

A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MUSICAL HISTORICISM:
THE CASE OF JOHANNES BRAHMS

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A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MUSICAL HISTORICISM:
THE CASE OF JOHANNES BRAHMS

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ABSTRACT

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Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) lived in an epoch marked by the 1848 revolution that precipitated social, cultural, and economical changes. In the realm of music, the extension of concert repertory to music of the past, and the emergence of historical writings reflected a greater awareness of music history. While composers of that era, including Brahms, arguably worked under the growing weight of history, Brahms was able to place himself within the ranks of classical masters by his historicist aesthetics and compositional methodology that synthesized the past, the present, and his individual creativity. Combined with his connection to musicology, a blooming discipline and child of the historicism movement, his historicist practice and thinking continuously receive scholarly attention, especially in the twentieth century up until today. Musical historicism, however, remains a problematic and paradoxical concept, notwithstanding the fact that it

gradually gains importance in both Germanic and Anglo-American Brahms scholarship and historiography, hence, increasing the need for historiographical studies on musical historicism in Brahms.

This thesis is a study of the interpretations and writings on Brahms and musical historicism from selected Anglo-American and German Brahms scholars, starting from the late 1960s, when scholars began to use “musical historicism” prominently as a term, up to the 2010s, in order to provide an overview of the usage and development of this term in Brahms scholarship and also to determine the extent to which there is a consensus on how Brahms scholars have employed this concept. With this study, I hope to highlight the importance of continuous reassessment and reinterpretation of writings on Brahms’s musical historicism, and, more specifically, speak to issues related to the reception history of Brahms’s music as well as informing our understanding of Brahms’s place in musical historicism.

The first chapter surveys relevant secondary literature, providing an overview of the historicism movement in philosophy and music pertinent to the case of Brahms, from the nineteenth century to the present. Chapters two, three, and four will chronologically trace and assess selected scholarly writings on Brahms’s musicological activities, compositional methodologies and styles, and critical reception. In the last chapter, I will summarize the thesis and ultimately suggest that the concept of musical historicism and its relationship with Brahms are evolving through time and have become an important force in Brahms’s scholarship, essential for a more holistic understanding of Brahms’s life and works and selected Brahms studies in their historical positions.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: HISTORICISM FROM BRAHMS'S

TIME TO THE PRESENT

1.1 Musical Historicism: Definitions, Movements, and the Case of Brahms

Musical historicism is an integral part of studies on nineteenth-century music history. Indeed, now the term is familiar in musicological studies; we see historicist thinking and practice permeating the research on composers of classical forms and genres, early music performance practice movements, and early historical writings.¹ In the case of Johannes Brahms, his connection to musical historicism continues to be a popular research topic among music scholars. Brahms is widely regarded by these scholars to be a key figure in musical historicism due to his historicist thinking and practices in compositional, performance, aesthetic, and what have been called musicological matters.

Before we explore the thinking and actions that eventually characterize the musical historicism movement and relate them to Brahms, it is necessary to have a fundamental understanding of the German historicism movement, which arguably is the root of musical historicism.

What is historicism? This is a question anxiously asked by interested scholars across various disciplines. Since historicism has quite a long history, it is natural for such

¹ Consider, for example, Philipp Spitta's biography on J. S. Bach. Carl Dahlhaus, J. B. Robinson, trans., "Historicism," in *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1989), 325-326 & 328.

scholars to survey and interpret various writings on historicism by thinkers of different epochs in order to find an answer. Frederick Beiser's *The German Historicist Tradition* (2011), perhaps the most exhaustive historiographical study in English to date on German historicism, presents two common definitions of historicism, followed by another which is more accepted by historicists. The first is the process of finding a universal/metaphysical truth from the progress of history; that is to discover the philosophy of history. The second definition discards the possibility of a universal law of history, but "[focuses] on the unique and singular events, and personalities of history."² He associates two arguably famous (or infamous) figures to champion both definitions: Karl Popper, representing the common Anglophone understanding of historicism, and Friedrich Meinecke, representing the German perception on historicism.³ The third definition that Beiser presents is the one most accepted by historicists. Beiser quotes Ernst Troeltsch and explains the meaning of "historicizing:"

[The] fundamental historicization of all our thinking about man, his culture and his values.⁴

[To] historicize our thinking means to recognize that everything in the human world — culture, values, institutions, practices, rationality — is made by history, so that nothing has an eternal form, permanent essence or constant identity which transcends historical change... there is no distinction between a permanent substance and changing accidents, because even their substance is the product of history. The particular causes that have brought human things into being make them what they

² Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-2. Beiser is a professor of philosophy at Syracuse University. He specializes in the history of German philosophy and the English Enlightenment. Several of his important publications include *Diotima's Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and "Normativity in Neo-Kantianism: Its Rise and Fall" in the *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 17, no. 1 (2009), 9-27. The College of Arts and Science, "Frederick Beiser," Syracuse University, 2010, accessed March 7, 2013, <http://thecollege.syr.edu/profiles/pages/beiser-fred.html>.

³ Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 2. Also see footnote no. 4.

⁴ Quoted in Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 2, from Ernst Troeltsch's *Der Historismus und seine Probleme*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1922).

are; and these causes are utterly historical, i.e., they depend on a specific context, a definite time and place.⁵

Such is the paradoxical nature of definitions one and two, and the conflicts of understanding between Anglo-American and Germanic sphere, while the third definition is derived from the second one. Other definitions or interpretation might have slight discrepancies from these three, but they generally do not bifurcate far away.⁶ From these we can sense the emphasis on the importance of history, as summarized by Dwight Lee and Robert Beck, who state that “Historicism has to do with explanation or evaluation by means of history and with the belief that historical knowledge is in some sense distinctively important in human affairs.”⁷

My survey of writings by Beiser, Lee and Beck, and other secondary literature clearly reveals that, even in the twenty-first century, scholars have yet to reach a consensus on the definition of the term, a problem that is also highlighted by the definitions mentioned above. Lee and Beck claim in 1954 that “[it is] too early to reach a consensus about the concepts for which the word may be used.”⁸

It might still be too early in 2011, fifty-seven years after Lee and Beck write the above statement, or we might have to live with this dilemma, because as Beiser concludes: “any attempt to define ‘historicism’ immediately runs into a major obstacle: the many

⁵ Beiser, *German Historicist Tradition*, 2.

⁶ Ibid., 4. Beiser provides further criteria on defining historicism with “individuality” and “holism” on page 4. Also, for Benedetto Croce’s definition of historicism, see Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck, “The Meaning of Historicism,” *The American Historical Review* 59, no. 3 (Apr. 1954): 572, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1844717>.

⁷ Lee and Beck, “The Meaning of Historicism,” 569. They base their ideas on three thinkers active in the 1940s: Dagobert Runes, Morris Cohen, and Friedrich Engel-Janosi.

⁸ Ibid., 568.

meanings of the word. The term has been used in very different, even contradictory, ways.”⁹

All of the definitions listed above are already prevalent in our knowledge of historicism, from the amateurs to experts of the topic, making it difficult to reject, change, or accept certain perceptions. For example, Beiser criticizes Popper, the philosopher who viewed historicism by the first definition, for “perpetrating misconceptions” of historicism, and his definition of historicism is generally rejected by historicists who have studied German historicism.¹⁰ In spite of this, most scholars are more than willing to include him in their discussion of historicism. Some went as far as to say Popper’s take on historicism is historicist as well.¹¹ This might be a reconciliatory gesture, or an attempt to synthesize this paradox, by acknowledging Popper’s view as unique in the context of his historical position. I argue, however, that Popper’s widespread influence on the Anglophone understanding of historicism is devastating. His book *The Poverty of Historicism* (published in 1957 but was conceptualized as early as 1936) is immediately accessible to Anglophone readers, since it is in English. Moreover, the post-war anti-German sentiments might have increased the popularity and acceptance of his work in the Anglophone sphere.¹² While the German historicists want to establish that history can be a science and advocate the “constant flux and web of influence” nature of historicism, Popper’s book and other Anglophone interpretations on historicism play a large role in attacking historicism as a philosophy of history that attempts to serve as a prophecy.¹³

⁹ Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹ See Lee and Beck, “The Meaning of Historicism,” 574-575.

¹² Suggested by Beiser, *German Historicist Tradition*, 25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8. Other pervasive Anglophone works on historicism include W. H. Walsh, *Philosophy of History: An Introduction* (London: Hutchinson, 1951), 9-14, and Simon Blackburn, “Historicism,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), accessed March 7,

Their takes on historicism give it a derogatory ring, which possibly affect studies of historicism in other disciplines in their language, e.g. music, if we would compare it to German music scholarship. One such instance would be the lack of an “historicism” entry in all editions of the *New Grove Dictionary*, even in its online edition (*Grove Music Online*) that permits speedy editing and additions; but its counterpart in German, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, has the entry “Historismus” in the supplementary volume of the first edition (1979) and in the second edition (1994-2007).¹⁴ Another instance would be the publication of the book *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik* in 1969,¹⁵ showing that the German musicologists were already discussing musical historicism prominently. Nevertheless, usage of the term “historicism” in Anglo-American musical scholarship did appear later.

Since there is no entry on historicism of music in the *Grove Music Online*, I examine Carl Dahlhaus’s entry of “Historismus” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, and its essence is similar to what he writes in *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte (Foundations of Music History)*. He borrows Meinecke’s definition: “In one sense, historicism is about the individuality and its development through time; and in another sense, the constant flux and changes that shape an entity and history.”¹⁶

2013, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199541430.001.0001/acref-9780199541430-e-1502>. While Blackburn relied heavily on Popper’s definition on historicism, he also brought out the importance of studying the origins and development of historical events and entities. The overall tone, however, is still pejorative.

¹⁴ Carl Dahlhaus, “Historismus,” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1st ed., ed. Friedrich Blume, (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1979), 16: 693-702. The “Historismus” entry in the supplementary vol. 16 is shorter than the entry in the second edition, which appears in vol. 4.

¹⁵ Walter Wiora, ed., *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik* (Regensburg, Germany: Gustav Bosse, 1969).

¹⁶ Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus*, in *Werke*, eds. Hans Herzfeld, Carl Hinrichs and Walther Hofer (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1965). First publication of this work was in 1936. Quoted from Carl Dahlhaus and Friedrich Krummacher, “Historismus” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), 4:335.

Nevertheless, he further defines it in the context of music by two aspects: mode of thought (*Denkform*) and practice (*Praxis*):

As a mode of thought it is characterized by the conviction that a musical creation is, as Adorno put it, ‘historical through and through’ — in other words that historicity is not simply a fundamental basis for all musical creations but actually forms their inmost essence... historicism in musical practice refers to nothing more than the predominance of the old over the new.¹⁷

Dahlhaus’s definition of musical historicism in the mode of behavior would be the standard of how music historians qualify a musical work as “historicist” or not, and it is also under this qualification that we consider Brahms as a historicist composer. For the *Denkform*, music historians or musicologists would agree that musical works have to be examined not only by their musical elements but also their historical context. An assessment on the works’ historical context will inform us covertly or overtly of the composer’s philosophy, psychology, and personal life, which were influenced by and might possibly impact his external world. Such evaluations, however, can be subjective and speculative.

Walter Frisch elaborates that the *Denkform* is applicable for historians and the *Praxis* is for composers.¹⁸ Walter Wiora, another eminent musicologist and scholar of historicism, further categorizes musical historicism into two types: “retrospective historicism” and “relativistic historicism,” in which James Garratt translates as “on the one hand, ‘increased devotion to earlier times and their gifts to posterity, for example, the cultivation and copying of varied styles of old music’ and, on the other hand, the belief that all phenomena are essentially historical and determined by the circumstances in

¹⁷ Carl Dahlhaus, J. B. Robinson trans., *Foundations of Music History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 61. The original German edition *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* is published in 1977.

