

Brahms, Autodidacticism, and the Curious Case of the Gavotte

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*in memoriam Robert Pascall*¹

On 23 February 1896, after an excursion into the countryside outside Vienna, Richard Heuberger found Brahms in uncharacteristically expansive mood. Brahms spoke at length about the relative merits of Mozart and Beethoven, making it clear his sympathies lay with the former, before turning to Haydn's "extraordinary greatness."² He entered his stride, however, when the conversation turned to musical education:

Neither Schumann, nor Wagner, nor I learned anything proper. . . . Schumann went one way, Wagner another, and I a third. But not one of us learned anything decent. Not one of us went through a proper school. Yes; we learned *after the event*.³

Several years earlier, in 1888, Gustav Jenner heard a slightly different version of the same tale when, as a twenty-two-year-old, he went to Vienna to study with Brahms:

Just think how Schumann suffered by coming so late to music. It was the same story with me; I came even later to music. What might I have been, if only I'd learned in my youth what I had to catch up on as a man!⁴

Both stories are presented without commentary; the two interlocutors apparently accepted them without demur. In later years, Brahms was keen to stress the disadvantages of his musical education when compared with Mendelssohn's:

Mendelssohn had a great advantage over us: his outstanding training. What endless pains it has cost me making up for that as a man.⁵

The most thorough-going account of Brahms's musical training dates from 1912 when Gustav Jenner argued, on the basis of conversations with the composer, that Brahms's education was seriously deficient (Jenner 1912). A more nuanced account is, however, required. For a start, the idea that Brahms had a weaker training than Schumann, that he "came even

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later to music,” simply doesn’t stand up to scrutiny. In his youth, Brahms enjoyed the teaching of two notable Hamburg musicians, Otto Cossel (1813–1865) and, when Brahms had outgrown him, Cossel’s own teacher, Eduard Marxsen (1806–1887), arguably the most celebrated teacher in North Germany at the time.⁶ It is not known whether Cossel’s lessons were confined to performance—one surviving anecdote suggests he was keen for his pupil to concentrate on the piano⁷—but there is evidence Brahms regarded these lessons as exemplary (Heuberger 1976, 108).⁸ Marxsen’s brief, by contrast, was to educate the whole musician, and he was particularly well qualified to do so.⁹ Both composer and pianist, Marxsen had a remarkable pedagogical lineage. He studied theory in Vienna with Ignaz von Seyfried (1776–1841), a pupil of both Mozart and Beethoven’s teacher Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809). Though it is rarely mentioned in the Brahms literature, Marxsen also took lessons in Vienna with Simon Sechter (1788–1867), probably the greatest nineteenth-century teacher of music theory. Jenner fails to mention Sechter in his account of Brahms’s education,¹⁰ choosing to portray Vienna at the time Marxsen studied there as a city in thrall to hidebound tradition, on the one hand, and modish virtuosity, on the other. Students, he claimed, were offered “stones instead of bread.”¹¹

This will hardly have been true of Sechter’s pupils. When Marxsen encountered him in 1830, Sechter was in his prime, and it seems unlikely Marxsen would have gained nothing from his famously rigorous training.¹² And although we have no detailed record of what was covered in Marxsen’s own teaching, he would surely have passed on at least some of Sechter’s precepts to such a talented and *wissensbedürftig* pupil as Brahms. After all, Marxsen recognized the full measure of Brahms’s genius exceptionally early: he announced in 1847, on the death of Mendelssohn—when his pupil was only fourteen—that “one artistic master has passed away; a greater one flourishes in Brahms.”¹³ So much for coming late to music!

Most of the surviving evidence about Eduard Marxsen’s teaching relates directly to Brahms. He taught only one other established composer, Ferdinand Thieriot (1838–1919); unfortunately, however, Thieriot appears to have left no account of his studies. Perhaps the most revealing evidence of the quality of Marxsen’s pedagogy is found not in the reminiscences of others but in two contrasting letters, one written by Robert Schumann, the other by Marxsen himself; both concern Joseph Joachim’s *Hamlet Overture*, Op. 4. The first letter, sent by Schumann on 8 June 1853 (his 43rd birthday), offers an unusually detailed response to an early draft of Joachim’s overture. In it, Schumann praises the form, the handling of orchestral effects, the sophistication of the motivic work and the effec-

tive manner in which Joachim reworks material on its reprise. Schumann instructs Joachim to change nothing until he has heard the overture several times in concert, and concludes by offering a performance in Düsseldorf (Jansen 1886, 318–319). The second letter, dated September 1853, is from Marxsen to Brahms (Brahms 1912a, 10–11). Though only part of the correspondence has survived, it is clear that Joachim wrote to Marxsen on the recommendation of Brahms to ask for advice about the *Hamlet Overture*. In other words, Brahms actively promoted his teacher as a source of sound compositional insight, even after the work had received the imprimatur of no less a figure than Schumann.¹⁴ Marxsen's letter contains a sober and meticulous account of various facets of the music that, in his estimation, require attention; these include harmony, motivic work, pacing and orchestration—some of the very same features praised by Schumann. As for Brahms, he suggests in a covering letter to Joachim that Marxsen's judgment is to be trusted (Brahms 1912a, 9).

Of the two figures, Marxsen was clearly the more demanding and, arguably, the more helpful advisor. What's more, the compositional aesthetic revealed in Marxsen's letter is remarkably similar to Brahms's own. Marxsen claims at the outset that the *Hamlet Overture* lacks “essential inner logic,”¹⁵ a term frequently echoed in Brahms's advice to young composers. When instructing Prince Heinrich XXIV Reuß, for example, Brahms insisted that a composition should contain nothing “approximate,” and he expressed himself in similar terms to Gustav Jenner: “Everything must be essential and must stand at the right point, every chance effect must be studiously avoided.”¹⁶ Indeed, the very first substantive comment Brahms made on a composition by Jenner sprang from the same concern; as Jenner recalled: “Brahms pointed out to me with devastating acuity the lack of logic in the [work's] structure.”¹⁷ The similarity of outlook is hardly surprising: Brahms, like Marxsen, was deeply rooted in tradition and, like Marxsen, he regarded Bach as his musical idol.¹⁸

According to Jenner it was, nonetheless, Marxsen that Brahms had in mind when bemoaning his musical education. Jenner, presumably prompted by Brahms, is singularly damning about Marxsen's abilities as a pedagogue, maintaining that nothing positive is known about his teaching (Jenner 1912, 77). And, according to Gustav Wendt, a school-director and author of various tracts on education, Brahms himself was even more explicit on one occasion: “I learned absolutely nothing [from Marxsen].”¹⁹ This phrase recalls Brahms's judgment on Robert Schumann, the only other figure generally regarded as a mentor to Brahms: towards the end of his life, Brahms is supposed to have said that he “learned nothing from Schumann other than how to play chess.”²⁰

These quotations suggest *in toto* a carefully crafted narrative that, true or not, is clearly designed to feed perceptions of independence of mind, self-reliance and, above all, determination. In creating it, Brahms plays on the stereotypical divide between industrious North German Protestants and the easy-going Catholics of Vienna. There is no evidence that his Viennese contemporaries ever challenged this version of history.

While we may entertain suspicions about Brahms's narrative, in the absence of the kind of hard evidence we possess in the case of Mendelssohn, it is difficult to form a conclusive verdict. The historical record would suggest that Marxsen was a devoted pedagogue whose central aims, as recounted by sometime Brahms pupil Florence May, one of the most reliable of early biographers (Avins 2015, 185), were "to guide his pupils to a mastery of the principles illustrated in the works of the great composers, and to encourage each student to develop his own creative individuality on the firm basis thus afforded" (May 1905, I, 65). These tenets are, once again, remarkably similar to those revealed by Jenner's reminiscences of Brahms's own teaching.²¹

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Whatever his debt to Marxsen, there are no grounds for doubting the diligence with which Brahms, after leaving home in 1853, set about supplementing his Hamburg education. Though he had been proclaimed the savior of German music in Robert Schumann's "Neue Bahnen" of October 1853 (Schumann 1853, 185–86), Brahms clearly felt his training had been inadequate, and he launched himself on an extended autodidactic project. This project, which was informed by close study of eighteenth-century theoretical works as well as the music of Bach and his predecessors, ran in several phases. Initially, Brahms taught himself canonic techniques, making such good progress that he was able to announce to Clara Schumann on 3 February 1855 that he could "now create canons in all possible artistic forms."²² Around the same time, he also began to study dances in Baroque style. Approximately one year later, in March 1856, Brahms embarked on an exchange of exercises, a *Notenkorrespondenz*, with Joseph Joachim; the remit of their studies was defined as "double counterpoint, canons, fugues, preludes, whatever."²³ Brahms was clearly the driving force behind this initiative and, within months, Joachim's lack of commitment led to a pause in their shared efforts. Over the following years, Brahms made repeated attempts to revive the correspondence course, but it is clear that his work on styles and procedures associated with early music was essentially autodidactic in nature.²⁴ All in all, the project occupied Brahms for

more than half a decade, seemingly restricting both time and appetite for free composition.

Brahms's autodidactic endeavors during the late 1850s and early 1860s are well documented, largely because so much of the relevant material is preserved in the correspondence with Joachim (Brahms 1912a and Brahms 1912b) and in Joachim's *Nachlaß* (now held in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Carl von Ossietzky, Hamburg). Over the years, this material has been examined in detail by a number of scholars, of whom David Brodbeck (Brodbeck 1994) is perhaps most illuminating. Brodbeck interweaves passages from the Brahms–Joachim correspondence with analysis of both study exercises and published compositions. However, like most of his peers, he focuses on counterpoint and neglects, among other things, Brahms's interest in meter—despite the fact that, during this period of reflection and self-examination, descriptions of metrical patterns in Baroque treatises were clearly a source of great fascination to the young composer.

