*

121 *più p* *pp*

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of five systems of staves. The piano part is in the lower staves, and the voice part is in the upper staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *pp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte). There are also markings for *dolce* (sweet) and *p sotto voce* (piano sotto voce). The score includes fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and articulation marks (e.g., slurs, accents). The measures are numbered 103, 107, 112, 116, and 121.

40

126

*dolce*

*pp*

*dolce*

132

*dim.*

*cresc.*

*f*

*dolce*

*cresc.*

137

*f*

*fp*

141

*f*

145

*p dim.*

*p*

*fp dim.*

151

*dolce*

156

*p molto dolce sempre*

*p molto dolce sempre*

159

*dim.*

*Tranquillo*

*Tranquillo*

163

*cresc. rit. un poco*

*f dim.*

168

*cresc. rit. un poco*

*rf*

*dim.*

The musical score is for a piano and voice piece. It consists of five systems of staves. The first system (measures 151-155) features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 156-158) continues the piano accompaniment with intricate fingerings and dynamics. The third system (measures 159-162) includes a vocal line with a 'dim.' marking and a 'Tranquillo' tempo instruction. The fourth system (measures 163-167) shows the piano accompaniment with a 'cresc. rit. un poco' marking and a 'f dim.' dynamic. The fifth system (measures 168-172) concludes the piece with a 'cresc. rit. un poco' marking and a 'rf' (ritardando) dynamic.