¹⁸ Walter Frisch, “German Modernism Music and the Arts: Bach Regeneration and Historicist Modernism” in *Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 149.

which they arose.”¹⁹ According to Frisch, who sometimes borrows the words of Dahlhaus, retrospective historicism is “a kind of naive traditionalism,” which “reaches back to older styles and techniques as if they could somehow be freed from history with impunity and incorporated into the present.”²⁰ In several writings on historicism, Dahlhaus presents nineteenth-century sacred compositions in Palestrina style as an example of retrospective historicism, since they are “excellent imitations...but only ‘empty husks’ of tradition.”²¹ In *Nineteenth-Century Music* (1989), Dahlhaus provides an account on Michael Haller, a composer/imitator of the Palestrina style in the nineteenth-century, who “considered himself not an epigone restoring part of the past, but the standard bearer of a musical verity that would remain true regardless of when it happened to be uttered.”²² By using this example, it is possible to draw a parallel to the historicism Popper defines. Due to the liturgical function and requirements, the style of Palestrina was sanctioned by the Council of Trent, therefore transcends history and becomes the “universal truth” for the Catholic Church composers.²³ “Relativistic historicism,” which according to Frisch, is the type of historicism that Brahms exhibited, the “restoration” that “acknowledges a gulf between present and past...seeks to restore something that has been broken off...thus reflective and self-conscious...it is marked by a desire, in Dahlhaus’s word, ‘to appropriate the past compositionally with a historical consciousness, precisely because it is past and bears the colors of an earlier era.’”²⁴ Both types of historicism utilize the past, allowing critics to

¹⁹ James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 12.

²⁰ Frisch, *Modernism*, 149.

²¹ Ibid. Dahlhaus’s writings that mention Palestrina style as an example include the “Historismus” entry in *MGG*, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, and *Foundations of Music History*.

²² Carl Dahlhaus, J. B. Robinson, trans., “Historicism,” in *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1989), 323-324.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Frisch, *Modernism*, 149.

question the transcendental quality of the musical works. Therefore it is even possible to denounce composers of both types of historicism as “anti-historical,” because they deny the “flux of changes.”²⁵ In the realm of music, however, it is the composers’ and musicians’ attitude towards early musical works that make a difference.

More recently, the definition provided by David Beard and Kenneth Gloag in *Musicology: the Key Concepts* (2005) supports the “web of influence” concept with “[promoting] the idea of cultural relativism, interpreting historical subjects as products of social, political and cultural circumstances in a given historical moment.”²⁶ It also emphasizes the importance of history, as historicists think that the past is as worthy as the present.²⁷ The major concerns of the authors are the changing focus of the musical historicism movement and their impact on the field of musicology, resulting in a brief historical account. It is noteworthy, however, that they did not mention anything derogatory, maintaining a neutral stance throughout the entry.²⁸

Richard Taruskin, author of the monumental *Oxford History of Western Music* (2005), who later collaborates with Christopher Gibbs in the production of the more compact version *The Oxford History of Western Music: College Edition* (2013),²⁹ refers

²⁵ On this perspective, see Richard Taruskin, “Midcentury” and “The Return of the Symphony,” in *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, The Oxford History of Western Music 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 411-416 and 675-682. Taruskin suggests that Brahms was a different type of historicist compared to the New German School, or an “anti-historicist.”

²⁶ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: the Key Concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2005), 80-81.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Joseph Dillon Ford suggests that the “arrival of Postmodernism” is pivotal in ridding the negative connotations of historicism, especially in the Anglo-American sphere. See his “Historicism, Postmodernism, and Modernism” in *Orpheus in the Twenty-First Century: Historicism and the Art Music Renaissance*, 2003, accessed March 15, 2013, http://www.newmusicclassics.com/orpheus_3.html.

²⁹ I argue that “historicism” is getting more emphasis in music scholarship, because mainstream music history textbooks targeting undergraduate students are a good reflection of general ideologies and thoughts of music scholarship during the time they are published. There is no “historicism” entry since the first edition of Norton’s *A History of Western Music*, even in the 2009 eighth edition. Leon Plantinga’s *Romantic Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984) is a rare example that includes the term (pp.

to historicism as “a historical method which defines social and cultural situations by their history but largely died out.”³⁰ By sticking with the ideas of Kant and Hegel, his definition of historicism is Germanic:

[A]ll history must be conceived as a process in a constant state of flux...things change under the impact of other things. Everything that can be observed can be described either as a cause or as an effect, hence everything is both cause and effect in an endless chain.³¹

Taruskin also clarifies that the statement quoted above is “not a theory of history but simply a description—rather, a tautological, or circular, definition—of how things happen.”³² He then characterizes Popper as “one of historicism’s most implacable foes.”³³ While Beiser does not name Hegel and Kant as historicists, their dialectics on historical thinking play a crucial part in the development of historicism, but Popper (as well as several “Hegelians”) interpreted Hegel’s ideas to the extreme, resulting in the universal and prophetic definition.

Parallel to historicism in general, music historians also have to deal with the definition dilemma of musical historicism. Dahlhaus comments that, in music, there are several methods to employ historicism as a practice, and to interpret historicism as a form of thinking, that they might oppose each other and went on different paths.³⁴ Christoph

16-20), but it is not really a textbook for undergraduate students. Taruskin’s *The Oxford History of Western Music* (2005) and its *College Edition* (targeting undergraduate students, co-authored with Christopher Gibbs, 2013), and Walter Frisch’s *Music in the Nineteenth Century: Western Music in Context* (2012), all discuss musical historicism extensively.

³⁰ Richard Taruskin, “Midcentury” in *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, The Oxford History of Western Music 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 411-416, and Richard Taruskin and Christopher H. Gibbs, “Musical Politics at Midcentury: Historicism and the New German School,” in *The Oxford History of Western Music: College Edition*, Instructor’s ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 647-650.

³¹ Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 412.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 413.

³⁴ Dahlhaus and Krummacher, “Historismus,” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 4:335. Original text: “Historismus als Denkform und Historismus als Praxis brauchen nicht zusammenzutreffen (man kann sich “verstehend” in die Vergangenheit versenken, ohne sie restaurieren zu wollen, oder kann sie gerade

Wolff has the same judgment as Beiser as he viewed historicism not just in the light of music, but in sociology and philosophy as well.³⁵ The derogative ring that haunts historicism well into the 1990s, especially in the field of fine arts and music, is evident when Wolff quotes Nikolaus Pevsner, an art and architecture historian: “historicism is the belief in the power of history to such a degree as to choke original action and replace it by action which is inspired by period precedent.”³⁶ Such a negative and cynical definition does not help the case of considering historicism as an artistically creative movement.

Joseph Dillon Ford in *Orpheus in the Twenty-First Century* (2003) presents a cross-discipline historicist study that encompasses architecture, visual arts, literature, and music, ultimately showing that there is a lack of consensus on how different disciplines perceive historicism.³⁷ Writing in a less academic, almost casual style, he first draws three definitions from Webster’s *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (1996), which fits the definitions of Popper, general German historicists, and the reverence of history, but he does not spare them from his own assessment and skepticism. Taking a birds-eye view on such disciplines as literature, politics, law, theology, and even anthropology, he suggests with dry humor how diverse historicism could be in different hands:

There are the so-called "new historicists" (evidently to distinguish themselves from "old historicists"), voluminously engaged in postmodern literary criticism. There are legal and constitutional historicists who study how history, sometimes rightly but often wrongly, has affected decision-making. There are theological historicists who contend, contrary to their divine adversaries, the futurists, that biblical prophecy has already been fulfilled. And among anthropologists of the

umgekehrt wiederherzustellen versuchen, ohne sie “aus sich selbst zu verstehen”); sie können sogar auseinanderklaffen und sich widersprechen, so daß der Terminus Historismus in ein Zwielicht gerät.”

³⁵ Christoph Wolff, “Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-century Music: An Essay,” in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George S. Bozarth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7-11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁷ Joseph Dillon Ford, *Orpheus in the Twenty-First Century: Historicism and the Art Music Renaissance*, 2003, accessed October 30, 2011, http://www.newmusicclassics.com/orpheus_title.html.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were even cohorts of historicists who, as adherents of either diffusionism or particularism, variously argued that culture was the unique creation of the ancient Egyptians, the consequence of independently expanding concentric circles, or simply the result of happy (or unhappy) accidents.³⁸

Perhaps because Ford is a composer, and one who lives in the post-modern era, he gives equal weight to the past, present, and future, seeing no necessity to overemphasize the distance of history. Such temporal distance is relative in Ford's opinion, and he enforces this by quoting Einstein's famous aphorism "The distinction between past, present and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one."³⁹ Before nitpicking the apparent discrepancies between Ford, Dahlhaus and Wiora, note that Ford's view actually serves as a gentle reminder to interpreters not to perceive Dahlhaus's and Wiora's take on historicism to the extreme polar, as they lean heavily on the awareness of temporal distance. Ford does not repudiate the knowledge of temporal boundaries, while the definitions by Dahlhaus and Wiora do acknowledge a diverse range of historicism, either as movements, methods, processes, or modes of thought. There also appears a distance between their positions on musical historicism in history. On one hand Dahlhaus and Wiora were interested in nineteenth-century historicism, while living their careers in the twentieth century, and on the other hand, Ford uses historicism in the twenty-first century which, according to him, gives him and other composers more liberty and foundation in making decisions.⁴⁰ In comparison, for Brahms in the second-half of the nineteenth century, historicism provided him certain liberty and foundation, as well as limitations and pressure, in making musical decisions.

³⁸ Joseph Dillon Ford, "Hydra-headed Historicism," in *Orpheus in the Twenty-First Century*, 2003, accessed October 30, 2011, http://www.newmusicclassics.com/orpheus_1.html.

³⁹ Ford, "Redefining Historicism," in *Orpheus in the Twenty-First Century*, 2003, accessed October 30, 2011, http://www.newmusicclassics.com/orpheus_2.html.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

1.2 Musical Historicism in Brahms's Era: The Nineteenth Century

The discussion of musical historicism can rarely escape from an example of *Praxis* of musical historicism, which was Mendelssohn's Bach revival in 1829, even though the event was not the earliest or the only early music revival performance, and with good reason. People who study the history of early music revival in the nineteenth century, may it be experts, students or amateurs, know that Mendelssohn did not simply decide to suddenly enact a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and the movement of musical historicism did not burst out of thin air with the "Bach Revival." Even though Bach was generally neglected between his final years and Mendelssohn's *St. Matthew Passion* performance (the famous Bach Revival), some of J. S. Bach's works were kept alive by loyal supporters and disciples.⁴¹ These torchbearers, such as Baron Gottfried van Swieten, Fanny von Arnstein, Agricola, Kirnberger, and Nichelmann, names now arguably only known by specialists and scholars, kept Bach's music alive in the eighteenth century, with Forkel joining the cause soon after the turn of the century with his Bach biography.⁴² It was Mendelssohn's *St. Matthew Passion* performance, however, that marked the culmination of the Bach Revival movement, because as a public event it had the widest influence, reaching people who had no access to Bach's music, manuscripts, and writings on Bach, to those who never knew Bach, and to those who were not interested in Bach previously, by letting Bach's music speak for itself, or more accurately, speak under Mendelssohn's hands. This performance is historicist and yet ahistoricist. It was a historically singular event that celebrated the legacy of music history,

⁴¹ The majority of them are keyboard works. See Nicholas Temperley and Peter Wollny, "Bach Revival," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01708>.

⁴² Ibid.

but the *Zeitgeist* and function of the work was arguably dead after Mendelssohn's modification. Similar to other first performances of early music throughout the nineteenth century, these past's music were actually new to the audience, but it was this temporal distance and freshness that struck them with awe.