How to make good this omission? Contemporary reminiscence will take us only so far: as we have seen, Brahms's statements are often at odds with the facts, insofar as they can be established. This paper argues that close engagement with scores offers a better lens on Brahms's autodidacticism. Curiously, a particularly sharp perspective on the relationship between pedagogical theory and practice can be gleaned from the study of meter in works by Brahms that reference the gavotte genre, one of the Baroque dances explored during the study period. This topic has received no serious attention to date, yet it reveals clearly how Brahms responded to theoretical stimuli and how, ultimately, he rose above limiting pedagogical concerns. What's more, Brahms's gavotte-related compositions, though relatively few in number as the following summary makes clear, cover a large part of his career, from his early twenties through to high maturity:

- Two Gavottes, WoO. 3, in A minor and A major (1854–55)
- Brahms's arrangement of a Gavotte from Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, WoO. Anh. Ia No. 2 (1871 or 1872)
- “Unüberwindlich,” Op. 72 No. 5 (1877)
- Intermezzo in A minor, Op. 76 No. 7 (1878)
- String Quintet in F major, Op. 88 (1882)
- “Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer,” Op. 105 No. 2 (1888).²⁵

By examining these works with an eye to metrical practice, we can trace the development of Brahms's compositional aesthetic and chart, in particular, the way in which he handles the process of learning. For

gavotte-like passages reveal Brahms in a number of different positions: grappling with metrical theories as passed down the generations; studying iconic works and using them as models for his own compositions; rewriting music that started life as a style-copy; and, on occasion, converting music that wasn't conceived as a gavotte into a transfigured version of the dance. This essentially tripartite process—theoretical study, engagement with time-honored repertoire and, finally, the transcending of models—closely matches the career path that Brahms sketched out for aspirant composers such as Jenner and Heuberger.²⁶

As will become apparent, Brahms's approach to the gavotte, and to meter in general, is much more complex than his often dogmatic statements would suggest—an outcome that forces us to reassess, in turn, the composer's professed stance on pedagogy and learning. In the process, strikingly novel conclusions emerge about education as a political instrument.

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Brahms is a remarkably late example of a composer who made conscious use of eighteenth-century metrical signs. By his mid twenties he was well informed: his library, which he built up from 1853 onwards, contained several important theoretical works from the Baroque period in which concepts of *Takt* are expounded.²⁷ Here, Brahms read descriptions of the metrical systems in common use, and he explored, in particular, the idea that each measure contains a combination of strong and weak beats presented in a pre-ordained hierarchy. In, for example, Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg's *Anleitung zum Clavierspielen*, a volume that Brahms acquired in 1855 (Hancock 1983, 75), the author draws a clear distinction between “good and bad [i.e. strong and weak] beats”, claiming that they are “inwardly long” and “inwardly short” respectively.²⁸ Marpurg doesn't develop the theme of inner length, but the manner in which he distinguishes between different beats within a measure leaves no room for confusion; strong beats, he implies, cannot be converted into weak beats with impunity.

Brahms appears to have espoused eighteenth-century concepts of meter whole-heartedly, even employing the distinction between good and bad beats in his correspondence (Brahms 1912a, 272). The two versions of the Op. 8 Piano Trio offer a simple but instructive example of the Baroque-informed approach to meter he adopted. In the 1854 version, written before Brahms had started intensive studies of earlier musical styles, and before he had examined many eighteenth-century treatises, he marks the movement “♩ — *Allegro con moto* ♩ = 72.” When he revised the work for a new edition in 1891, the heading was changed to “♩ — *Allegro con brio* [without

a metronome mark].” By using ♩ as an indicator of half-note rather than quarter-note pulse, Brahms was able to dispense with the now-redundant “con moto” marking, replacing it with the more informative “con brio.”

In the three decades between the two versions of the Op. 8 Trio, Brahms had clearly acquired a lively awareness of the significance of metrical markings. Johann Mattheson’s magisterial *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) may have been the work that first brought such niceties to his attention. In a letter dated Christmas Eve 1854, Brahms specifically directed Joachim to Mattheson’s “very important” treatment of the matter.²⁹ It is the description of the gavotte that is particularly relevant here:

The gavotte [—] its affect is one of truly **exultant joy**. Its meter is binary, but not $\frac{4}{4}$ time; rather, it consists of two half-notes, regardless of whether it is subdivided in quarter or indeed eighth notes. I would wish this distinction noted rather better than is the case.³⁰

Many years later, in the 1870s, Brahms was still taking Joachim to task for confusing ♩ and ♩ meters—once in an arrangement of Schubert’s *Grand Duo*, D. 812, and again in an edition of the Mendelssohn string quartets (Brahms 1912b, 71 and 113). There is no evidence that this was mere editorial rectitude; rather, a well-ordered metrical framework, one that enjoys the authority of Baroque theorists, appears to be Brahms’s prerequisite for a convincing musical discourse.

It is in this light that we must interpret metrical markings in Brahms’s own works and his advice to friends and pupils about meter. When Richard Heuberger first brought scores for inspection in 1878, Brahms’s initial comments were not on form, melody or harmony, as might have been expected of a composition teacher, but on the music’s metrical structure. Brahms took particular offense at what he called a “very crooked rhythmic-metric arrangement,” remarking:

One can of course use such irregular patterns, but they must be justified by the situation and sound convincing.³¹

A decade or so earlier, Georg Henschel had received similar instructions after turning to Brahms for pedagogical advice:

My dear friend, let me counsel you: no heavy dissonances on the unaccented parts of the bar, please! That is weak. I am very fond of dissonances, you’ll agree, but on the heavy, accented parts of the bar, and then let them be resolved easily and gently.³²

This simple binary—the distinction between accented and unaccented

beats as determined by the meter—lies at the heart of much of the material examined here. It is particularly germane to any consideration of the gavotte, whose metrical framework, as we've seen, is easily confused. However, before we turn to Brahms's music, it's helpful to set his interest in the gavotte within a broader historical context. Though Brahms's autodidactic project was probably without parallel in nineteenth-century Germany, his interest in the gavotte was shared by numerous contemporaries.

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One curious manifestation of historicism in later nineteenth-century Germany was a relatively sudden upsurge of interest in Baroque dances, and in the gavotte in particular. In the popular imagination, the revival of Baroque dances has usually been associated with twentieth-century neo-classicism. However, as Scott Messing and Jann Pasler have demonstrated, the desire to assert national identity in France in the years after the Franco-Prussian War (1870) led to increased awareness of indigenous dances such as the pavane.³³ According to Matthew Werley, a similar phenomenon can be traced in Germany. In research based on detailed statistical analysis, Werley has plotted a meteoric rise of interest in the gavotte. Throughout Europe, only five gavottes were published between 1800 and 1850. The number rose to 18 during the 1860s. However, during the 1870s and 1880s more than 1,000 examples of the genre were published, mainly by German composers. According to Werley, the first significant spike in gavotte production took place in the second half of the 1870s, in the wake of German unification.³⁴

Quite why German nationalists were seized by enthusiasm for what was originally a French peasant dance remains opaque. Was there an element of triumphalist appropriation? Or did they consider the gavotte a feature of the German Baroque, stylized and “naturalized” by Bach and his contemporaries? A similar phenomenon can be observed some decades earlier in the reception of the minuet. Joseph Fort has noted that in German-language dance treatises, especially those published in the 1790s (that is to say, during another period of Franco-German tension), authors are at pains to reject the dance's French heritage, typically observing that, given its qualities, the minuet can only be German in origin.³⁵ Whatever the reasons for the surge of interest in the gavotte, its popularity continued to rise until about 1890, with a slow decline thereafter. Composers who produced gavottes include Richard Strauss, Ferruccio Busoni, Carl Reinecke, Ferdinand Hiller and Heinrich von Herzogenberg, all figures with personal connections to Brahms.

Brahms too contributed to the vogue for the gavotte, though in a rather different way from his contemporaries. His first published contribution dates from the early years of the gavotte craze. In early 1872, Bartholf Senff of Leipzig issued Brahms's arrangement of a gavotte from Act 2 Scene 3 of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, Wq. 40.³⁶ Though Brahms's title, "Gavotte von Gluck," is in the singular, in reality the work consists of two gavottes, in A major and A minor, presented in an ABA' ternary form. Brahms's arrangement was scored for solo piano, the medium of choice for most of the gavottes charted by Werley.³⁷

Iphigénie en Aulide was quite widely known in nineteenth-century Europe, partly because of the version Wagner prepared for performance in Dresden in 1847. This version was performed several times in Vienna during the period when Brahms was occupied with his Gluck arrangement. Performances of *Iphigénie* took place in 1867, 1868, 1869 and 1874—one on the same day as the premiere of the first three movements of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (1 December 1867). Given Brahms's long-standing interest in Gluck, it is likely he attended at least one performance.³⁸ In fact, the A major Gavotte was one of the movements Wagner omitted from his arrangement.³⁹ Ironically, however, his cuts found particular favor with Eduard Hanslick, who detected in Wagner's version "the hand of a master, both in what is done and what is not done." Hanslick also praised Wagner's approach to pre-existing musical material: "a fine awareness for preserving characteristic elements from the past and a very clear vision of the present day's requirements go hand in hand here."⁴⁰ Brahms appears to have thought differently; at least, it's hard not to suspect a desire, in the face of Wagner's indifference, to immortalize the Gluck Gavotte.

It was long thought that Brahms first encountered the Gavotte from *Iphigénie en Aulide* in the early 1840s, while studying under Otto Cossel. An arrangement of this dance by an unidentified composer is preserved in a small collection of works that Cossel used for teaching; however, it is impossible to determine whether this arrangement featured in Brahms's lessons. Brahms's own version is first mentioned in connection with a concert in Bremen on 7 November 1868.⁴¹ Whether the arrangement was notated at this point is unclear; Brahms may have written out his version only at the time of publication.⁴² He played the arrangement about a dozen times in public concerts between 1868 and 1881; venues ranged from Den Haag and Bremen in the north-west to Temesvar (Timisoara) and Hermannstadt (Sibiu) in the south-east—effectively the entire geographical range of Brahms's activities as performer (Hofmann and Hofmann 2006). The published score was dedicated to Clara Schumann, and she too performed it frequently, often enjoying great success with the public.⁴³

When she played the Gavotte in London in February 1872, for example, the audience was reportedly “beyond itself with delight.”⁴⁴ In short, this modest Gluck arrangement proved to be one of the most frequently performed of all Brahms’s compositions during this stage of his career.⁴⁵

Apart from this one work, there is little obvious evidence that the vogue for the gavotte had a significant impact on Brahms’s oeuvre. No other publication features the word “gavotte” in its title, and many of his closest friends were probably unaware that the genre played *any* role in his compositional development. However, as the list of gavotte-related passages above makes clear, Brahms had engaged with the dance from at least the mid 1850s. As part of his autodidactic project, Brahms devoted himself between the middle of 1854 and the end of 1855 to intensive study of suite movements by Bach. The fruits of his research can be found in a series of dances in Baroque style, of which six survive:

- Two Gavottes, WoO. 3, one in A minor and one in A major
- Two Gigues, WoO. 4, one in A minor and one in B minor
- Two Sarabandes, WoO. 5, one in A major/minor and one in B minor.⁴⁶

The exact nature of Brahms’s enterprise is unclear. Were the dances merely part of the project to educate himself in past styles and genres? Or did he intend to combine movements with a view to publication?

The music itself provides an answer to the first question. All six pieces reveal deep debts to J. S. Bach’s keyboard suites. In some cases—notably, the Gigues—Brahms seems content to remain largely within the orbit of Bach’s expressive world; other movements, however, transcend their models, moving some way beyond academic exercises in style-copy (Ennis 1992, especially 61–63). The first of the WoO. 5 Sarabandes, for example, toggles between the tonalities of A major and A minor in a manner that Bach would never have contemplated; indeed, the two surviving sources for this dance, one notated in A major and one in A minor, provide an indication of the harmonically fluid language employed here by Brahms.⁴⁷ By opening up clear disparities between Baroque and nineteenth-century sensibilities, such movements fall comfortably within Martha M. Hyde’s category of “metamorphic anachronism” (Hyde 2003, especially 100–102). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this is the category within which the music discussed below is also located.

A partial answer to the second question, about larger groupings, is found in an entry in Clara Schumann’s diary dated 12 September 1855:

Johannes surprised me with a Prelude and Aria for his A minor Suite, which is now complete.⁴⁸



Example 1: Johannes Brahms, Gavotte in A minor, WoO. 3 No. 1; Pascall 1976, 409.

We know nothing further about the Prelude and Aria, and Brahms's interest in the A minor Suite, at least as a coherent work, appears to have fizzled out not long after the September diary entry. That said, both he and Clara Schumann continued to perform individual movements for some months to come. All Brahms's dance movements remained unpublished during his lifetime. The two Sarabandes first appeared in 1917, and the two Gigues were first published in the *Gesamtausgabe* in 1927. As for the two Gavottes, they entered the public arena only in 1976, thanks to Robert Pascall who uncovered them in a Viennese archive (Pascall 1976).⁴⁹ However, it would be wrong to assume that these miniatures had lain dormant since the 1850s.

In the mid 1860s, material from the A minor Gavotte (Example 1) resurfaced in the Scherzo of the G major String Sextet, Op. 36. In reworking the dance, Brahms made far-reaching adjustments: the meter is changed to $\frac{2}{4}$, and the music takes a radically different course after the opening four-measure phrase. In short, the Sextet movement shows only limited traces of the model on which it is based.⁵⁰

Some thirty years after its completion, Brahms revealed a continuing interest in his A major Gavotte (Example 2). We now know that the second movement of the F major String Quintet, Op. 88, a work first performed in December 1882, is a recomposition of two of Brahms's Baroque dances from the 1850s. Brahms himself never fully acknowledged the borrowing, though he made an oblique reference on one occasion to some "sheets of music from my youth."⁵¹ The Quintet's middle movement helps explain the comment. This is constructed in an ABA'B'A" form, whereby the A sections are based on the Sarabande in A major/minor, WoO. 5 No. 1, and the B sections draw on the A major Gavotte, WoO. 3 No. 2.⁵² The B' section (Example 3) is very closely related to the 1850s Gavotte, while the B section uses similar material, albeit in the guise of another Baroque genre, the siciliano.

In repurposing his A major Gavotte, Brahms used ♩ meter but dispensed with the dance's traditional metrical arrangement of two quarter-

Gavotte II

Example 2: Johannes Brahms, Gavotte in A major, WoO. 3 No. 2; Pascall 1976, 410.

note upbeats.⁵³ Thus, the music of the 1850s Gavotte is presented in the Op. 88 String Quintet *per arsin et thesin*; that is to say, by starting on the downbeat rather than in the middle of the measure Brahms reverses strong and weak beats in contravention of precepts passed down by Baroque theorists. Nevertheless, traces of the dance's history remain embedded. Initially, the downbeats in Violin 2 and Viola 1 are void, and each pair of notes is presented in an upbeat-downbeat arrangement that leads to what is now the middle rather than the beginning of the measure. The two lowest voices arguably give further weight to the same beats, as they contain the lowest notes in each measure. For all that, anyone presented "blind" with this music might consider it barred correctly. After all, the harmony moves initially in metrical units of a measure, and the melody seems to sit comfortably within a downbeat-oriented arrangement, at least until the fourth measure of the section, where a tonicized E major chord is reached, somewhat unexpectedly, in the middle of the measure. Brahms gradually sets the metrical apple-cart to rights: a root-position chord of E (major or minor) sounds on the downbeat of five of the following six measures, thereby helping to normalize the metrical layout. In the process, the opening passage of the 1850s Gavotte is extended from eight to ten measures. It's not clear why the metrical layout of the A major Gavotte was changed for the Quintet. Perhaps Brahms wanted to include the extension mentioned above and, at the same time, needed to end on a downbeat. Perhaps he was keen to lose the explicit historical reference to the genre of gavotte in what was, after all, intended as a modern concert work.⁵⁴ Whatever the reason, each version of the dance contains musical elements that support its metrical arrangement and elements that contradict it.

The choice of $\frac{2}{4}$ meter for the Op. 36 Scherzo renders redundant any

questions about good and bad beats, at least as far as the half-note level is concerned: because of the short measures, each half-note of the original A minor Gavotte now falls on a downbeat.⁵⁵ However, Brahms's decision to reverse the metrical pattern of the A major Gavotte, when reusing it in the F major String Quintet, sits uncomfortably with the pedagogical strictures he imposed on Henschel and others. It also stands in opposition to Brahms's views on the rebarring of well-known works advocated by Hugo Riemann. It is to this topic that we must now turn in order to set the metrical arrangements used in Brahms's gavotte-related compositions in the richest possible context. As we shall see, the relationship between Brahms's views on Riemann's metrical theories and his own practice is far from straightforward; there is wide divergence, too, in their outlooks on didacticism.

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Hugo Riemann (1849–1919) is remembered today primarily as a lexicographer and harmonic theorist. However, from early in his career he was also fascinated by meter and phrasing, focusing in particular on the status of strong and weak beats. A full explanation of his theory of *Auftaktigkeit* (or “upbeatness”) lies outside the scope of this paper;⁵⁶ in essence, however, Riemann argued for the supremacy of the upbeat, suggesting that the natural order of phrasing leads from upbeat to downbeat. This represents a conscious rejection of the Baroque theories espoused by Brahms, which saw the downbeat as the dominant element in any measure, with the other beats following in positions of subservience.

In accordance with his principles, Riemann revised the phrasing of classical works, typically adding slurs across barlines to indicate what he perceived as logical groupings.⁵⁷ Rephrasings of the classics sometimes went hand-in-hand with rebarrings, the aspect of his work that is of greatest relevance here. In short, Riemann believed in placing barlines according to the location of the stressed beats within individual phrases. To this end, he produced versions of well-known pieces in which measures were shortened or lengthened according to the music's “natural” rhythm.⁵⁸

Riemann's primary concern was to educate the public. However, his methods found no favor with Brahms. In a letter to his friend and publisher Fritz Simrock dated 7 September 1883, Brahms takes issue with Riemann's practices, focusing on the latter's so-called “instructional” editions. (Explicitly didactic in mission, such editions served to explain to the burgeoning *Bildungsbürgertum* the background to canonical works as well as the music itself.)⁵⁹ Brahms begins his letter to Simrock by raging

about matters of principle. He argues that “damned instructional editions of the classics rarely have anything at all to do with art. They are all about the wallet of those that produce them.”⁶⁰ Having swept aside Riemann’s pedagogical mission, or lack of it, Brahms turns to meter and phrasing. His stance is best summarized in a further extract from the same letter to Simrock:

We still phrase and annotate [scores] just like our Classical forebears. It’s not just a matter of making do; rather, their methods leave nothing to be desired, however ingeniously we, like Herr R., may ponder issues of phrasing etc. What’s more, we have no reason to abolish the barline—Herr R., were he to be consistent, should have the courage to do so.⁶¹

Brahms’s position in this letter could hardly have been clearer: the metrical arrangements passed down from Baroque theorists are, he argues, still valid. Yet only one week later, in his next letter to Simrock,⁶² he drew attention to the use of “sheets of music” from his youth in the F major String Quintet (see endnote 51). Here, Brahms may not have “abolished” the barline; nevertheless, by reversing the stress-pattern of the A major Gavotte, he rode roughshod over the natural metrical order of pre-existing music in a manner not unlike that employed by Riemann, thereby flouting the metrical arrangements prescribed by Mattheson and others.

Most examples of Riemann’s practice of rebarring are found in well-known works for piano. He seems to have been wary of Brahms’s music, which is often marked by a polymetric approach resistant to such attentions. However, in 1912 Riemann plucked up courage and published an article based on analysis of Brahms *Lieder*. At first glance, the thirty-year gap between Brahms’s letter to Simrock and Riemann’s article might encourage skepticism about methodology. However, the practices Riemann employed in 1912 are very similar to those he had developed decades earlier; they are, to all intents and purposes, the very practices Brahms abjured so vehemently in 1883.

Riemann, it should be noted, was an enthusiast for Brahms’s music, and the primary concern of the article, “Metrical Liberties in Brahms’s Songs” (Riemann 1912–13), was to lay to rest the long-standing criticism that Brahms’s vocal music displays little sensitivity to the declamation of texts. Riemann suggests that Brahms was “misunderstood even during his lifetime by a very considerable proportion of musicians”; as he tartly added, claims of faulty declamation can be laid at the door of “listeners, readers or singers who lack insight”—which we might interpret in this context as musical education.⁶³

The largest part of Riemann’s essay is devoted to one of Brahms’s

Langsam und leise

Singstimme

Im - mer lei - ser wird mein Schlum - mer, nur wie

Pianoforte

pp sempre e legato

Schlei - er liegt mein Kum - mer zit - ternd ü - ber mir, — ü - ber

dim.

Example 4: Johannes Brahms, “Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer,” Op. 105 No. 2, edited by Eusebius Mandyczewski (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1926–27).

mature masterpieces, “Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer,” Op. 105 No. 2 (Example 4) which, as have seen, is one of the small number of pieces in Brahms’s oeuvre laid out in the metrical space of a gavotte. The song is notated, as one might expect, in ♩ , with phrases typically starting in the middle of the measure. The material that fills this space, persistent dotted rhythms in a trochaic formulation, is not at all typical of gavottes; this, however, has no bearing on the metrical issues considered here.