History, may it be in philosophy, law, or music, was on the rise and had become important towards the mid-nineteenth century. Despite the fact that the term "musical historicism" had yet to exist, Glenn Stanley presents two views of historicism that permeated the nineteenth century and will continue to influence the twentieth century:

(i) a notion of 'progress with limits' that underlies conservative historical thinking well into the [twentieth] century, and (ii) a historicism that replaced the principle of inevitable progress with that of historical relativism and validated early music.⁴³

The writers of music, most of them critics and journalists, such as Franz Brendel, A. B. Marx, Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner, and Eduard Hanslick, were more interested in the "continuing progress (or its necessity) in music."⁴⁴ None of them could escape from the influence of Hegel, especially Brendel and Marx, but while their historical thinking was paralleled with the Hegelian "concept of progress and... aesthetics... the dialectical approach, the essential element in [Hegel's] theory of historical change, is largely absent in Marx's writing and not rigorously applied in Brendel's."⁴⁵ For music historians around the mid-nineteenth century, J. S. Bach was the final composer in music history, because he was more remote compared to the classical composers, whose legacies had never really been interrupted.⁴⁶ In the late nineteenth century, the increasing demands by the growth of German nationalism and elevation in German academia had further

⁴³ Vincent Duckles, et al., "Musicology," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46710>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

popularized the canonization of dead composers (most of them German) by frequent performances in the concert halls, and the development of systematic research and writings of music history (musicology), also with the focus of German composers.⁴⁷ At the same time when German composers could be proud of their musical legacy, they were to be troubled by the very same thing, a phenomenon which Brahms experienced.

Prominent nineteenth-century composers such as Mendelssohn, Liszt (non-German but active in Germany), Schumann, Wagner, and Brahms perceived history differently and continued in different artistic directions, according to their aesthetics.⁴⁸ Among them, Brahms would be the most well-known for his struggle and eventual success with history, in an era that works of living composers had to compete with the works of dead composers for a place in concert halls, with slim chance of survival. One familiar with his biographies would know his upbringing and musical training which emphasized the classics and the tradition.⁴⁹ His reserved, studious, and non-flamboyant character, and his alignment with the Schumanns eventually led him on a path built on historical legacy and put him at odds with the New German School. As a lifelong student of music he studied music history and music of the past masters along with some of the most important musicologists of his time.⁵⁰ In order to improve his own technique of composition, he exchanged counterpoint exercises with Joseph Joachim, an act that not only benefited his works but also contributed to the continuation of a musical legacy

⁴⁷ Ibid. Dahlhaus described this as “patriotism” in his *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 327-28.

⁴⁸ These were literally three generations of composers. Imogen Fellingner, “Brahms’s ‘Way’: A Composer’s Self-view,” in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 49-51.

⁴⁹ For example, see Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms* (Vienna: Wiener Verlag, 1904-1914), 4 vols., also accessible from <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/254348101.html> (accessed Mar. 7, 2013), Florence May, *The Life of Johannes Brahms*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: William Reeves, 1905), 2 vols., and Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

⁵⁰ Karl Geiringer, “Brahms as a Musicologist,” *The Musical Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (Autumn 1983): 463-464, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741976>.

since the Renaissance masters.⁵¹ As a composer he attempted, worked, and conquered the musical styles, forms, and genres that had historical associations, in his *Ein deutsches Requiem*, his variations for keyboard, the four symphonies, various choral works, chamber works, and organ works.⁵² As a performer and conductor he programmed and conducted many early music performances in his recitals and during his tenures in Detmold, with the Vienna Singakademie, and with the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde.

The supporters of Brahms and many academic institutions immortalized Brahms within the ranks of classical masters soon after his death, due to his historicist aesthetics and compositional methodology.⁵³ His audience and supporters might not have understood most of his larger works at the initial hearing, but the monumental and Germanic qualities exhibited in his works demanded respect.⁵⁴ His success with forms and genres associated with past masters, especially with *Ein deutsches Requiem* and the First Symphony, and his connections with the field of musicology, had quickly established himself in the museum of classical music, as part of the canon, and as a continuous subject of importance in music research.⁵⁵

⁵¹ May, "Chapter VII: 1855-1856," in *The Life of Johannes Brahms*, vol. 1, 197-198.

⁵² For example, Katherine Lenore Fitzgibbon, "Historicism and Nationalism in the German Requiems of Brahms, Reger, and Distler" (DMA diss., Boston University, 2008), 34-86, ProQuest AAT 3314016, examines the historicism in Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*. Joseph Dillon Ford, "Derivative Historicism in Music," in *Orpheus in the Twenty-First Century*, 2003, accessed October 30, 2011, http://www.newmusicclassics.com/orpheus_22.html, discusses Brahms's Handel Variations, op. 24.

⁵³ See Margaret Notley, *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5, and Leon Botstein, "Brahms and Nineteenth-Century Painting," *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 2 (Autumn 1990), 154-168, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746200>.

⁵⁴ Peter Gay, "Aimez-vous Brahms?" in *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 231-256, originally published in *Salmagundi*, no. 36 (Winter 1977), 16-35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40546958>.

⁵⁵ See the Dissertation Abstract of Roger Scott Moseley, "Brief Immortality: Recasting History in the Music of Brahms," (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2004), 1-2, ProQuest AAT 908182998.

1.3 Methodology and Selection Criteria

Many scholars in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries consider Brahms to be highly successful as a historicist composer. Indeed, the majority of music scholars whom I cited above for their definitions and interpretations on musical historicism, discuss Brahms fleetingly or extensively in their polemics on historicism.⁵⁶ Initially, the reception of Brahms the historicist in his time and in the early twentieth century range from one extreme to another. Despite the long and diverse history of Brahms studies, analyses, and reception history, it was only in the late 1960s that scholars began to use the term “musical historicism” prominently and positively in Brahms scholarship, and have since developed over time, depending on their historical context, scholarly trends, available resources, and the scholars’ perspectives on musical historicism.

Chronologically speaking, the earliest essay I examine extensively for this thesis is “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen” by Imogen Fellingner, from the book *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik* edited by Walter Wiora published in 1969.⁵⁷ This is probably the first publication that organized and compiled its contents under the umbrella of “Historismus.” The first writing that associates Brahms with historicism, however, did not begin with Fellingner. The earliest publication I found is *Jahr und Jahrgang* (1897), in which the authors regard Brahms as a major figure in the German-speaking land, and recorded his death.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, 69, Wolff, “Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music: An Essay,” Walter Frisch, *Modernism: Music and the Arts*, 149, Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 675-743, and Ford, *Orpheus in the Twenty-First Century*.

⁵⁷ Imogen Fellingner, “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen,” in *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, ed. Walter Wiora, Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts 14 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1969), 147-167.

⁵⁸ Gustav Hillard, Otto Brües, Alexander Lernet-Holenia, *Jahr und Jahrgang 1897* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1897), 66, accessed February 22, 2013, <http://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=o0AKAAAAIAAJ&rdid=book-o0AKAAAAIAAJ&rdot=1>.

This thesis is a historiographical study and review of selected Anglophone and German scholarly writings on Brahms and musical historicism from the late 1960s to 2010s. My thesis is theoretical-philosophical in nature, focusing on “historiographical problems such as change and causality.”⁵⁹ Therefore, unlike scholarly works based on Brahms’s life and work that draw heavily on textual scholarship, archival research, and theoretical analyses, my thesis relies on existing publication of music scholars on Brahms as primary source, or in Kevin Korsyn’s sardonic words, “to talk about talking about music.”⁶⁰ Since there is a limit of time and scope, works discussed in this thesis are selective. While writings before the 1960s that exhibit the connection of historical thoughts and Brahms will not be discussed in depth, as well as many Brahms-related writings not concerning historicism, some of such references will be utilized as satellite works or supporting evidence in order to consolidate certain arguments.

This chapter has offered an overview of the definitions and movement of historicism and musical historicism from the nineteenth century to the present, drawing them to Brahms when necessary. The selection criteria for Brahms scholarly writings in chapters two, three, and four will be based on three aspects: 1) the usage of the term “historicism,” 2) demonstration of elements of historicism, and 3) according to chronological order by decades. Studies selected based on the first criteria will include a commentary on how the scholar defined the term and the extent to which s/he employed it, and if possible relate such usage to the second criteria. Studies selected under the second criteria are mostly writings that exhibited strong elements of historicism, such as historical thoughts and practices. This includes the studies of past music and music

⁵⁹ Vincent Duckles, et al., “Musicology,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46710>.

⁶⁰ Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34.

history in chapter two, compositional or performance practice that evoke the past but with a firm ground in the present and progression in chapter three, and critical reception highlighting historical context in chapter four. While trying to select publications that can bring out the changes in scholarship from one decade to another, the third criteria also invites the most criticism, since it is difficult to reach a consensus on the study that best represents the changes in Brahms and musical historicism scholarship of a decade, and I must admit the possibility of overlooking certain sources related to this topic that are deemed important by other scholars. Last but not least, the final chapter is a summary and conclusion of how musical historicism in the scholarship of Brahms has evolved through time, and has become imperative in the studies and understanding of Brahms's life, works, and historical position.

CHAPTER II

“BRAHMS AS A MUSICOLOGIST”

2.1 Introduction

Considering whether Brahms was or could be qualified as a musicologist seems appropriate for several reasons. First would be the importance of history in Brahms’s life. Secondly, when Brahms continued to consolidate himself as a worthy composer in the 1860s, he continued to actively engage himself in the study of music history, especially in editing early music for publication,⁶¹ and was acquainted with several prominent musicologists of his time. In the same decade (1863), as musicology rose as a discipline, Friedrich Chrysander, one of the pioneers of musicology and a friend of Brahms, proposed that musicology should be a science,⁶² and was a move identical to the objective of historicism in the second-half of nineteenth century. Lastly, the historicist’s thinking of an idea (*Anschauung*), requires supporting and complementary actions (*Praxis*) in order to increase understanding (*Verstehen*), and knowledge (*Wissenschaft*), to “devise new applications” continuously, was something Brahms practiced throughout

⁶¹ Musicology is a discipline with a developing scope through time. It is beneficial to consider Brahms as a musicologist by taking the historical context into account, not limiting to a particular era’s perspective. Vincent Duckles and Jann Pasler, in their entry “musicology” for *Grove Music Online*, outline the broad definition of musicology as “the scholarly study of music,” and quoted AMS’s definition in 1955 where musicology was defined as “a field of knowledge having as its object the investigation of the art of music as physical, psychological, aesthetic, and cultural phenomenon.” Therefore, a musicologist is someone who studies the outlined criteria systematically. Editorial tasks of early music, which involve source study and archival research, is one of the sub-disciplines of musicology. Vincent Duckles, et al., “Musicology,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46710>.

⁶² Vincent Duckles, et al., “Musicology.”

his life, thanks to the inspiration and knowledge he found in early music.⁶³ The topic of Brahms's profound connection to early music has remained popular for more than a century. Such biographers as Max Kalbeck, Florence May, Walter Niemann, Siegfried Kross, Michael Musgrave and Jan Swafford documented, mostly in a fleeting matter, accounts of his teaching, rehearsals, performances, and editing and source studies of early music. Scholars who specialized in Brahms's historicist practice have provided highly detailed studies. Virginia Hancock focused on Brahms's study and collection of early choral music and its influence on his composition.⁶⁴ Imogen Fellingner writes on Brahms's historicist thinking and practice in her essays.⁶⁵ Michael Musgrave and Siegfried Kross assess the influence and weight of history on Brahms's compositions in their writings.⁶⁶ More recently, Roger Moseley, Jacquelyn Sholes, and Heather Platt research on Brahms's allusions to composers of the past.⁶⁷

⁶³ David Fallows, "Musicology," in *Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford University Press, 2011), accessed November 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e4633>.

⁶⁴ Virginia Hancock, "Brahms and His Library of Early Music: The Effects of His Study of Renaissance and Baroque Music on His Choral Writing," (DMA diss., University of Oregon, 1977), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/907303480?accountid=5683>, "The Growth of Brahms's Interest in Early Music, and its Effect on his Own Choral Compositions," in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary, and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 27-40, and "Brahms's Links with German Renaissance Music: A Discussion of Selected Choral Works," in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 95-110.