Riemann prefaces his comments by apologizing for having to offer any sort of analysis of what he describes as a “radiantly clear” song. He adds that, despite earlier comments, it is not one of the songs usually described as exhibiting poor declamation (Riemann 1912–13, 12). Having delivered this disclaimer, Riemann examines the metrical groupings in some detail. He starts by observing that the opening of the poem contains regular eight-syllable lines, but that Brahms opts for three-measure phrases. “Anyone who relies totally on Brahms’s barlines,” Riemann remarks, “will feel a slight sense of unease caused by the drawing-out of the rhyming syllables [“Schlummer” and “Kummer”] and by the long pause [between phrases].”⁶⁴ He then offers an alternative reading of the opening (Example 5).⁶⁵

In some respects, Riemann’s is perhaps a more “correct” reading of the barlines than that found in Brahms’s score: he converts the opening three-measure units into more orthodox two-measure groupings, thereby ensuring that the first sentence of Hermann Lingg’s text is set to music within a passage that lasts eight measures. However, Riemann’s version

Im-mer lei-ser wird mein Schlummer, Nur wie Schleier schwebt mein

°T (2) D °T D °T (4)

Kum-mer Zit-ternd ü-ber mich, ü-ber

♭♯ °T (6) °S (D) D (8)

mich.

°T (8a)

Example 5: Hugo Riemann: “Die Taktfreiheiten in Brahms’ Liedern,” *Die Musik* 12 (1912–13), 10–21 (13).

fails to tell the whole story. Brahms’s stresses on “leiser” and “Schleier,” for example, appear to have been neglected—though it is possible Riemann hoped to account for them by adding hemiola-like dynamic markings in the first four measures of his reduction. Riemann also struggles to cope with the ambiguity of the song’s harmonic rhythm. For example, measures 2 and 3 of Brahms’s original maintain the same harmonic pattern (V–I), while in Riemann’s reading they fight against the barline. Clearly, the metrical arrangement of “Immer leiser” is not as black and white as Riemann suggests.⁶⁶

How Brahms might have reacted to Riemann’s article can only be guessed at—he died some fifteen years before it was published. However, given the intensity with which he rejected the rearrangings in Riemann’s “instructional” editions, we can be confident that he would have resisted Riemann’s conclusions about “Immer leiser.” Yet, as we have seen, and as we shall shortly see in more detail, Brahms sometimes adopted techniques

very similar to those of Riemann. His gusty rejection of Riemann's instructional methods therefore raises intriguing questions about his approach to meter and, in particular, about his use of information gathered from Baroque theorists—information that, as we have seen, Brahms viewed as fundamental to any rigorous musical training.

In fact, from his early twenties onwards, Brahms had complemented the study of eighteenth-century treatises with an exploration of unusual metrical arrangements in scores. Carl von Winterfeld's pioneering *Johannes Gabrieli und sein Zeitalter* (Winterfeld 1834) provides crucial evidence. Brahms first acquired a copy of this historically significant study in 1858,⁶⁷ and it's clear from his markings that he devoted particular attention to Winterfeld's comments on rhythm and meter. For instance, he placed a mark next to Giovanni Gabrieli's setting of Psalm 8, *Domine Dominus noster*, a piece cited by Winterfeld to illustrate the point that true rhythm comes not from editorial barlines but from word accents:

The length and shortness of notes corresponds to the speech-determined accent of each separate syllable of the holy words when sung; the different individually organized rhythmic divisions of the music are shaped in a natural fashion according to these.⁶⁸

We can't be sure that by marking this passage Brahms was expressing approval of the idea of rebarring music, as Winterfeld invites us to do. However, other markings in scores and theoretical volumes owned by Brahms suggest that he had no qualms adopting such practices.⁶⁹

Brahms took particular interest in the meter of Isaac's celebrated setting of "Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen," copying out the music from another pioneering volume by Winterfeld, *Der evangelische Kirchengesang* (Winterfeld 1845). Brahms initially made his copy in the regular $\frac{4}{2}$ meter that Winterfeld himself had employed. Later, however, he added pencil marks to the soprano part in order to show the "true" meter which, as Virginia Hancock has demonstrated (Example 6), fluctuates between $\frac{6}{2}$ and $\frac{4}{2}$.⁷⁰ Or, to express it more pointedly, Brahms's version of "Innsbruck" converts a passage notated in duple meter into one that starts in triple time before moving to duple time. This gives pause for thought, for what has been described here is precisely the procedure employed by Riemann in his rebarring of Brahms's "Immer leiser."

Why, then, did Brahms respond so waspishly to Riemann's theories about rebarring? Is he guilty of hypocrisy? Or had Riemann simply failed to understand what he was trying to achieve? In the case of "Immer leiser," it is easy to see why Brahms might have been unwilling to countenance any rebarring. Riemann's version of "Immer leiser" is based on the assumption



Example 6: Hancock 1983, 162.

that only one meter can be present at any point and that what we encounter in a piece such as this is, in effect, a *sequence* of fluctuating meters.⁷¹ It is a schoolmasterish stance: subtleties are ignored in the interests of hammering home a pedagogical point. The original score, on the other hand, suggests that the framework of a gavotte, such as we find in “Immer leiser,” allows for metrical flexibility within uniformity. To revisit Brahms’s words to Richard Heuberger, one can use irregular patterns, “but they must be justified by the situation and sound convincing” (see endnote 31). The true pedagogical message to be gleaned from the study of Renaissance and Baroque masters, Brahms appears to argue, is that meter, like many other musical parameters, is far from one-dimensional; it can and should be treated contrapuntally.

An even more intriguing example of metrical play within a gavotte-like structure can be found in the song “Unüberwindlich,” Op. 72 No. 5 (Example 7). According to Brahms’s *Taschenkalender*, “Unüberwindlich” was composed in May 1876, at the height of gavotte mania; it was first published in the summer of the following year.⁷² This Goethe setting is unusual in several respects. First, it is a drinking song, a genre encountered nowhere else in Brahms (Loges 2017, 142). More relevant to the present discussion, the song is based on a two-measure fragment from Domenico Scarlatti’s Sonata, K. 223/L. 214, that, as presented by Brahms, seems to reference the gavotte.⁷³ Like many high-Baroque examples of the genre, the song is notated in ϕ , and an upbeat figure consisting of two quarter-notes (or dotted equivalents), another marker of the dance, is found in most phrases.⁷⁴ What’s more, Brahms appears to have taken to heart Mattheson’s teaching about the gavotte’s *Affekt*: the music expresses “truly exultant joy.”⁷⁵

Closer inspection, however, reveals more metrical subterfuge, more rejection of long-standing pedagogical precepts. The Scarlatti sonata is indeed notated in ϕ , but the music starts on a downbeat rather than in the middle of the measure (Example 8). As in his reworking of the 1855 Gavotte, Brahms has reordered the meter by reversing strong and weak beats. One could go so far as to say that in this song Brahms created a

Singstimme *Vivace*
Hab ich

Pianoforte
D. Scarlatti

tau.send.mal ge.schwo.ren die.ser Fla.sche nicht zu trau.en, die.ser

Example 7: Johannes Brahms, “Unüberwindlich,” Op. 72 No. 5, edited by Eusebius Mandyczewski (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1926–27).

Allegro

[2da]

[w]

Example 8: Domenico Scarlatti, Sonata in D major, K. 223 / L. 214, edited by Kenneth Gilbert (Paris: Heugel, 1974).

gavotte out of material that, in Scarlatti's hands, has no obvious connection with the genre. Rebaring the entire Scarlatti sonata in line with Brahms's metrical scheme would, in fact, rapidly lead to confusion, as most of the main points of arrival would fall not on downbeats, as one might expect, but in the middle of the measure.

Brahms made one other significant change to the Scarlatti excerpt: he transposed it from D major to A major. The decision to change key may well have sprung from considerations of vocal range. However, it's striking to note that all the material in Brahms's oeuvre that, in terms of meter and character, most obviously references the gavotte—the two piano Gavottes from the 1850s, the Gluck arrangement, the A major Gavotte's reworking in the F major String Quintet and “Unüberwindlich” itself—shares the same tonic.⁷⁶ These works are formed, as it were, *aus einem Guß*.

The same is true of the final gavotte-like piece to be considered here, the Intermezzo in A minor, Op. 76 No. 7 (Example 9). Like the Gluck arrangement, “Unüberwindlich,” and the F major String Quintet, this Intermezzo was first published during the height of the gavotte craze. Indeed, the publication dates of “Unüberwindlich” and the Intermezzo (1877 and 1878) suggest that they may well have lain on Brahms's desk at the same time.

Though it appears not to have been noted before, the opening of the A minor Intermezzo displays all the markers of a High Baroque gavotte. The Intermezzo is cast in \mathcal{C} , and the music starts with a half-measure anacrusis consisting of two quarter-notes. Moreover, it uses the periodic phrasing typical of Baroque dances. That said, Brahms slurs many of the phrases against the beat, creating cross-rhythms reminiscent of Riemann's theory of *Auftaktigkeit*.

In some respects, Brahms's notation is a curiosity. A rebarred version that starts not with quarter-note upbeats but on a downbeat (Example 10) appears at least initially to be more “comfortable.” In this version—generated, we might note, by applying the methodology Brahms himself employed when refashioning his A major Gavotte for use in the F major String Quintet—a root-position tonic chord on the first downbeat passes through an applied dominant to a local tonic (III) on the next downbeat. Essentially the same material is then presented two more times, each iteration separated by a brief interlude not unlike those found in “Immer leiser.” In this revised barring, each interlude fits snugly within one measure, rather than straddling barlines, as happens in the published score. What's more, in the distorted version the pitch-class E falls on the first beat of every measure of the melody up to and including m. 6, where it is decorated by an extended suspension. Thereafter, the tolling Es are transferred to the bass, where they continue to sound on the downbeat. In short, each

Moderato semplice

mp *p* *mp*

Example 9: Johannes Brahms, Intermezzo in A minor, Op. 76 No. 7, edited by Eusebius Mandyczewski (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1926–27).

Moderato semplice

mp *p*

5 *mp* *p*

Example 10: Johannes Brahms, Intermezzo in A minor, Op. 76 No. 7 (in a metrically realigned arrangement prepared by the author).

Andante.

N^o 1.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Chopin's Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55 No. 1. The tempo is marked 'Andante.' The first system is labeled 'N^o 1.' Each system consists of a treble and bass staff. Below the bass staff of each system, there are rhythmic markings: a series of eighth notes with stems pointing up, followed by a series of eighth notes with stems pointing down, and finally a series of eighth notes with stems pointing up. These markings appear to be a rhythmic analysis or a specific performance instruction related to the downbeat stress discussed in the text.