⁶⁵ Imogen Fellingner, "Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen," in *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, ed. Walter Wiora. Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts 14 (Regensburg, Germany: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1969), 147-167; "Brahms's View of Mozart," in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 41-57, and "Brahms's 'Way': A Composer's Self-view," in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 49-58.

⁶⁶ Michael Musgrave, "Historical Influence in the Growth of Brahms's Requiem," *Music & Letters* 53, no. 1 (Jan. 1972), 3-17, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/733656>, and Siegfried Kross, "Brahms the Symphonist," in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary, and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 125-145.

⁶⁷ Roger Scott Moseley, "Brief Immortality: Recasting History in the Music of Brahms," (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2004), ProQuest AAT 3146959, Jacquelyn Sholes, "Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism? Reconsidering Allusion and Extramusical Meaning in the 1854 Version of Brahms's B-major Trio," *19th-Century Music* 34, no. 1 (Summer 2010), 61-86, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2010.34.1.061>, and Heather Platt, "Probing the Meaning of

The main focus of this chapter is to survey the writings of several scholars, whose concern was solely on Brahms's role in music history and his participation in what was viewed as a scientific study of music, that initially associated with the emergence of musicology as a field of study, asserting an active role with editing works and score source studies, not just by performing, teaching, and collecting. I begin with Karl Geiringer's essay, "Brahms als Musikhistoriker" (1933), where he begs its readers to address two provocative questions: Can we consider Brahms as a music historian or musicologist? How do musicologists of different eras see Brahms in this role?

2.2 Karl Geiringer: "Brahms als Musikhistoriker" [1933] and "Brahms as a Musicologist" [1983]⁶⁸

Both Karl Geiringer's "Brahms als Musikhistoriker," written in 1933 for a Festschrift during Brahms's centennial birth year, and later its English version "Brahms as a Musicologist" issued in 1983 — Brahms's sesquicentennial birth year, are not only significant in the hard facts they presented to the researchers of his library but also in Geiringer's initiative to label Brahms a music historian and a musicologist.⁶⁹ In order to

Brahms's Allusions to Haydn," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 42, no. 1 (June 2011), 33-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41228641>.

⁶⁸ Karl Geiringer, "Brahms als Musikhistoriker," *Die Musik* 25, no. 8 (May 1933): 571-78, and "Brahms as a Musicologist," *The Musical Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (Autumn 1983): 463-470, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741976>.

⁶⁹ Geiringer studied musicology under Adler, Fischer, Sachs and Wolf. He was awarded a PhD by University of Vienna. He was the curator of Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in 1930 succeeding Mandyczewski, starting his studies in Brahms and Haydn. He finally settled in Santa Barbara in 1962. He wrote articles for *Grove Dictionary*, was a national AMS president in 1955-56, wrote extensive studies on Brahms, Haydn and J. S. Bach, and contributed to the development of the musicology programs at Boston University and at the University of California at Santa Barbara. See Cecil Hill and Paula Morgan, Geiringer, Karl (Johannes)," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10832>, and Heather Platt, *Johannes Brahms: A Guide to Research*, Routledge Music Bibliographies (New York: Routledge, 2003), 313. She notes that "Brahms as a Musicologist" is the English version of "Brahms als Musikhistoriker."

gain insights on Geiringer's motives, it is important to consider "Brahms als Musikhistoriker" in its historical context.

The year 1933 witnessed the escalated growth of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP, or Nazi Party) that led to the darkest period in the history of Germany, which at that time was still recuperating from the First World War's after-effects, paying dearly with innumerable losses of human life, severe military restriction and abject economical hardship, the latter of which was worsened by the Great Depression.⁷⁰ There was a lack of success for the scholarly celebration of Brahms's centennial in 1933, and these socio-politico-economic factors could very well be the reasons why, considering both Anglophone and Germanic nations were hit equally hard.⁷¹ The consequences of the First World War fueled nationalist sentiments to dangerous levels, the extremities of which were represented by the Nazis.

The assessment by Daniel Beller-McKenna on Geiringer's biography of Brahms, (*Brahms: His Life and Works*), sheds some light on the motivation of Geiringer in writing "Brahms als Musikhistoriker."⁷² Geiringer's biography was published in 1936, very close to the year that essay was published, and within the same historical context. Geiringer, together with many German Brahms scholars of that particular time, was not afraid to laud Brahms for his Germanic qualities such as his work ethic, patriotism, and erudite

⁷⁰ See Cristiano Ristuccia, "The German Economy Between the Wars, Lecture 5: The German Great Depression," Cambridge University, 2013, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/teach/ristuccia/p2bp14g.htm>, and Doris Bergen, "Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State – Factors in Hitler's Rise to Power, 1918-1933," Community Television of Southern California, 2004-2005, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.pbs.org/auschwitz/40-45/background>.

⁷¹ Observed by Kevin Korsyn, "Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology," *Music Analysis* 12, no. 1 (Mar. 1993), 90, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/854077>.

⁷² Daniel Beller-McKenna, "The Rise and Fall of Brahms the German," *Journal of Musicological Research* 20 (2001), 203.

knowledge, for both academic and political reasons.⁷³ In Geiringer's case, he zealously shows the depth and scope of Brahms's knowledge and interest, his penchant for hard work, and his esteemed circle of musicological friends.⁷⁴ He presents such evidence that could qualify Brahms as a musicologist, as his vast collection of early music manuscripts, valuable first editions, books on music history, theoretical treatises and composers' biographies, in addition to Brahms's meticulous studying and annotation of these sources, his editorial achievements, and his choice of performing early music.⁷⁵ We must, however, keep in mind that Geiringer was in Vienna at that time.⁷⁶ If we consider his Jewish ancestry and Liberalism-influenced scholastic career, it seems that extreme nationalism was less plausible in his case. This is arguable, though, because Geiringer possibly wanted to assert the superiority of German musicians in terms of versatility and intellect, by highlighting Brahms's prowess in musicological activities.

While Geiringer is not the first person to write about Brahms's musicological bent, he might be the first to label him as a *Musikhistoriker* or Musicologist.⁷⁷ Unsurprisingly, scholars who later researched Brahms's interest in early music knew both essays well, since Geiringer's essays are secondary literature that provide supplementary evidence, and are from a reliable source.⁷⁸ It then raises another two provocative questions: how do

⁷³ Ibid. See Beller-McKenna's commentary on Brahms's biographies by Geiringer and Niemann.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Also see Karl and Irene Geiringer, "The Brahms Library in the 'Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde,' Wien," *Notes, Second Series* 30, no. 1 (Sep. 1973): 6-14, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/896019>, and Karl Geiringer, M. D. Herter Norton, trans., "Brahms as a Reader and Collector," *The Musical Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (Apr. 1933), 158-168, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/738796>.

⁷⁶ Hill and Morgan, "Geiringer, Karl (Johannes)."

⁷⁷ As mentioned before, many other scholars write about Brahms's connection with early music in their own ways.

⁷⁸ Consider for example Virginia Hancock, who cited both "Brahms als Musikhistoriker" and "Brahms as a Musicologist" in her essay "Brahms and Early Music: Evidence from his Library and his Choral Compositions" in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspective*, George Bozarth ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 29.

other musicologists and Brahms scholars think about Geiringer's labeling, and does this labeling influence other Brahms scholars?

Finding a review of these essays becomes a daunting task for me. It is surprising that there exist no single review of both essays.⁷⁹ Styra Avins describes Geiringer's general style of writing in her review of *On Brahms and His Circle*, although she does not address both essays:

[T]he style of Geiringer's work is of a different era, more narrative and less analytical than contemporary research...essays were written entirely without jargon... did not generally look below the surface...was content simply to present the remarkable material he had stumbled on so by chance...⁸⁰

I suggest two reasons that might explain why musicologists after Geiringer do not question his motive of calling Brahms a music historian or musicologist. First, Geiringer is one of the most authoritative scholars on Brahms during his time and had served as the curator of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde; and second, Geiringer presents his Gesellschaft findings as facts in a narrative way, rarely with personal criticism. These two reasons are arguably unconvincing in the eyes of a post-modernist, but then it is also possible that they simply find criticizing the label unnecessary and redundant, turning back to the point that Brahms was more important as a composer.

In Geiringer's eyes, Brahms could qualify as a musicologist, or at least a *Musikhistoriker*, due to his activities in music research, archival and editorial works, all branches of musicology according to the codification of Guido Adler in the early twentieth century, and by the categorization of the musicology entry in Grove Music

⁷⁹ As an exception, consider Heather Platt's *Johannes Brahms: A Guide to Research*, Routledge Music Bibliographies (New York: Routledge, 2003), which provides annotated bibliography of both essays, since detailed criticism is not her concern here.

⁸⁰ Styra Avins, review of *On Brahms and His Circle: Essays and Documentary Studies* by Karl Geiringer, *Music and Letters* 89, no. 4 (Nov 2008): 650-653, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/mal/summary/v089/89.4.avins.html>.

Online.⁸¹ Two statements by Geiringer posit that Brahms's meticulousness and industry in music editing are comparable to the pioneers of musicology at that time:

[Brahms] followed the general trend of musicology and used the source material in his possession to correct the music scores in his library and restore the original text, thus freeing it from later changes and additions.⁸²

A substantial number of newer editions in his library containing corrections in his hand testify to his unceasing endeavors to obtain the authentic version of each work just as its composer had written it down.⁸³

He also lists some of Brahms's achievements in editorial works, including "the W. F. Bach's F-major Sonata for two claviers...two C. P. E. Bach's Violin Sonatas in B minor and C minor. For Chrysander's *Collected Edition* of Handel's works, he provided thirteen chamber duets and two tercets. Together with Chrysander he also edited four volumes of keyboard compositions by Couperin."⁸⁴ Brahms preferred to remain anonymous when most of these edited works were published; but more recent scholarship accredits him with at least the editing of the two Bachs' works mentioned above and a number of Schubert's works such as twenty Ländler, twelve German Dances, three Ecossaises and a Mass.⁸⁵ Brahms also edited works by such composers as Schumann, Chopin, Mozart, Handel, and Couperin. The most impressive work among them would be the editing of

⁸¹ See Vincent Duckles, et al., "Musicology," and John Kimmey, Jr., *A Critique in Musicology: Clarifying the Scope, Limits and Purposes of Musicology*, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 281-3.

⁸² Geiringer, "Brahms as a Musicologist."

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid. There are questions on Brahms's participation in the editing of Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin*. See section 2.6 of this chapter on Kelly's essay: Elaine Kelly, "An Unexpected Champion of François Couperin: Johannes Brahms and the 'Pièces de Clavecin'," *Music & Letters* 85, no. 4 (Nov. 2004): 576-601, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/music_and_letters/summary/v085/85.4kelly.html.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Also see Elaine Kelly, "Unexpected Champion of François Couperin," (2004), and David Brodbeck, "Brahms's Edition of Twenty Schubert Ländler: an Essay in Criticism," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspective*, George Bozarth ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 229-250.

Mozart's *Requiem* K. 626, as he fastidiously discerned the handwritings of Mozart and Süssmayr, in order to restore it to its original phase.⁸⁶

Geiringer further demonstrates Brahms's historical interest and musicological activities with his studies of parallel fifths and octaves (*Oktaven u. Quinten u. a.*). He deduces that Brahms "seemed to have considered presenting a thorough theoretical study on the topic," and not merely just a collection, since "[Brahms grouped] the progressions in various categories marked as 'correct,' 'good,' 'expressive,' 'characteristic,' but also 'careless,' 'bad,' and 'false.'"⁸⁷ It is hard to question Geiringer's assumption: Brahms was systematic, almost scientific in this study, presenting numerous examples he found in early music ranging from Clemens non Papa to Georges Bizet; expressing his criticisms and analyses in detail.⁸⁸ We must also not underestimate the theoretical and musicological value of this work. The theoretical rules regarding parallel fifths and octaves are somewhat ambiguous and their reception rather controversial in the nineteenth century, but Brahms's analyses explained the conditions of acceptable and unacceptable parallel octaves and fifths, and why certain rules governed the writings of these consecutive intervals, by relying on their aural effects. This could have been beneficial for music students, especially composers, since most of them rigidly stick with the rules by visual assessment, and this remains a problem among some music students

⁸⁶ Geiringer, "Brahms as a Musicologist," and George Henschel, *Personal Recollections of Johannes Brahms* (Boston: R. G. Badger, 1907), 34, which Geiringer did not cite. Cited via Imogen Fellinger, "Brahms's View of Mozart," in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 49.