Example 11: Friedrich Chopin, Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55 No. 1 [edited by Woldemar Bargiel] (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel: n.d. [1878]).

downbeat of this eight-measure extract starts with a triad containing the pitch-class E.⁷⁷ For all these reasons, one might argue that the distorted version is metrically more persuasive than Brahms's own version.⁷⁸

Of course, the situation here, as in the F major Quintet and “Immer leiser,” is not entirely straightforward. There are arguments against this rebarring, not least the weight given by the dotted rhythm on the first downbeat of Brahms's score; indeed, it could be argued that it is the applied dominant chords, rather than the more predictable local tonics, that merit downbeat stress. However, many listeners, when confronted with the evidence, seem to view the distorted version as more natural.⁷⁹ In summary, Brahms appears to have created a gavotte-like passage from music that sits more comfortably in a downbeat-oriented meter. Is this another manifestation of the phenomenon encountered in the almost contemporaneous Scarlatti-based song? There, as will be recalled, the composer produced a confected gavotte from material that had limited connections, if any, with the genre.

As with much of Brahms's output, information about the origins of the Op. 76 collection is sketchy. Without supporting evidence, Max Kalbeck maintained that the A minor Intermezzo was inspired by Brahms's editorial work on the Schumann and Chopin complete editions. He goes so far as to suggest that Chopin's Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55 No. 1 (Example 11), provided a specific model (Kalbeck 1904–14, III, 194–95). It's true that the two pieces have similar openings. In both works, the mediant is tonicized straight away; after an initial ascent from dominant to tonic, both main themes worry repeatedly around $\hat{5}$, employing striking dotted rhythms; and in both cases there are three statements of an initial two-measure cell, the third of which is extended. However, it's intriguing to note that the

barring in the Chopin Nocturne is essentially the same as in the distorted version of the A minor Intermezzo—that is to say, the tonic chords fall on the downbeats, and there is no pair of upbeat quarter-notes. The only significant divergence in the opening, other than the initial syncopation, is the dotted rhythm in the first complete measure. This, as suggested above, justifies Brahms's metrical arrangement by placing extra weight on the third note of the melody.

Brahms was characteristically vague about the Intermezzo's origins. In October 1878 he asked Fritz Simrock to suggest a title for his new collection of miniatures, the pieces that would become Op. 76. Running through various possibilities, Brahms claimed that “Aus aller Herren Länder” (perhaps best translated as “from all four corners of the earth”) would capture the nature of the collection most accurately.⁸⁰ However, cultural appropriation is not the point here; Brahms is surely drawing attention to the diverse stylistic backgrounds of the various pieces.⁸¹ In the case of the A minor Intermezzo, we seem to be dealing, within a single number, with a fusion of Baroque and Romantic styles—a marriage across the centuries between Bach and Chopin. Or, to express it less poetically, the rude pedagogical precepts of Baroque theorists collide in this miniature with the fine sensibilities of a Romantic.

* * *

Why so much disparity between practice and theory—or, at least, between Brahms's various responses to the gavotte and the opinions on metrical rectitude he expressed so trenchantly to Joachim and others? It is tempting to conclude that the principle of “quod licet iovi, non licet bovi” must be at play: Brahms, as a composer with godlike gifts, allows himself liberties that mere mortals may not contemplate.⁸² Curiously, this quasi-proverbial phrase was almost certainly familiar to Brahms: it first appears in Joseph von Eichendorff's novella *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826),⁸³ a volume Brahms referenced in anecdotes. Indeed, Brahms himself used a derivative of the phrase, “quod licet Bacho non licet Francisco,” when discussing liberties taken by Robert Franz in his Bach arrangements.⁸⁴

We have no way of knowing whether Brahms contemplated his own actions in the light of Eichendorff's maxim. However, pedagogical nostrums conceived for abecedarians arguably do not apply to composers of several decades' experience. For all his insistence on the value of a thorough education, Brahms's career suggests that the strict training he repeatedly lauded was but one step on the road to compositional mastery. Though he wrote many passages using rigorous fugal and canonic techniques in his

youth, from the time of *Ein deutsches Requiem* (1868–69) onwards Brahms largely abandoned archaic forms and practices, eschewing the use of (arguably) anachronistic terms such as “fugue” in his titles. Study of his stylistic progression suggests he became increasingly wary, against a backdrop of hostility from the New German School, of overtly historicist affiliations.⁸⁵

It remains a challenge to reconcile Brahms’s metrical practice with the statement he made to Jenner about the benefits of early exposure to good teaching. Clearly, the teenage Brahms was not conversant with theoretical descriptions such as those found in Mattheson. However, would earlier awareness of metrical niceties, as revealed by Mattheson and other theorists, have affected the music Brahms wrote as a mature composer? From relatively early on, he apparently rejected any attempt to apply metrical knowledge systematically.

Why then did Brahms feel his lack of musical education so sorely? As has often been observed, nineteenth-century music was defined by greatly increased access to musical materials, one of the pre-conditions, of course, for a historicist approach to composition. And with greater access came anxiety. Virtually every major nineteenth-century composer, at least in the German-speaking world, felt the need to confront their musical heritage and, in particular, the so-called learned arts. In the last weeks of his very short life, Schubert sought out Simon Sechter, the teacher of Brahms’s teacher, Marxsen, for counterpoint lessons (Mann 1982). Schumann, similarly, argued for immersion in earlier styles, encouraging aspirant composers to study early Italian polyphony “in order to reach into the spirit of song.”⁸⁶ Brahms’s great antagonist of his Viennese years, Anton Bruckner, also devoted many years to intense study of earlier musical styles and procedures, once again under the tutelage of Sechter. In fact, despite a significant difference in their ages, both Brahms and Bruckner withdrew from the public eye at roughly the same time—essentially, the second half of the 1850s—to immerse themselves in study.⁸⁷

It is striking that, apart from private comments to Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann, almost all of Brahms’s recorded utterances about self-improvement spring from his later decades, from the period when he was comfortably settled in Vienna. He seems to have used the concept of autodidacticism as a political instrument in ongoing disputes with the New Germans, with the need for study equated, more or less, with a compositional method that is reliant on elaboration rather than inspiration.⁸⁸ Brahms’s most frequently cited statement on the topic is found in the reminiscences of Georg Henschel:

There is no real creating without hard work. That which you would call invention, that is to say, a thought, an idea, is simply an inspiration from

above, for which I am not responsible, which is no merit of mine. Yea, it is a present, a gift, which I ought even to despise until I have made it my own by right of hard work. And there need be no hurry about that either. It is as with the seed-corn: it germinates unconsciously and in spite of ourselves.⁸⁹

However, this artistic *Stellungnahme* has a deeper history than is usually acknowledged, for Brahms's words appear to be a reworking of a passage from Otto Jahn's monumental Mozart biography:

If a genius's powers of invention are a gift of gracious Nature, art is a possession that can be acquired only through effort and labor; the ability to work tirelessly, and with unusual efforts, and to make one's work fruitful is similarly the prerogative of a genius. One does Mozart an injustice if his reputation for the most constant and conscientious hard work is diminished just to increase the amazement of those not in the know; the perfect beauty of the completed art-work does not prove that it cost no effort to reach this state, it proves only that it was successful.⁹⁰

Brahms first encountered Jahn in the mid 1850s—they were both principal mourners at Robert Schumann's funeral in 1856—and though the Mozart biography appeared some years later, Brahms seems to have incorporated Jahn's politicized interpretation of “effort and labor” into his own aesthetic. Jahn's mission was to challenge the idea of Mozart's genius as innate and, consequently, as unworthy of adulation. Brahms's version of the text has been subtly reconfigured to suit the particular circumstances of musical politics in the 1870s. He defends his reliance on elaborative compositional methods by stressing the role of tradition and, by implication, of learning in the shaping of his musicianship.

While Brahms never fails to articulate the need for effort in his advice to young composers, his compositional career allows no easy reconciliation between theory and practice. On the one hand, he argues vigorously that, for composers to reach their full potential, they require proper guidance in their formative years. He suggests to Jenner that such guidance is best acquired from village organists and choirmasters, keepers of the ancient flame.⁹¹ Yet Brahms also appears to revel in his status as self-made man. What's more, when discussing his own youth, he comes close on several occasions to admitting that he was not the ideal pupil—indeed, that he might not have been receptive to the education he claims to have craved. In 1855, looking back on the period when he was still studying under Marxsen, Brahms described himself as lacking discipline: “it was a time in which I was still chaotically dreamy.”⁹² Some three decades later, in a more specific context, Brahms praised the way pupils were taught in

his Hamburg school, while acknowledging that he was far from ready for knowledge at this point in his life:

We learned the Bible by heart, without understanding a thing about it. If something lights up later in life, all the material is there already and it suddenly comes alive. As a boy I was always dreamy and dozy. Thank goodness, not one of my teachers was bothered about this. . . . A child can't understand everything he has to learn.⁹³

It is of course possible that Brahms's comments on his deficient education were ironic. However, there's a certain doggedness to his pronouncements that encourages us to resist this conclusion. At the very least, Brahms seems keen to establish a distinctive narrative of disadvantage. Given this, it's tempting to compare Brahms's comments on education with other tales from his youth—in particular, widely debunked stories about having to earn money playing the piano in Hamburg brothels.⁹⁴ Thanks to the testimony of Robert Meisner and the researches of Kurt Hofmann and Styra Avins among others, we now know that Brahms grew up in a middle-class family. Though money was often tight, his parents prioritized education. Meisner claims that Brahms's classmates at the school he attended from the age of eleven were for the most part the “sons of doctors, highly placed civil servants, merchants and owners of [Hamburg's] larger stores.”⁹⁵

Few appear to have tried to locate the source of stories about Brahms's indigent background, and about Hamburg dives in particular, though Meisner, who knew several of the figures involved, castigates Kalbeck for his misrepresentations, claiming that almost everything found about Brahms's schooldays in Kalbeck's biography is “invalid.”⁹⁶ Nonetheless, we must surely conclude that at least some of the material originated, directly or indirectly, with Brahms himself. Who else will have passed on the relevant information? Once again, it seems Brahms deliberately cultivated the image of a composer striving to overcome adversity.

* * *

Marxsen may have had little knowledge of Baroque treatises; indeed, it's very likely he failed to provide the training in contrapuntal techniques that Brahms later sought. However, it's surely time to scotch the notion that Marxsen taught Brahms nothing and that Brahms would have been a greater composer, had he been better taught at an earlier age. As detailed examination of his response to meter in the gavotte has revealed, Brahms used theoretical knowledge just as he used the compositions of others. He took whatever he needed wherever he found it and, as he acknowledged

with reference to the Bible, full awareness of the value of learning could on occasion take years.