⁸⁷ Geiringer, "Brahms as a Musicologist."

⁸⁸ See Paul Mast, "Brahms's Study, *Oktaven u. Quinten u. A.*: with Schenker's Commentary Translated," *The Music Forum* 5, ed. Felix Salzer, (1980), 1-196, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

even in more contemporary eras.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, notwithstanding the historical and theoretical qualities of this study and its worthiness for publication, *Octaven u. Quinten u. A.* was for Brahms's private use only.⁹⁰ Geiringer's notice that Brahms's study halted at the stage of collecting once again emphasizes how reserved and private Brahms was. Or it is Geiringer's cheerful hope that Brahms had published something to prove himself in the musicological realm — to be acknowledged as a musicologist?

Finally, Geiringer writes about Brahms's collection of early music and historical music books. Many musicologists would concur that being a collector of historical music books will not qualify the collector as a historian or musicologist, but Brahms set himself apart with his annotations. As annotations will involve both objective findings and personal criticism, these again display his erudition and seriousness in musical research other than the editorial works and early music studies. History and the knowledge of history played an important part not only in Brahms's musical career, but also in his everyday life. Musgrave, in his essay "The Cultural World of Brahms," highlights Brahms's "chief preoccupation" with "the study of history."

In addition to broad histories of civilization, such as Müller's General History of Mankind, Brahms naturally took a special interest in German history, possessing such sizable works as Sybel's seven-volume *Foundation of the German Empire* and Hausser's four-volume *German History*.⁹¹

Geiringer is indeed persuasive with his narration of empirical evidence that suggests Brahms was qualified to be a music historian or musicologist. After his 1933 essay "Brahms als Musikhistoriker," Brahms scholars do not appear to have been as eager as

⁸⁹ Robert Laudon, "The Debate about Consecutive Fifths: A Context for Brahms's Manuscript 'Oktaven und Quinten'," *Music & Letters* 73, no. 1 (Feb. 1992): 48-61, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/736146>, and Mast, "Brahms: Octaven u. Quinten."

⁹⁰ Geiringer, "Brahms as a Musicologist," and Mast, "Brahms: Octaven u. Quinten."

⁹¹ Michael Musgrave, "The Cultural World of Brahms," in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

Geiringer to prove Brahms to be a musicologist, but the next two essays, published in the 1980s, which I will discuss below, did not deny the denotation. It is very possible that Geiringer's discoveries in the form of these two essays provide future scholars with a springboard for further research (not counting "Brahms as a Musicologist" in 1983 to have an impact in the early 1980s), despite the fact that some authors do not cite these two essays.⁹²

2.3 Paul Mast: "Brahms's Study, Octaven u. Quinten u. A.: with Schenker's Commentary Translated" [1980]⁹³

Brahms's collection and studies of parallel fifths and octaves has been addressed by many scholars since the early twentieth century with Heinrich Schenker's commentary, later with Geiringer's essay and biography between the wars, and continues after the end and recuperation from World War II, up to the twenty-first century.⁹⁴ Other than Brahms's editorial works, *Octaven u. Quinten u. A.* is perhaps the most representative musicological/theoretical work of Brahms, and therefore plays an integral part in the discussion of Brahms's musicological role. Apart from Schenker's commentary, the most detailed study on Brahms's *Oktaven u. Quinten u. A.* would be Paul Mast's "Brahms's Study, Octaven u. Quinten u. A." (1980).⁹⁵ From Brahms's original eleven-page manuscript, to the addition of Schenker's commentary that spanned several pages, Mast

⁹² Out of the essays that discuss Brahms's musicological activities, Mast, Fellingner, and Kelly do not cite Geiringer. Hans Joachim Marx does cite him.

⁹³ Paul Mast, "Brahms's Study, Octaven u. Quinten u. A.: with Schenker's Commentary Translated," *The Music Forum* 5, ed. Felix Salzer (1980): 1-196. Other German sources spelled "Octaven" as "Oktaven."

⁹⁴ Schenker writes on this topic from the perspective of a theorist and analyst. Other scholars focusing on Brahms, early music and his historicist practice, such as Roger Moseley, Virginia Hancock, and Imogen Fellingner, mention this work in their writings as well.

⁹⁵ This essay originated from Paul Mast's master's thesis (1971) from Eastman School of Music, where he ultimately earned his doctoral degree in music theory. Retrieved from Eastman School of Music, "Theory Department Alumni," University of Rochester, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/theory/alumni/>.

expands it to almost two hundred pages.⁹⁶ Brahms's original collection and annotations were in a highly disorganized state, but Schenker's and Mast's efforts result in a work worthy as a theoretical treatise at the very least.⁹⁷ This also buffers the laudation of Geiringer on Brahms's study of parallels.

This project of Brahms has a straightforward and accurate title, as commented by both Schenker and Mast, but this project was very personal to Brahms as well, because Brahms's remarks of the parallels cannot avoid subjectivity. Brahms was noting down his acceptance, rejection, contemplation, and suspicions of these parallels, by relying predominantly on his aural judgment. This could cause controversy, particularly with dogmatic music theorists, or composers with different aesthetics and perception of parallel fifths and octaves. His practice was not extraordinary in his time, when composers and critics were inclined to express their aesthetics and argued with their opponents openly, some of them even with acrid sarcasm or downright bitterness.⁹⁸ If Brahms had considered publication, this might have been a reason to withhold his decision; but, if Brahms truly intended this project only for private use, it was a peculiar decision to allow it to survive his "house-cleaning," which suggests that Brahms valued the quality of this work.⁹⁹

The three-page introduction to this huge essay, however, also reveals Mast's opinion of Brahms's relationship with early music, which he set up with a descriptive list

⁹⁶ William Drabkin, review on *The Music Forum, Volume V* by Felix Salzer, *Music Analysis* 1, no. 2 (Jul. 1982): 205, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/854129>.

⁹⁷ Mast, building on Schenker's work, has organized Brahms's materials by deciphering his handwriting and the tightly-spaced musical examples, making it more accessible to readers.

⁹⁸ Consider as a fitting example how Wagnerians and Brahms's supporters criticized each other.

⁹⁹ Schenker's commentary, translated by Mast, "Brahms's Study, Octaven u. Quinten u. A.: with Schenker's Commentary Translated." Considering that he tried to retrieve and destroy his correspondence with his friends and acquaintances, and that the compositions he did not destroy were the ones he wished to publish posthumously, this decision is even more striking.

of acquaintances, collections and editorial work, a device that many scholars employ well into the twenty-first century.¹⁰⁰ He then concludes the introduction with “[t]hus the *Octaven u. Quinten* manuscript also offers a revealing view of Brahms the *musicologist* at work.”¹⁰¹ Geiringer is not alone in calling Brahms a musicologist. It is significant that Mast, a music theorist, describes Brahms as a *musicologist* and not suggesting he is a *theorist* of voice leading and parallel writings, despite the fact that Brahms’s work does have a clear pedagogical value in music theory, especially in counterpoint studies.¹⁰² Although a trained theorist, Mast’s approach was musicological: source studying, dating of Brahms’s manuscript, and further commentary by providing his interpretations on Brahms’s annotations. By detailed examinations of paper type, ink, writing style and other referential methods, Mast “[reconstructs] the chronology of the manuscripts.”¹⁰³ William Drabkin, a reviewer of Mast’s essay, also posits that Brahms’s *Oktaven u. Quinten* “offers major documentation of Brahms’s intimate knowledge of earlier music — probably the most intimate of any major composer before the twentieth-century,” but Drabkin is reserved in his assessment of whether this study influenced Brahms’s compositions and how it could influence them.¹⁰⁴ He also does not suggest if Brahms could qualify as a musicologist. There was no further commentary by Mast, nor supporting evidence, qualifying Brahms as a musicologist — just that fleeting remark in the introduction.

¹⁰⁰ Mast, “*Octaven u. Quinten u. A.*,” 2.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* The emphasis is mine.

¹⁰² The emphasis is mine.

¹⁰³ Drabkin, review on *The Music Forum*: 206.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

2.4 Imogen Fellerger: “Brahms’s View of Mozart” [1983]¹⁰⁵

Three years after the publication of Mast’s essay, Imogen Fellerger tackles Brahms’s relationship with Mozart in her 1983 essay “Brahms’s View of Mozart.”¹⁰⁶ Similar to other scholars who write about Brahms’s musicological activities, she includes collections, detailed studies and annotations, repertoire choice and performance practice, but here I will focus on the third section of this essay, on Brahms’s research of Mozart, including source study, editing, and commentary.¹⁰⁷

It is unfair to compare Fellerger and Mast regarding the concept of historicism, since Mast did not make a substantial comment on Brahms’s historicist thinking and practice, while Fellerger consciously accentuates Brahms’s awareness of his historical position, and how his early music research and other musical activities complemented and built on each other.¹⁰⁸ Compared with Geiringer’s and Mast’s essays, Fellerger considers a wider range of contextual factors, such as Brahms’s upbringing, his experience with Mozart during different times of his life, his historical position and the possible web-of-influence towards his psychological state, as each had a certain impact on how Brahms perceived Mozart. To overcome the enormous weight of history and

¹⁰⁵ Imogen Fellerger, “Brahms’s View of Mozart,” in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 41-57. Imogen Fellerger (1928-2001) is a German musicologist who specializes in Brahms. She completed a musical bibliography project of the 19th century while working at Cologne University and later in Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung. She was appointed chairman of IAML working group on music periodicals in 1979, and in 1990 became a member of the board of trustees of the Johannes-Brahms-Gesellschaft of Austria. Two of her most important musicological works are *Verzeichnis der Musikzeitschriften des 19. Jahrhunderts* (1968) and *Periodica Musicalia* (1789-1830). Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, et al., “Fellerger, Imogen,” in *Grove Music Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2001-) accessed November 16, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09454>.

¹⁰⁶ Fellerger, “Brahms’s View of Mozart,” 49. This collection of essays is published in 1983, the same year as “Brahms as a Musicologist,” but Fellerger certainly was aware of Geiringer’s earlier essay “Brahms als Musikhistoriker” published in 1933.

¹⁰⁷ Fellerger, “Brahms’s View of Mozart,” 47-52.

¹⁰⁸ See also Imogen Fellerger, “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen,” in *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, ed. Walter Wiora. Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts 14 (Regensburg, Germany: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1969), 147-167.

social expectations created by Schumann's "Neue Bahnen," Brahms not only made sure that he was well acquainted with Bach, Beethoven, and Schumann, but he also industriously expanded his research to other revered composers of the past, in this case it was Mozart.

Brahms was acquainted with some of Mozart's music rather early in his life, thanks to his training with his teacher Eduard Marxsen, but Fellingner suggests that he had not reached a definite view of the composer until the 1850s, which was after he started to study Mozart extensively.¹⁰⁹ In his library, Brahms had the autograph score of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor, and many other works in original editions, filled with annotations as the evidence of his study.¹¹⁰ Fellingner refers to Schenker and Mast as she calculated "about a tenth of [the examples in *Octaven u. Quinten u. A.*] is taken from Mozart's works," but categorizes this work as theoretical rather than musicological. Similar to Mast, she provides no further comment on this *Oktaven u. Quinten* or her categorization.