In his discussions with Henschel, Brahms likened the process of composition to that of a seed-corn germinating. Perhaps he should have added a reference to the text from the Epistle of St James that was used in the second movement of *Ein deutsches Requiem*:

*Siehe, ein Ackermann wartet
auf die köstliche Frucht der Erde
und ist geduldig darüber, bis er empfahe
den Morgenregen und Abendregen.*⁹⁷

No farmer could hasten the rains. No composer—schooled, unschooled or self-taught—can hasten maturity.

Notes

1. Robert Pascall, the doyen of UK-based Brahms scholars, died on 9 June 2018. This study, a tribute born of admiration, gratitude and affection, explores Brahms and pedagogy through the medium of Baroque dances, a topic of enduring fascination to both of us. Pascall launched his extensive series of Brahms publications with an article on “Unknown Gavottes by Brahms” (Pascall 1976), and his last monograph, *Brahms beyond Mastery: His Sarabande and Gavotte, and its Recompositions* (Pascall 2013), is effectively a history of the composer told through eighteenth-century dance forms. In the intervening years, I used one chapter of my PhD dissertation (Ennis 1992) to reveal for the first time that the slow movement of the Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115, is based on the Sarabande featured in the title of *Brahms beyond Mastery*. He, in turn, expanded on this material in Pascall 2001. The focus here is on meter, a topic that rarely surfaced in our deliberations; as a result, this paper consists almost entirely of fresh perspectives—as Robert would doubtless have wished.
2. “ungeheurer Größe” (Heuberger 1976, 94). All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.
3. “Weder Schumann, noch Wagner, noch ich haben was Ordentliches gelernt. . . . Schumann ging den einen, Wagner den andern, ich den dritten Weg. Aber gelernt hat keiner was Rechtes. Keiner hat eine ordentliche Schule durchgemacht. Ja, *nachgelernt* haben wir” (Heuberger 1976, 94).
4. “Denken Sie doch daran, wie Schumann darunter gelitten hat, daß er so spät zur Musik kam, und mir ist es nicht anders ergangen; ich bin ja noch später dazu gekommen. Was wäre aus mir geworden, wenn ich in der Jugend gelernt hätte, was ich später als Mann habe nachholen müssen!” (Jenner 1912, 79–80). For more details about Brahms and Jenner see Sholes 2018.
5. “Einen großen Vorzug hatte Mendelssohn vor uns voraus: die vortreffliche Schule. Was hat es mich für eine unendliche Mühe gekostet, das als Mann nachzuholen” (Kalbeck 1904–14, I, 33). Mendelssohn’s training under Carl Friedrich Zelter is particularly well documented; see Todd 1983.
6. See Musgrave 2000, 63. Brahms received his earliest musical training from his father (Avins 1997, 1). According to Florence May, Brahms’s father was ambitious for his son,

keeping “Hannes closely to his studies” (May 1905, I, 69).

7. According to Gustav Jenner, Cossel expressed himself bluntly: “If only Johannes would pack in his composing!” [“Wenn der Johannes doch das Komponieren lassen wollte!”] (Jenner 1912, 77).

8. Brahms described Otto Cossel in a letter to his eldest daughter, Marie Janssen, as “your dear, unforgettable father, whose memory is one of [the] holiest and most precious of my life” (Avins 1997, 740–41).

9. Marxsen started by training Brahms as a virtuoso pianist, only to realise his extraordinary “creative abilities” [“schöpferische Fähigkeiten”] (Kalbeck 1904–14, I, 31).

10. Peter Clive similarly fails to mention Sechter in the Marxsen entry of his biographical dictionary (Clive 2006). Marxsen’s studies with Sechter are attested in various nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sources; for a more recent citation, see Saslaw 2001.

11. “Steine statt Brot” (Jenner 1912, 80).

12. See Zeleny 1979 for further details.

13. “Ein Meister der Kunst ist heimgegangen, ein größerer erblüht in Brahms” (Kalbeck 1904–14, I, 32). The earliest documentary evidence linking Brahms and Sechter dates from 1856, when Clara Schumann gave Brahms a copy of Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg’s *Abhandlung von der Fuge* in Sechter’s revised edition of 1843. Brahms first met Sechter in Vienna in February 1863, receiving from him a canon that survives in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde archives. Sechter numbered several members of Brahms’s circle among his pupils; these include Anton Door, Robert Fuchs, J. P. Gotthard (original name: Bohumil Pazdírek), Franz Lachner, Gustav Nottebohm and Carl Ferdinand Pohl (Clive 2006, 414; Kalbeck 1904–14, II, 24).

14. By this stage, Liszt had also given the *Hamlet Overture* his blessing. He praised the work effusively, claiming that, even after hearing it live, he would be unlikely to change anything more than “minor details” [“menu détail”] (Joachim 1911–13, I, 49).

15. “auch fehlt die notwendige innere Konsequenz, die zum allgemeinen Verständnis unerlässlich” (Brahms 1912a, 11).

16. “ungefähr”; “Alles muß notwendig sein und an der rechten Stelle stehen, jeder zufällige Effekt sorgfältig vermieden werden” (Kalbeck 1904–14, II, 180).

17. “Mit vernichtender Schärfe wies Brahms mir das Unlogische des Aufbaues nach” (Jenner 1905, 6).

18. Florence May refers to Marxsen’s “ardent worship” of “the mighty Sebastian Bach” (May 1905, I, 65).

19. “Ich bin getreulich hingegangen; gelernt aber habe ich gar nichts” (Kalbeck 1904–14, I, 34; undated comment).

20. “Von Schumann habe ich nichts gelernt als Schachspielen” (Kalbeck 1904–14, I, 125). This comment is often taken as a joke, as a typical example of the composer saying the opposite of what he really meant. Kalbeck himself claims Brahms was “exaggerating” [“übertreibend”]. Others are more inventive in their reasoning: John Daverio, for example, maintained that, as chess encourages the same “strategic thinking that musical composition demands,” the comment might contain some sense (Daverio 2002, 157). It is possible, of course, that Brahms was telling the truth. He first met Schumann shortly before the latter’s mental collapse. By this stage in his life, Schumann spent most of his time in a trance-like state, and the idea of him giving Brahms detailed compositional advice is implausible.

21. On the occasion of Marxsen's golden jubilee in 1883, Brahms arranged for one of Marxsen's piano works, *100 Veränderungen über ein Volkslied*, to be published without his knowledge. A letter from Marxsen to Emil Krause (Kalbeck 1904–14, I, 34) reveals that the former saw this work as a “short contribution to the inexhaustibility of thematic work” [“kurzer Beitrag zu der Unerschöpflichkeit der thematischen Arbeit”], words that could be used to characterize many of Brahms's own compositions. For a survey of Brahms's activities as a teacher, principally of the piano, see Behr 2009. For further information on Brahms and Marxsen, see Jaffe 2010a and Jaffe 2010b. In the first of these two articles, Jaffe examines, and challenges, the widespread idea that “there was a turnabout in the teacher–pupil relationship” when Brahms was at the peak of his career, with Brahms now correcting Marxsen's music (1).
22. “Kanons kann ich jetzt in allen möglichen künstlichen Formen machen” (Litzmann 1927, I, 73).
23. “Doppelter Kontrapunkt, Kanons, Fugen, Präludien, was es ist” (Brahms 1912a, 127). A letter from Brahms to Clara Schumann dated 21 March 1855 indicates that she had been his first choice as collaborator; however, little seems to have come of this plan (Litzmann 1927, I, 100–01).
24. In January 1857 Brahms proposed the resumption of contrapuntal studies, a suggestion accepted by Joachim shortly afterwards; this phase continued fitfully until December 1857 (see Brahms 1912a, especially 168, 173 and 193). In the spring of 1860 Brahms and Joachim exchanged chorale harmonizations for a short period (Brahms 1912a, 269–72), and as late as September 1861 Brahms once again suggested the regular exchange of contrapuntal exercises, as well as waltzes, variations and other material (“Kontrapunktisches, Walzer, Variationen und sonst Zeug”; Brahms 1912a, 305).
25. With the exception of the two Gavottes, which were first made available long after Brahms's death, the dates given here relate to first publication.
26. See especially Jenner 1905 and Heuberger 1976.
27. It is known that Brahms studied treatises by J. J. Fux, J. Mattheson, J. G. Walther, C. P. E. Bach and F. W. Marpurg during the 1850s. For details of the works he owned, see Hofmann 1974 and Hancock 1983 (especially 69–101).
28. “gute und schlimme Tacttheile”; “innerlich langer”; “innerlich kurzer” (Marpurg 1755, 18).
29. “Sehr Wichtiges habe ich schon entdeckt. Ein gute Beschreibung nämlich und Erklärung der alten Tänze” (Brahms 1912a, 121).
30. “Die Gavotta [—] Ihr Affect ist wirklich eine rechte **jauchzende Freude**. Ihre Zeitmaasse ist zwar gerader Art; aber kein Vierviertel-Takt; sondern ein solcher, der aus zween halben Schlägen bestehet; ob er sich gleich in Viertel, ja gar in Achtel theilen läßt. Ich wollte wünschen, daß dieser Unterschied ein wenig besser in Acht genommen würde” (Mattheson 1739, 225). A similar point is made in Marpurg's *Anleitung zum Clavierspielen*: “An error often arises with respect to the [metrical] sign, with the simple large C confused with cut C; in this case, one is obliged to study the nature of the piece, examining the fastest notes found in it as well as structural divisions, to ascertain whether it belongs to the meter with two or with four beats” [“In Ansehung der Bezeichnung entstehet öfters eine Irrung, indem man das schlechte große C mit dem durchstrichenen C vermischt, in welchem Falle man die Natur des Stückes, nach den darinnen vorkommenden geschwindesten Noten und nach den Einschnitten beurtheilen muß, um zu wissen, ob es zu dem Tact mit zwey oder

mit vier Theilen gehöret”] (Marpurg 1755, 20).

31. “takt-metrisch sehr schiefe Fügung”; “Solche Unregelmäßigkeiten kann man ja machen, aber sie müssen doch in der Sache begründet sein und sicher dastehen” (Heuberger 1976, 14). Brahms’s comments on Ernst Rudorff’s *Fantasie*, Op. 14, contain similar reflections: he suggests Rudorff rewrite the music, bringing it “into a somewhat more regular metrical arrangement” [“in etwas regelmäßiger Taktzahl”] (Brahms 1907c, 153). For more recent discussions of unusual metrical arrangements in Brahms, see in particular Malin 2006, McClelland 2006 and Murphy 2007.

32. Henschel 1918, 112. As George S. Bozarth points out (Bozarth 2008, 266–67), Henschel was an obedient pupil. See Jenner 1905, 37, and Brahms 1912a, 272, for further advice from Brahms on the use of 6/4 chords on weak beats. For more about Brahms’s views on strong and weak beats, see May 1905, I, 17 and Schumann 1925, 232.

33. See Messing 1988 and Pasler 2009 (especially 501–07 and 629–42). I should like to thank Katharine Ellis for drawing this to my attention and for other advice.

34. I am very grateful to Matthew Werley for sharing details of his research on gavottes in nineteenth-century Germany. Werley’s research is summarized in the graphics found on the following website:

http://media.virbcdn.com/files/3b/7af5b62048cdf3cc-Gavotten_Graphsimple.pdf

35. Gerhard Ulrich Anton Vieth, a German educational reformer and advocate of gymnastics, was one who queried the French origin of the minuet (Vieth 1795, 427). I am indebted to Joseph Fort for this information, passed on in personal communications.

36. The exact date of publication is unclear; see Goertzen 2017 and Goertzen 2018.

37. *Iphigénie en Aulide*, premiered in April 1774, was the first opera Gluck wrote for Paris; it was also the first opera he composed using a French-language text. The movement in question appeared in Gluck’s printed score as “Gavotte gratioso” [*sic*]. Set for two oboes, two bassoons and strings, it formed part of a sequence of dances and choruses. Brahms’s arrangement was almost certainly based on a copy of an eighteenth-century French edition given to him by Clara Schumann in 1856, perhaps on the occasion of his 23rd birthday. Brahms’s copy of the opera, which reveals traces of intensive study, is preserved in his *Nachlaß*, now held in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna.

38. We know that Brahms attended a performance of the Overture to *Iphigénie en Aulide*, with Wagner’s concert ending, on 2 November 1862, shortly after arriving in Vienna (Kalbeck 1904–14, II, 22).

39. Gluck himself cut this movement when reworking *Iphigénie en Aulide* for a 1775 revival (Goertzen 2017, XXI).

40. “eine Meisterhand, sowohl in ihrem positiven Thun als in ihrem Unterlassen”; “Eine feine conservative Empfindung für das Charakteristische der Vergangenheit und der klarste Blick für das Bedürfnis der Gegenwart haben hier Hand in Hand zusammengewirkt” (Hanslick 1900, 7).

41. See Goertzen 2017, XXII–XXIII, for further details. Here, Goertzen gives a helpful summary of Brahms’s engagement with Gluck’s music and details of the Gluck scores he owned.

42. The Gluck arrangement is first mentioned in Brahms’s correspondence in a letter to Clara Schumann dated 4 November 1871 (Litzmann 1927, I, 645); see also McCorkle 1984, 620. Brahms’s manuscript has not survived.

43. Valerie Goertzen, drawing on the “Sammlung der Konzertprogramme Clara Schumanns” in the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau, reports that Clara Schumann played the piece in at least thirty-seven concerts in twenty-four cities. Goertzen makes the intriguing observation that Brahms usually grouped the A major Gavotte with other “historic” pieces, whereas Clara Schumann liked to perform it alongside Romantic character pieces (Goertzen 2017, XXVII). Matthew Werley argues in an unpublished paper that Brahms may have intended the Gluck arrangement as a peace-offering to Clara after a period of disharmony.
44. “Die Leute waren außer sich vor Entzücken darüber” (Litzmann 1927, II, 6). The work/concert was reviewed in *The Musical Times* 15 (1872), 416.
45. See Draheim 2009, 105. In the wake of Brahms’s arrangement, numerous other versions were produced, including arrangements for violin and piano and for cello and piano. So many of these appeared that Brahms had to warn his publisher, Bartholf Senff, of the risks posed by pirated editions (Brahms 1920, 207).
46. Further details about the dance movements, including their publication history, can be found in McCorkle 1984, Horne 1989 and Horne 2002, as well as the Pascall studies mentioned earlier.
47. A parallel to this can be found in the Intermezzo, Op. 116 No. 2, where a version of the A minor opening is reprised in A major; see Horne 1989, especially 269–80.
48. “Johannes überraschte mich mit einem Präludium und Arie zu seiner A-moll-Suite, die nun vollständig” (Litzmann 1902–09, II, 387). The two movements were presumably intended to mark Clara Schumann’s wedding anniversary and birthday, which fell on 12 and 13 September respectively (Pascall 2013, 8).
49. The two Gavottes, together with WoO. 5 No. 1, were first made available to performers in 1979 as *Kleine Stücke für Klavier* (edited by Robert Pascall; Vienna: Doblinger).
50. For a more extended discussion of the reworking, see Pascall 2013, 19–35.
51. “Notenblätter aus meiner Jugendzeit” (Brahms 1919, 28).
52. Unusually for Brahms, this movement is an example of directional tonality, with the music moving from an initial tonic of C# to a closing tonic of A.
53. In fact, as can be seen in Example 2, the 1850s version of the A major Gavotte was notated in c; however, the metrical layout *vis-à-vis* the barlines is the traditional one (see Pascall 1976, 410; also, Pascall 2013, 37–51).
54. In the 1850s Gavotte (Example 2), Brahms’s opening phrase, at least as defined by the slur, lasts for three and a half measures, one possible further reason for metrical realignment.
55. The reworking of the A minor Gavotte in the Op. 36 Scherzo does, however, reveal metrical reversal at the quarter-note level. In the three lowest voices of Op. 36, as in two of the middle voices of Op. 88 (see Example 3), Brahms uses silence on the downbeat followed by pizzicato notes in an arrangement that serves to highlight the weaker second beat; in Op. 36, the latter also contains the lowest note of the measure on *its own* weaker half. What’s more, the second beats in the Violin I part of Op. 36 usurp the mordent reserved for the downbeat in the original Gavotte (Example 1). I am indebted to Ian Sewell for pointing this out and for many other helpful suggestions.
56. For further information about the intellectual background to Riemann’s theories, see Rehding 2003, especially 72–77 and 162–65.
57. See, for example, Riemann 1895–1901, I, 132. It is perhaps difficult nowadays to

appreciate just how influential Riemann's approach was; an upbeat-dominated approach was the prevalent style of phrasing throughout much of the twentieth century, at least until the "authentic" performance movement started re-examining issues of articulation. Most performers and scholars saw little reason to challenge Riemann's approach. One notable exception was Heinrich Schenker, whose essay "Weg mit dem Phrasierungsbogen" was an early plea for *Urtext* editions (Schenker 1925). On this subject, see also Cook 2013; here Nicholas Cook points out that Riemann was "the principal target of Schenker's attacks on editors who substitute their own phrasing for composers', and so reduce performance to mechanical execution" (210–11).

58. For a useful summary of Riemann's approach to phrasing, with a focus on Beethoven, see Kronos 2001.

59. According to Riemann, an instructional edition "prevents a defective or faulty [interpretation] and indicates instead proper expression, doing away with the need for reflection. The author offers the beginner an indispensable relief in working out phrasing" (Riemann 1885, 4; quoted in Cook 2013, 218). Donald Francis Tovey once talked of groaning at the sight of Riemann's instructional editions (Tovey 1957, 137); however, the Bach editions he prepared for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music are not entirely dissimilar in goal and method.

60. ". . . die verfl. instruktiven Klassiker-Ausgaben überhaupt gar selten was mit der Kunst zu tun haben. Sie gehen den Geldbeutel der Veranstalter an" (Brahms 1919, 26–27). Brahms was similarly dismissive of Riemann's counterpoint treatise—"a useless volume" ["ein unnützes Buch"], as he described it in 1889 (Heuberger 1976, 41). We know from the *Briefverzeichnis* at the Lübeck Brahms-Institut that Brahms received at least two letters from Riemann. The first, which dates from November 1883, concerns Riemann's "Phrasierungsausgabe" of Mozart's piano sonatas; the other, dated April 1889, suggests that Brahms's antipathy to Riemann's ideas did not stand in the way of cordial relations. See http://www.brahms-institut.de/db_bbv/ for further details.

61. "Wir phrasieren und bezeichnen noch immer wie unsere Klassiker. Wir kommen nicht bloß damit aus, sondern haben gar nichts zu wünschen, trotzdem wir doch wohl so gescheit wie Herr R. über Phrasen usw. denken. Auch den Taktstrich abzuschaffen, haben wir einstweilen keine Ursache—dazu sollte aber Herr R. den Mut haben, wenn er konsequent sein wollte" (Brahms 1919, 27).

62. The letters date from 7 and 15 September 1883.

63. "[Johannes Brahms ist] gleich bei Lebzeiten von einem recht erheblichen Teile der Musiktreibenden mißverstanden worden"; "[er ist] seitens minder einsichtiger Hörer, Leser oder Sänger deren absprechendem Verdikt nicht entgangen, daß er öfter Deklamationsfehler mache" (Riemann 1912–13, 11). This perception has in fact persisted well beyond Brahms's death. Robert Haven Schauffler offers an extreme example: in his centenary tribute, Schauffler claimed that Brahms used to "torture the word-music of the poems he set, with even more brutality than the average song composer" (Schauffler 1933, 321).

64. "Wer sich vollständig auf Brahms' Taktstriche verläßt, wird ein leises Unbehagen spüren, das die Dehnung der Reimsilben und die lange Pause bewirken" (Riemann 1912–13, 12).

65. Note the appalling proof-reading in this example. No fewer than four of the words are erroneous in one respect or another; in addition, one accidental (in the melody of m. 3) is missing. The altered accidentals in the harmonic reduction of m. 4 are presumably an intentional respelling on Riemann's part, perhaps to highlight the lower neighbor-note figure (B#–A#–B#) that was hidden by Brahms's enharmonic spelling (C–B–B#); I am indebted

to Ian Sewell for pointing this out.