Fellingner connects Brahms to musicological research of Mozart, showing the impact of his opinion during his time and after his death, particularly to Köchel's catalogue of Mozart's works. The corrections by Brahms would not be possible, if he did not possess sufficient scholarly and practical knowledge of Mozart:

Brahms play[ed] an active part in the Mozart research of his time. His own copy of Köchel's *Verzeichniss* (1862)... shows various corrections and additions in his own hand... These were taken into consideration in Graf Waldersee's second edition (1905) and/or in Einstein's third edition (1937)... Brahms inserted names of composers for works wrongly ascribed to Mozart by Köchel, for example regarding KV 227 he noted in the margin: 'NB/John Bird.', meaning of course William Byrd... In addition he corrected orthographical errors, altering at KV 359 'Silimène'

¹⁰⁹ Fellingner, "Brahms's View of Mozart," 42-43.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 44.

to 'Celimène', following the manuscript... and supplied the names of poets...¹¹¹

Fellinger then raises questions parallel to those of Schenker and Mast, particularly on the survival of *Oktaven u. Quinten*.

It is not known whether Brahms noted these corrections and emendations for his own purposes alone, whether he passed them on to Köchel, from whose estate they came perhaps to Waldersee, or whether Brahms had sent them directly to the latter.¹¹²

Since Brahms was known to be ambivalent and reserved in his attitude towards many facets of his life, not only towards editorial work, it is difficult to answer these questions.¹¹³ There will perhaps never be an answer, if there is no mention of this topic in his correspondence with his friends — after all, these letters are part of the detective work.

Brahms's editorial activity on Mozart's works is a prime focus of Fellinger in this essay. He served as the advisor and editor to the *Collected Editions* of Mozart's works, giving advice to Ernst Rudorff during the editing of Mozart's *Concertos for One Wind Instrument with Orchestra*, and the *Requiem*, K. 626, earning the attention of music scholars, due to its notorious difficulty in identifying the different hands that completed the work.¹¹⁴ While Geiringer briefly mentions Brahms's editorial triumph regarding this requiem, Fellinger offers details surrounding the editorial job by citing primary sources, such as the correspondences and reminiscences of George Henschel, Brahms, Otto Jahn, Friedrich Chrysander and Joseph Joachim.¹¹⁵ Ultimately the publication of the Requiem represented Brahms's perspective of the two manuscripts he referred to: he differentiated

¹¹¹ Ibid, 47.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ See Karl Geiringer. "Brahms the Ambivalent," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspective*, ed. George Bozarth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 1-4, and Elaine Kelly "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," (2004).

¹¹⁴ Fellinger, "Brahms's View of Mozart," 48.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 49-50.

notes written by Mozart and Süssmayr with the letters “M.” and “S.,” and “two other hands that have tried to complete the score.”¹¹⁶ See Figure 1.

Hostias.

Corni di Bassetto. (S.) **Andante. (S.)**
(Senza Tromboni.)

Fagotti. (S.)

Violino I. (M.) (S.)

Violino II. (M.) (S.)

Viola. (M.) (S.)

Soprano. (M.) **TUTTI**
Ho - stias et pre - ces ti - bi, Do - mi - ne, ti - bi,

Alto. (M.) **TUTTI**
Ho - stias et pre - ces ti - bi, Do - mi - ne, ti - bi,

Tenore. (M.) **TUTTI**
Ho - stias et pre - ces ti - bi, Do - mi - ne, ti - bi,

Basso. (M.) **TUTTI**
Ho - stias et pre - ces ti - bi, Do - mi - ne, ti - bi,

Violoncello, Basso ed Organo. (M.) **SOLO** **TUTTI**
Andante. (S.)

W. A. M. 626.

Figure 1: Beginning of Hostias. Note the markings of (M.) and (S.)¹¹⁷

By stating that “it is quite astonishing and of great interest to observe the detail and erudition of Brahms’s musicological work on Mozart,” Fellingner’s implication of Brahms as a capable musicologist/historian is powerful, despite the fact that she does not openly label Brahms as one.¹¹⁸ With regard to this statement and to Brahms’s editorial works, there is another curious remark from her: “...Brahms wanted the edition published without his name appearing as editor or arranger; this was because he did not consider

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Requiem in D minor, K. 626*, ed. Johannes Brahms, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Werke, 24 (supplementary) (Leipzig, Germany: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1877), 65. Retrieved from [http://imslp.org/wiki/Requiem_in_D_minor,_K.626_\(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Requiem_in_D_minor,_K.626_(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus)).

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 48.

such a task to be an achievement in any real artistic sense.”¹¹⁹ There is no elaboration or citation whatsoever that indicates the source of this remark. Indeed, Brahms was vague in his attitude towards editing. Geiringer attributes Brahms’s anonymity to his humbleness, but Kelly saw Brahms’s preference of anonymity as self-doubt of his own editorial ability.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, the next essay “Brahms und die Musikforschung,” sheds light on the grounds where scholars can consider Brahms as a musicologist.

2.5 Hans Joachim Marx: “Brahms und die Musikforschung” [1997] ¹²¹

Another prosperous year for Brahms scholarship was 1997, the centennial of Brahms’s death. It was befitting for music scholars, mostly Brahms specialists, to organize an International Brahms Conference (Internationaler Brahms-Kongreß), this time in Hamburg, Brahms’s hometown.¹²² The event was a rendezvous of Anglo-American and German Brahms scholars (as was the 1983 conference) with such familiar names as Robert Pascall, Camilla Cai, Imogen Fellingner, Michael Musgrave, Ludwig Finscher, Constantin Floros, Otto Biba, Siegfried Kross, Friedhelm Krummacher, Christian Martin

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 46.

¹²⁰ See Geiringer “Brahms as a Musicologist,” and Elaine Kelly “Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin.”

¹²¹ Hans Joachim Marx, “Brahms und die Musikforschung,” in *Johannes Brahms: Quellen-Text-Rezeption-Interpretation*, ed. Friedhelm Krummacher, et al. (Munich, Germany: G. Henle Verlag, 1999), 291-303. Marx is a German musicologist. He studied at the Musikhochschule in Leipzig, at Freiburg University, and Basel University, earning his doctorate from the latter. He held teaching posts at the University of Zurich, University of Bonn, and University of Hamburg. He specializes in Baroque choral music, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries’ instrumental music, and the works of Handel and Corelli. His publication includes *Habilitation* (1972), entries for major music dictionaries such as *MGG1*, *MGG2*, and *The New Grove Dictionary*. He also serves as the editor for *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kirchenmusik* series, *Veröffentlichungen der Internationalen Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe* series, and the new collected edition of Corelli’s works. Hans Eggebrecht and Konrad Küster, “Marx, Hans Joachim,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-) accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/17955>.

¹²² The 1933 conference was in Berlin, and the Brahms conferences in 1983 were held in various cities, such as Washington D. C., Vienna, Hamburg, and Leipzig. See Platt, *Johannes Brahms: A Guide to Research* (2003), 27-32.

Schmidt, Walter Frisch, Virginia Hancock, and many others.¹²³ German musicologist Hans Joachim Marx presented his paper “Brahms und die Musikforschung,” an essay that could arguably be the successor of Geiringer’s “Brahms als Musikhistoriker” and “Brahms as a Musicologist.” Hence, another German scholar argued for the acknowledgement of Brahms to be a musicologist, or at least a music scholar. As with Geiringer, Marx does not just fleetingly commenting on Brahms’s achievement in musicology, but also elucidates and discusses supporting evidence with erudite speculation.¹²⁴

By the 1990s, musicology had undergone a paradigm shift.¹²⁵ In Nicholas Cook’s words, “the 1990s were a time of rapid change in musicology, prompted largely by a dizzying array of influences from different strands of critical, literary, and interdisciplinary theory.”¹²⁶ Brahms would not be seriously considered as a musicologist or music researcher by the standards of the 1990s, but Marx urges us to see Brahms in the light of his time, to “understand and justify the ‘sharpened sense of history’ of Brahms the artist in the historical and philosophical context of the nineteenth-century.”¹²⁷ By utilizing the full advantage of this “paradigm shift” that impacted musicological methodology, particularly scholars’ use of subjective criticism, Marx questions the validity of the claim “Brahms as a musicologist.”

¹²³ Friedhelm Krummacher, et al., ed., *Johannes Brahms: Quellen-Text-Rezeption-Interpretation* (Munich, Germany: G. Henle Verlag, 1999), 5-7.

¹²⁴ Marx is considering Brahms at least as a music scholar, which would be a suitable translation of “Musikforscher.” The German word “Musikforscher” can also be translated as “musicologist,” but Marx does not consider Brahms as the same type of musicologist or music historian as were Chrysander and Jahn. He does comment that the notion “Brahms as a musicologist” is usually touched on cursorily.

¹²⁵ Alastair William, *Constructing Musicology* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), back cover.

¹²⁶ Nicholas Cook’s review of Alastair Williams’s *Constructing Musicology* is on the back cover of the book.

¹²⁷ Hans Joachim Marx, “Brahms und die Musikforschung,” in *Johannes Brahms: Quellen-Text-Rezeption-Interpretation*, ed. Friedhelm Krummacher, et al. (Munich, Germany: G. Henle Verlag, 1999), 292.

Strictly speaking, Marx is more famed as a Corelli and Handel specialist. He probably becomes acquainted with Brahms's musicological works via his research on Corelli's and Handel's sources, as he is "the general editor of the new collected edition of Corelli's works."¹²⁸ Brahms did not edit Corelli's or Handel's works (his friend Chrysander did both, and Joseph Joachim contributed to Corelli's), but sources/edition studies will definitely involve Friedrich Chrysander, and eventually touched on Brahms, if one considers historical context in depth.

Marx structures his essay in three parts. He devotes a large part in describing Brahms's library collection, interest in German and translated literature, his studies and collections of music treatises, autograph manuscripts and first editions, and his editorial activity with heavy emphasis on Mozart's *Requiem*.¹²⁹ Marx also inserts various correspondences between Brahms and his friends—a move identical to the empirical presentations of Geiringer and Fellingner.¹³⁰ He does, however, accentuate Brahms's education, since the process shaped his preferences and his view on the importance of proper education.¹³¹ This is not included by other scholars in the discussions of Brahms's musicological activity, but eventually provides a plausible answer for Brahms's zeal towards early music research.¹³² In his concluding section, Marx demonstrates his critical insight on Brahms's inner thoughts and evaluates his research activities using his musicologist and historian friends as yardsticks.

¹²⁸ Eggebrecht and Küster, "Marx, Hans Joachim."

¹²⁹ Marx, "Brahms und die Musikforschung," 291-303.

¹³⁰ See "Brahms as a Musicologist" and "The Brahms Library in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde" by Geiringer, and Imogen Fellingner, "Brahms's 'Way': a Composer's Self-view," in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Michael Musgrave "Brahms's View of Mozart" and "Brahms und die Musikvergänger Epochen."

¹³¹ Fellingner explored this topic in her essay "Brahms's 'Way'."

¹³² Not even Elaine Kelly discusses this perspective in 2004. Fellingner, however, hints on this in "Brahms's View of Mozart," but is less explicit than Marx.

Marx does not simply claim that Brahms was a musicologist. Taking Marx's perspective into account, we can interpret that Geiringer's and Mast's writings of "Brahms as a musicologist" and "Brahms the musicologist" meant "Brahms in the role of musicologist" rather than "Brahms was a musicologist." Marx, however, is more unequivocal in his proposals and reservations; he challenges the notion with:

Brahms was, thus, neither a philologist nor a historian, despite he was keenly interested in the historical music research of his time. He was rather a music scholar, who was exclusively interested in the music and who was fascinated by the heterogeneity of music of the past. He only wanted to explore the music itself, not undertaking historical investigations, let alone analytical observations.¹³³

As paradoxical it appears to be, Marx's statement does not entirely discount the idea of Brahms as a musicologist, as he explains that, while

Brahms was not such a subject-specific historian as Chrysander, Nottebohm, or Spitta. Although he pursued 'antiquarian studies'... he did not want them to be discussed in public... He did not commit himself to the source-critical method that Jahn had inaugurated, did not take up the 'objective' position of the historian, who just analyzes and describes the artwork from a distance...¹³⁴

Brahms did contribute to the development of musicology as an intellectual, history-oriented discipline.

As the debates and discussions on Brahms's musicological achievements continue, one should consider Brahms's motive for his fervent music research: to him, the

¹³³ Marx, "Brahms und die Musikforschung," 300. Original text: "Brahms war also kein Philologe, kein Historiker im strengen Sinne, obwohl er an der historischen Musikforschung seiner Zeit lebhaft Anteil nahm. Er war vielmehr ein Musikforscher, dem es ausschließlich um Musik ging und den die Verschiedenartigkeit der Musik vergangener Zeiten faszinierte. Er wollte nur die Musik selbst erforschen, keine historischen Untersuchungen geschweige denn analytischen Betrachtungen anstellen."

¹³⁴ Ibid., original text: "Brahms war aber kein Fachhistoriker wie Chrysander, Nottebohm oder Spitta. Er trieb zwar 'antiquarische Studien'... wollte aber nicht, daß sie in der Öffentlichkeit diskutiert wurden... Brahms hat sich nicht der von Jahn inaugurierten quellenkritischen Methode verschrieben, hat nicht den 'objektiven' Standpunkt des Historikers eingenommen, der das musikalische Kunstwerk aus der Distanz nur analysiert und beschreibt..."

“antiquarian tendency” of exploring music from the past was an “artistic necessity.”¹³⁵

According to the Marx, Brahms’s dissatisfaction with his general and music education was why he felt the need to research the music of the past. It was never Brahms’s intention to be a musicologist or music historian like Chrysander, Spitta, et al. The consideration by future musicologists of Brahms the master-composer as a major participant in musicology is more of a by-product.

2.6 Elaine Kelly: “An Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin: Johannes Brahms and the ‘Pièces de Clavecin’” [2004]¹³⁶

With Marx’s essay, it may appear that the discussion of Brahms as a musicologist, or his role as one, had arrived at a terminal point, but the scholarly attention does not cease, as we can see in Elaine Kelly’s essay “An Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin: Johannes Brahms and the ‘Pièces de Clavecin’” (2004). There is no lack of previous scholarship that documented Brahms’s interest in early music and related activities, but by comparing the attention given to his editorial tasks on works by German composers to those by non-German composers, Kelly’s essay implicitly informs us that there remains a

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Elaine Kelly, “An Unexpected Champion of François Couperin: Johannes Brahms and the ‘Pièces de Clavecin’,” *Music & Letters* 85, no. 4 (November 2004): 576-601, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/music_and_letters/summary/v085/85.4kelly.html. Elaine Kelly is currently a lecturer in the University of Edinburgh, UK. Her research interests focus mainly on musical thought and practice in the German Democratic Republic, music historiography, Brahms, and nineteenth-century historicism. Her publications include a co-editing book with Amy Wlodarski *Art Outside the Lines: New Perspective on GDR Art Culture* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2011), “Evolution versus Authenticity: Johannes Brahms, Robert Franz, and Continuo Practice in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *19th-Century Music* 30, no. 2 (2006), and “Imagining Richard Wagner: the Janus-Head of a Divided Nation,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008). Her PhD dissertation topic is “‘A More Beautiful Era of Art:’ Figurenlehre, Style Brisé and other Baroque Elements in Brahms’s Piano Compositions — Brahms’s Involvement as a Scholar, Performer and Editor of Baroque Keyboard Music and the Effect It Exerted on His Compositional Style” (Queen’s University of Belfast, 2002). Reid School of Music – ECA, “Elaine Kelly,” The University of Edinburgh, 2012, accessed November 20, 2012, http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/edinburgh-college-art/music/staff/academic-staff?person_id=14&cw_xml=publications.php.

lack of research on Brahms's relationship with Francois Couperin's complete edition, a project pioneered by his friend Friedrich Chrysander. This essay is a focused and rather detailed study of the circumstances surrounding Brahms's devotion to Couperin concerning three aspects: performance, editorial, and compositional.¹³⁷ In light of the essays I discussed above, especially taking the departure point of Geiringer, I will discuss two main issues of Kelly's essay: First, the extent to which Brahms contributed to the editing and publication of Francois Couperin's complete edition in the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst* series,¹³⁸ and, second, the historical context and significance of the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst* and Couperin's *Pièces de clavecin* in nineteenth-century Germany, specifically why Chrysander wanted to include Brahms in the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst* and Brahms's role in Chrysander's designation.

Similar to Fellingner, Kelly provides us with a comprehensive historical context, highlighting the historicism movement and nationalism in the nineteenth century. The "preoccupation of the past" and "the need to establish a sense of national heritage" gradually shaped the conditions that led to the revival of "old German art" and were the motives behind the inclusion of Couperin and Corelli in the *Denkmäler*, Kelly posits.¹³⁹

Once again there is an abundant amount of documentation on Brahms's interest in early music and related activities. Kelly summarizes the information, citing sources from

¹³⁷ Essays that discuss the possibility of Brahms being influenced by Couperin were written prior to Kelly's, but most of them are isolated, less-detailed, or only fleetingly mentioned this point. See, for example, Brian Newbould, "A New Analysis of Brahms's Intermezzo in B minor, op. 119 no. 1" *Music Review* 38 (1977): 36-37. For details, see Kelly's footnote no. 103, pp. 595.

¹³⁸ Geiringer, and perhaps Howard Ferguson, believe that Brahms and Chrysander co-edited the Couperin volumes, or at least were heavily involved, a notion rarely challenged before Kelly's essay. Howard Ferguson, "Editions of Couperin," *Music & Letters* 51, no. 4 (Oct. 1970): 474, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/731513>.

¹³⁹ Elaine Kelly, "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," (2004): 576.

the years 1902 to 1997.¹⁴⁰ Brahms's interest in Couperin, however, was unique among the Germans, as Kelly notes many of his German friends considered Couperin and other French or foreign composers to be inferior.¹⁴¹ I posit to attribute Brahms's reverence of Couperin, Chopin, and Scarlatti to his liberalism. He accepted any music he deemed worthy of research regardless of its nationality, but this somehow went against the nationalistic attitudes in music of that time.¹⁴² On Chrysander's inclusion of Couperin in the *Denkmäler* project, Kelly suggests that his motive was not because of a liberalist outlook, but rather to prove the supremacy of German music scholarship over the French, by competing with the newest French Couperin edition at that time.¹⁴³ Chrysander had a problem though: both he and Bellermann, the chief-editors of the project, were not experts on Couperin; therefore Brahms, as an admirer of Couperin and who already had considerable reputation as an early music champion, was brought into the project.¹⁴⁴

Although welcoming Brahms's involvement, Chrysander was "eager to minimize Brahms's workload."¹⁴⁵ Kelly describes the task given to Brahms as:

... similar to Joachim's, that is, to prepare the edition "for practical use," and to read proofs... "Expected to correct only from the engravings," the last stage before printing and publishing... "so time is won without the slightest damage to the things."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. See Kelly's footnote no. 15 at p. 578. These sources including: Walter Hübbe's *Brahms in Hamburg* (1902), Sophie Drinker's *Brahms and his Women's Chorus* (1952), Virginia Hancock's "Brahms's Performances of Early Choral Music" (1984-5), Siegmund Helms's "Johannes Brahms und Johann Sebastian Bach" (1971), and *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* (1997), which is a selection of letters annotated by Styra Avins, translated by her and Josef Eisinger.

¹⁴¹ Kelly, "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," 579.

¹⁴² See Margaret Notley, "Brahms as Liberal: Genre, Style, and Politics in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna," *19th-Century Music* 17, no. 2 (Autumn 1993): 107-123, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746329>.

¹⁴³ The French edition in question is *Le Trésor des pianistes*, ed. Aristide and Louise Farranc. The four Books of Couperin's *Pièces de clavecin* were published under this name during 1862-1869. See Kelly's footnote no. 62 in "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," p. 586.

¹⁴⁴ Elaine Kelly, "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," (2004): 586.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 587.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. The words in quotation marks were Chrysander's.

Chrysander had a reputation of being autocratic on editing and on certain scholarly issues, but it would be foolish to suggest that he did not trust Brahms's editorial expertise.¹⁴⁷ If he was worried about Brahms's speed of editing, his decision did not speed up the publishing process. In fact the final proofreading and printing were postponed by other reasons, such as bad engraving, unrealistic promise of early publication, and delays in delivering final drafts.¹⁴⁸ By being more isolated from the project, however, it allowed Brahms to have a more neutral perspective during the proofreading regarding editorial decisions.

This raises a question: To what extent did Brahms contribute to the Couperin project in both editions of the *Denkmäler*? Earlier scholarship places emphases on his contributions, since it is widely believed that Brahms played a big part in editing the Couperin volumes of both *Denkmäler* and *Augener* editions,¹⁴⁹ but Kelly argues otherwise, noting that there was no discussion or mentioning of the *Augener* edition in the correspondence between Brahms and Chrysander, and there are other anomalies that strongly suggested Brahms lost touch with the Couperin project at some point, which is compelling evidence against the "common knowledge."¹⁵⁰ The reasons why Brahms's name was on both versions were due to Chrysander needing his fame to solve funding and sales problems, and that Brahms trusted Chrysander's editing ability

¹⁴⁷ See Anthony Hicks, "Chrysander, Friedrich," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05720>, for comments on Chrysander's scholarship.

¹⁴⁸ Kelly, "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," (2004): 587-589. She described the circumstances of the delayed publication for both editions of the *Denkmäler*.

¹⁴⁹ See Geiringer's assumption in "Brahms as a Musicologist," p. 467, that Brahms and Chrysander co-edited the Augener edition, because they were listed as co-editor (1983), and see *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspective*, ed. George Bozarth, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) for essays on Brahms editorial activities. Also note that an unknown British author wrote an obituary-like article "Friedrich Chrysander" after his death in *The Musical Time and Singing Class Circular* 42, no. 704 (Oct. 1901): 661, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3365621>, which states that Chrysander's hard work on Couperin's editing was given to Brahms.

¹⁵⁰ Kelly, "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," (2004): 589.

wholeheartedly.¹⁵¹ The funding issue surrounding Chrysander and his works is not new to Chrysander scholars, but this is never discussed in essays of Brahms's musicological activities, since scholars mention Brahms and Chrysander editing the Couperin editions as a fact among other activities, and do not dwell on it.¹⁵²

Before discussing Kelly's assessment of the Chrysander-Brahms edition, we will look at Howard Ferguson's letter to the editor of *Music & Letters* in 1970:

J. D. misses the point in his review... of Kenneth Gilbert's new edition of Couperin's 'Pièces de Clavicin'... He may feel that "Brahms's engraved edition still looks much more beautiful". But it is full of mistakes, whereas Gilbert's edition is scholarly and accurate.¹⁵³

Higginbottom's entry of Francois Couperin in *Grove Music Online* lists Gilbert's version but not the Chrysander-Brahms's, since Gilbert's edition is indeed the complete edition, while Chrysander-Brahms's only included the clavecin works.¹⁵⁴ Contesting Ferguson's harsh criticism, Kelly agrees with Wilfrid Meller's opinion that "[Chrysander and Brahms] succeeded in creating an edition of the Pièces de clavecin that continues to be of significant practical value today."¹⁵⁵ While Ferguson is comparing the Chrysander-Brahms's edition with the much modern and updated edition of Gilbert (1969-72), Kelly considers their edition in its historical context by comparing it with the French Farrenc's edition of the same time. Despite some minor errors, the Chrysander-Brahms edition was "far superior" to the Farrenc edition, due to its faithfulness to the original first edition,

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 584 and 589.