66. Curiously, the same song was also examined by Arnold Schoenberg (Schoenberg 1975b, 421–22). Here, Schoenberg, like Riemann before him, attempts to normalize Brahms's phrasing. Schoenberg makes no reference to Riemann in his text, though we know that he was familiar with the latter's work: he wrote notes on Riemann's metrics in 1923, and he referred to Riemann in several essays, including "Phrasing" (1931), where he described Riemann's theories as "nonsense" (Schoenberg 1975a, 347). For further details, see Stuckenschmidt 1977, 291–92. Despite the lack of an explicit reference to Riemann's theories, Schoenberg's reading of "Immer leiser" seems to be in dialogue with "Die Taktfreiheiten": Riemann's main points—three-measure phrases, the drawing-out of rhyming syllables, and the pause between phrases—are all specifically addressed in Schoenberg's rebarring. However, Schoenberg comes to quite different conclusions. His rebarring is intended to demonstrate the inadequacy of a regular pattern. Of course, as so often, Schoenberg has an axe to grind. Here he is arguing, against the grain of his age, that Brahms was not a traditionalist, but an innovator; Brahms's "non-quadratic" phrasing is, in Schoenberg's eyes, a reflection of his modernity.

67. He almost certainly had access to a copy several years earlier, most likely in the Schumanns' library.

68. "Länge und Kürze der Tonzeichen entspricht der redegemäßen Betonung jeder einzelnen Sylbe der gesungenen heiligen Worte; hienach gestalten sich ungezwungen verschiedene, eigenthümlich gegliederte rhythmische Abtheilungen des Gesanges" (Winterfeld 1834, I, 172).

69. For further information about Brahms's annotations, see Hancock 1983, *passim*.

70. Hancock 1983, 162. As Hancock notes, Brahms did not, however, change the barring in the performing parts; see *ibid.*, 51–52, for details of Brahms's transcription.

71. Note, however, the added dynamics mentioned above; these suggest that Riemann was reluctant to abandon altogether Brahms's barring.

72. The song appears to have enjoyed great success in the concert-hall; in a letter dated 7 April 1879, Georg Henschel reports that he had to sing "Unüberwindlich" twice in a recent London concert, "and the audience would have preferred to hear it a third time straight away" ["und die Leute hätten es am Liebsten gleich noch ein drittes Mal gehört"]. The song was still in Henschel's repertoire in 1885: in January of that year he performed it in Krefeld with Brahms himself at the piano (Bozarth 2008, 188 and 165).

73. See Henschel 1918, 102, for details of how Brahms chose to acknowledge his debt to Scarlatti. Brahms was frequently drawn to Scarlatti sonatas; according to Kurt Hofmann (Hofmann 1974, 163), he owned an "Original-Ausgabe" consisting of 30 Scarlatti sonatas, Czerny's edition of 200 sonatas in two volumes (Haslinger), Nottebohm's edition of 60 sonatas (Breitkopf und Härtel), plus various individual copies. For further information on Brahms and Scarlatti, see Brahms 1907b, 59–60; Sams 1972; Goebels 1986; and McKay 1989. For a more recent treatment of the subject, with details of a newly discovered copy of Scarlatti sonatas commissioned by Brahms for Clara Schumann, see Synofzik 2014.

74. The most obvious exception occurs in the reprise of the words "Hab ich tausendmal geschworen" (m. 41); however, this is simply a distorted augmentation of the Scarlatti phrase, presented in a loose canon for humorous effect.

75. George S. Bozarth goes so far as to claim the song "is the closest [Brahms] came to writing a comic opera" (Bozarth 2008, 256).

76. Brodbeck 1994 highlights the role that cyphers may have played in “personal works” by Brahms in A minor (69–70).

77. Compare the earlier discussion of the phrase extension in the F major String Quintet; here, too, the pitch-class E sounds recurrently on downbeats. In the Intermezzo, the pitch-circling round E continues when the relative major is tonicized; see the treble of mm. 15–16. Note also the highlighted tenor voice in mm. 35–36 (first-time bracket) which, in the context of C major, nevertheless features a chromatic approach to E.

78. Here, as elsewhere, the discussion of metrical rearrangements is based on perspectives informed by the Baroque treatises studied by Brahms; in these sources, as we have seen, a binary division between “good” and “bad” beats is fundamental to the analysis of meter, and a reversal of pattern is usually to be interpreted as a transgression against the established order.

79. This statement is based on the responses of those who attended colloquia in Cambridge, Hong Kong, Auckland and Wellington in which earlier versions of this paper were presented. In this context we might recall Brahms’s advice to Henschel and others about placing dissonances on strong beats. While Brahms appears to have been alluding in such cases to suspensions, one could argue that the same principle applies to a chord that is “dissonant” within a prolongation.

80. Brahms 1917, 91–92; see also Kalbeck 1904–14, III, 195–96.

81. At least one of the Op. 76 pieces appears to reference directly music by Schumann: the Capriccio, Op. 76 No. 2, shares key, meter and bass-line with Schumann’s *Davidsbündlertanz*, Op. 6 No. 12. See Brahms 1907a, 79–81, for details of Elisabet von Herzogenberg’s unusual response to the A minor Intermezzo.

82. Literally, “what is permitted to Jove is not permitted to the ox.” One is reminded here of Bruckner’s admonition to his pupils: “Look, gentlemen, that’s the rule; of course, I don’t compose that way.” [“Segn’s, mein’ Herrn, dass ist die Regl, i schreib’ natirli not a so.”]; German text quoted in Schenker 1954, 177. See Dubiel 1990 for a spirited exploration, focusing on Beethoven, of the tensions between theory and free composition.

83. It is not entirely clear that Eichendorff invented the epithet. However, in the absence of earlier citations, we may reasonably assume that the phrase was coined for use in *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*. The context in which the phrase occurs will surely have been of particular interest to Brahms: it appears in the middle of a discussion about a “Waldhornist” (Brahms was a Waldhorn enthusiast).

84. Kalbeck 1904–14, I, 281. In a story about his 1853 concert tour with Eduard Remenyi, Brahms described a situation reminiscent of episodes in *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* as “pure Eichendorff!” [“der reine Eichendorff!”] (Heuberger 1976, 53). I am grateful to Reuben Phillips for directing me to this. Further information about Brahms and *Aus dem Leben* can be found in Lütteken 2009, 31–33. For more on Brahms’s library and his literary interests, see Phillips 2019; here, Phillips makes a persuasive case for Brahms as an autodidact in matters literary.

85. Exceptions can be found in the Fugue in A flat minor for organ, WoO. 8, and the Chorale Prelude and Fugue on “O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid,” WoO. 7; these were published in 1864 and 1882 but date back to the 1850s.

86. “damit man hinter den Gesangsgeist komme” (quoted in Kross 1958, 52).

87. Brahms appears to have regarded Bruckner’s studies as an abject failure. Comparing him with the long-forgotten composer Felix Draeseke, Brahms remarked: “The two gentle-

men have in common that they both studied very little” [“Gemeinsam ist den zwei Herren, daß beide wenig gelernt haben”] (Heuberger 1976, 136). And when Bruckner was awarded an honorary doctorate, Brahms’s scorn knew no bounds: “That a totally uneducated man is made a doctor—that’s pretty strong” [“Daß man einen total ungebildeten Menschen zum Doktor macht, das ist eigentlich ziemlich stark”] (Heuberger 1976, 49).

88. For a useful survey of some of the binaries encountered in this field, see Floros 1980.

89. Henschel 1907, 22–23; the conversation took place in 1876.

90. “Wenn geniale Erfindungskraft ein Geschenk der gütigen Natur ist, so ist die Kunst nur ein mit Mühe und Arbeit errungener Besitz; die Kraft mit ungewöhnlicher Anstrengung zu arbeiten ohne zu ermüden, und die Arbeit fruchtbar zu machen, ist ebenfalls ein Vorrecht des Genies. Man thut Mozart Unrecht, wenn man ihm den Ruhm des treuesten und gewissenhaften Fleißes schmälert, um das Staunen der Unverständigen zu erhöhen; die vollkommene Schönheit des vollendeten Kunstwerks ist kein Beweis dafür, daß es keine Arbeit gekostet habe, dasselbe zu Stande zu bringen, sondern nur dafür, daß sie gelungen sei.” Quoted from Jahn 1856–59 in Sandberger 2009, 146. Wolfgang Sandberger appears to have been the first to draw a connection between the Henschel and Jahn texts; see Sandberger 2006, 9–10.

91. “The best teachers are to be found among old village cantors” [“Die besten Lehrer findet man unter den alten Kantoren auf den Dörfern”] (Jenner 1912, 83). In Jenner’s 1905 account of studying with Brahms, he focused explicitly on counterpoint: “First look out a teacher who can instruct you in strict counterpoint; the best are found among old village cantors. . . . it’s absolutely necessary to view the world for a decent period through these glasses” [“Zunächst suchen Sie sich einen Lehrer, der Sie im strengen Contrapunkt unterrichtet; die besten findet man unter den alten Kantoren auf den Dörfern. . . . es ist unbedingt nötig, dass man die Welt eine gute Zeit lang durch diese Brille sieht”] (Jenner 1905, 13).

92. “Es war eine Zeit, in der ich noch recht chaotisch schwärmte” (Brahms 1912a, 92).

93. “Wir haben die Bibel auswendig gelernt, ohne etwas davon zu verstehen. Geht einem dann später ein Licht auf, so hat man bereits das ganze Material, das dann plötzlich lebendig wird. Ich war als Bub auch stets schwärmerisch und duselig. Gott sei Dank hat sich aber keiner meiner Lehrer darum geschert. . . . Das Kind kann nicht alles verstehen, was es lernen muß” (Heuberger 1976, 34); the account dates from 1887.

94. For differing interpretations of Brahms’s early life, see Avins 2001, Swafford 2001, Desai 2003, Avins 2015 and McManus 2019.

95. “vorwiegend Söhne von Ärzten, höheren Beamten, Kaufleuten, Besitzern größerer Läden” (Meisner 1977, 90). According to Helmut Wirth’s preface to this volume of *Brahms-Studien*, Meisner’s article first appeared in August 1915 in the *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte*, Vol. 12.

96. “So ist fast alles, was Kalbeck über Brahms Schulzeit konstruiert und zu erzählen weiß, hinfällig” (Meisner 1977, 94). Styra Avins suggests that Brahms’s reluctance to engage with biographers was a major factor in the perpetuating of misrepresentations. However, her focus is more on what she terms a “Poverty Myth” than on Brahms’s education; furthermore, she is inclined to blame Kalbeck rather than Brahms himself for the development of a “classic story by which genius overcomes adversity” (Avins 2015, 197). More recently, Laurie McManus has argued that cultural-intellectual contexts in late nineteenth-century Vienna may have influenced Brahms’s attempts to shape his own biography (McManus 2019).

97. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." Epistle to St James, Chapter 5, Verse 7 (King James Version).

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