¹⁵² Anthony Hicks, "Chrysander, Friedrich," in *Grove Music Online*, and Styra Avins, ed., Josef Einsinger and Styra Avins, trans, *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Otherwise Kelly was the first, because her essay focused on Chrysander's and Brahms's roles in editing Couperin.

¹⁵³ Howard Ferguson, "Editions of Couperin," *Music & Letters* 51, no. 4 (Oct. 1970): 474, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/731513>.

¹⁵⁴ Edward Higginbottom, "(4) Couperin, Francois (ii) [le grand]" in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed November 16, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40182pg4>.

¹⁵⁵ Kelly, "Unexpected Champion of Francois Couperin," p. 589-590, paraphrasing Meller's *Francois Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (London, 1950), 339.

Chrysander's and Brahms's careful treatment of ornaments and the supplemental *L' Art de toucher le clavecin*, and their shunning of sentimental performance direction additions that were so prevalent in late nineteenth century.¹⁵⁶

Be that as it may, Kelly provides compelling evidence that Brahms's involvement in the editing of Couperin was minimal, other than writing statements regarding performance directions as requested by Chrysander.¹⁵⁷ The readers expecting Kelly to provide detailed account on how Brahms the “unexpected champion of Couperin” championing Couperin in editorial or musicological work will be disappointed, but it nevertheless clears up the confusion of rightful accreditation. Despite this rather anticlimactic revelation, Kelly does acknowledge that:

Brahms was unusually active as an editor, involving himself with the complete Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann editions, as well as a number of smaller-scale projects, including works by... Couperin. This commitment was rooted in a genuine musicological bent, fuelled by a desire to bring forgotten or unknown works before the public.¹⁵⁸

Although [Couperin's] music found little favor among friends whose opinion Brahms valued highly, such as Philipp Spitta and Clara Schumann, he immersed himself in it as both scholar and performer.¹⁵⁹

Unlike Geiringer and Mast, Kelly does not call Brahms a musicologist; but similar to Fellingner, she agrees on Brahms's ability as an editor and his musicological interest in Couperin. With all of the evidence Kelly presents in her essay, however, labeling Brahms as “musicologist” would seem incongruous, since his participation in the Couperin editing project, or rather the lack of it, does not support the claim of him being a

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 590-593.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 590.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 580-581.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 579.

musicologist, while his other editorial/musicological activities with other early composers are not the concern of this essay.

2.7 Conclusion

Was Brahms a musicologist, after all? He was indeed well acquainted with the pioneering historians and musicologists of his epoch, such as Friedrich Chrysander, Philipp Spitta, Gustav Nottebohm, Otto Jahn, Carl Ferdinand Pohl, and Eusebius Mandyczewski. He did not, however, write biographies like Spitta, Jahn, Chrysander, and Nicolaus Forkel, nor publish articles and criticism like Nottebohm, Chrysander, and Guido Adler. He conducted, resurrected, and performed much early music previously obscured, activities also undertaken by several historically-conscious composers and performers of his time.

Yet, no master-composer before Brahms had the honor to be labeled “music historian” or “musicologist.” On one hand, most master-composers rarely engaged themselves so intensely in “musicological” activities. Mendelssohn was famous for reintroducing early music but otherwise is rarely discussed in the same light as the “musicologist” Brahms, while Schumann was more known as a critic. On the other hand, pioneers of music history were no master-composers. With this notion, Brahms was striking due to his awareness of history and his position in it, which stimulated his diligent studies and research of the historical aspects of music, resulting in his impressive erudition in music history. This in turn provided him the necessary research methodology and tools for editing/revising, an activity that also returned favors to his compositional

skills. His interest, research, and activities regarding early music interlocked with his own creative and performing process.¹⁶⁰

Geiringer is not the only one who calls Brahms a musicologist or music historian. Paul Mast acknowledges him as one in 1980, three years earlier than the English publication of Geiringer's essay, but forty-seven years later than the original German version. Mast was probably impressed by Brahms's work on parallel octaves and fifths, which indeed combined musicological and theoretical effort, notwithstanding its unpublished state, to call Brahms so. Later, we see Fellingner, Hancock, and Kelly are not as tempted to pin this label on Brahms. If we desire the reasons behind this, it is important to keep in mind that all of them do acknowledge Brahms's musicological achievements, for example Hancock devoting many essays and her dissertation on Brahms's choral music and early music, Kelly mentioning his "strong musicological bent," and Fellingner being impressed by his "erudition of musicological work on Mozart."¹⁶¹ Brahms was still more recognized as a composer, and scholarly interest on Brahms stems largely from his compositions and his life. By researching and uncovering Brahms's prowess in musicology, scholars can set him apart from most composers of his time, by attributing to Brahms the mastery of both composing and researching work, which perhaps is what Geiringer wanted. Most scholars circumscribe these findings by connecting them back to Brahms's compositions and performance practice, but Geiringer and Marx are two scholars whose writings heavily lean on Brahms's musicological bent, both in a single essay. By doing so they were not suggesting that scholars consider

¹⁶⁰ See Fellingner, "Brahms's View of Mozart," 41-58.

¹⁶¹ Fellingner "Brahms's View on Mozart," and Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 703, mentioned "[Brahms] actually engaged in some amateur musicological work." Otherwise, Paul de Man called him a historian, quoted from Kevin Korsyn, "Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology," 1993.

Brahms as a musicologist before his role as a composer, but rather to qualify his research achievements.

The archival and editing work remain as important aspects in many musicologists' jobs today, especially those specialized in these categories.¹⁶² Another part of musicologists' responsibility, regardless of whichever era, is to write articles upon a discovery of anything significant on original sources and printed materials, describing facts pertinent to these source studies or even providing a historiographical study on printed editions, and sharing their findings and knowledge with the public. Like scientists, they have the ultimate goals of sharing knowledge based on evidence for greater understanding of music, contributing to academia, and providing foundations and paths for newer, continuous research. Under this perspective, Brahms wrote no "research papers," at least officially, but he did leave a legacy that brings forth further research. The changing and ever-enlarging scope of musicology across the years, however, can also be a crucial reason for why scholars are reluctant to call Brahms a musicologist/music historian, since Brahms did not fit in the behavior of musicologists in general.¹⁶³ He had the ability and knowledge to emulate his musicologist friends, but he chose not to do so, perhaps scarred by the leaking of the Manifesto against the New German School, and his lack of confidence in public expression other than to perform his composition. Fellingner comments that "Brahms acquired a thorough historical knowledge of his art and its theory, which was incomparable by other masters of his time" which gave us a reason to

¹⁶² See Kimmey, *A Critique of Musicology* (1988), and Vincent Duckles, et al., "Musicology".

¹⁶³ Marx hints on this in "Brahms und die Musikforschung."

call Brahms a music historian, at least an amateur one.¹⁶⁴ Marx, on the other hand, calls Brahms a “music scholar (Musikforscher).” My take of his perspective is that being a “music scholar,” did not require Brahms to share his studies publicly, and he could reserve them for private uses. Given that his opinions in music historical scholarship were so well-respected by the major players of the field in his time, they perhaps already viewed Brahms as one of them, or as an expert consultant. Wagner, on the other hand, was never called a “historian” or “musicologist” despite his numerous writings and publications, because he wrote mostly about his aesthetics and ideology, which were highly personal and subjective, lacking the scientific research and objectivity of a historian or musicologist.¹⁶⁵

For a man as meticulous as Brahms, however, the process of composing and performing was daunting, especially if he did not know the mechanism and background knowledge exhaustively.¹⁶⁶ He insisted on knowing the history and details of his models by scientific studies—as if he must be able to explain and provide evidence when challenged on his methodologies in synthesizing the old into the new—or at least perhaps to address self doubt. The knowledge and technique he assimilated might gradually become part of his subconscious and tracing the exact origins of his inspirations will be

¹⁶⁴ Feller, “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen,” (1969), 147. Original text: “Brahms eignete sich, wie kein anderer Meister seiner Zeit, eine gründliche historische Kenntnis seiner Kunst und ihrer Theorien an.”

¹⁶⁵ Many thanks to Dr. Kevin Mooney who guided me regarding these questions about Wagner. Richard Wagner was a prolific writer on topics encompassing music, mythology, history, drama, and politics. For a comprehensive list of Wagner’s writings and speeches, see Barry Millington, et al., “Wagner: (1) Richard Wagner” in Grove Music Online (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed April 6, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29769-2001-10-31pg1>.

¹⁶⁶ His complaint to Levi of hearing Beethoven’s giant footsteps when he was trying to write a symphony was one of the most quoted passages in Brahms scholarship. Original text: “Ich werde nie eine Symphonie komponieren. Du hast keinen Begriff davon, wie es unsereinem zumute ist, wenn er immer so einen Riesen hinter sich marschieren hört.” Quoted in Feller’s “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen” (1969), 163.

troublesome at times,¹⁶⁷ but he always understood the rules—freedom and restrictions—of compositional theory, derived from his studies and editing of early music.

There is no consensus on this question, if we should call Brahms a musicologist or music historian. It is possible that there will never be consensus; some current musicologists would even prefer to deny it. Taking liberty of my twenty-first century standing, I suggest something that is not new: Brahms was a musician who crossed the boundaries of composer, performer, conductor and musicologist. His abilities to blur these borders are not surprising or novel in modern or post-modernist eras, as we have witnessed many musicians who can handle multiple disciplines of music simultaneously. Consider for examples Charles Rosen and Richard Taruskin, both renowned internationally as performers and scholars. For Brahms, who had his career in the second half of the nineteenth century, his achievements across the four branches mentioned were impressive and singular of his time.

Some scholars might find this overall discussion redundant. I think, however, we should continue to assess Brahms's role as a music historian/researcher/musicologist, not rendering this important aspect of his life to a secondary or supplementary function to Brahms the composer. Perhaps by giving more importance to his contributions in musicology, more detailed research could be devoted to Brahms's editorial tasks (including proofreading and revisions), such as tracing the process, the chronology, and interpretation of Brahms's personal opinion and editorial markings, especially with regard to the editions' prefaces he had written, buffered with commentary and analysis by scholars who undertake such projects. Such studies might benefit the overall field by

¹⁶⁷ I will discuss this point in Chapter Three of this thesis, as it focuses on Brahms's compositional methods and works.

opening new grounds for source study and reception history pertaining to the works

Brahms had edited, which could offer insights on Brahms the music scholar/musicologist/

historian at work.

CHAPTER III

BRAHMS THE HISTORICIST COMPOSER

3.1 Introduction

Discussions of musical historicism typically cover two aspects: ideology / thoughts (*Anschauung*) and practice / actions (*Praxis*), and that the *Anschauung* is to be carried out as deeds, a process the German idealists termed as “*Entäußerung*,” transforming thoughts into *Praxis*. Therefore, without *Praxis* it would be difficult to determine the ideas that served as the foundations of musical historicism.¹⁶⁸ Brahms’s musicological / historical studies are part of the *Praxis*, but since this thesis intends to outline a history of musical historicism in Brahms scholarship, it is literally impossible to ignore Brahms’s musical works, and the compositional technique and structure that formed his works. Indeed, his compositions most clearly exhibit the historicist aspect, informing our interpretations of his techniques, training, and sources — and in turn allude to his heritage, or a part of his life, and psychology. There are ample sources on the historical influences in Brahms’s compositions. Addressing specific works and genres, such examples include Virginia Hancock and Robert Pascall on Brahms’s choral works, Michael Musgrave and Katherine Fitzgibbon on Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Siegfried Kross, Robert Knapp and Walter Frisch on Brahms’s Symphonies, David Brodbeck and Margaret Notley on

¹⁶⁸ Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, viii, and Dahlhaus and Friedhelm Krummacher, “Historismus,” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd. ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), 4:335.

Brahms's chamber music,¹⁶⁹ not to mention scholars who cover larger areas, including general history, biographies, or various topics surrounding the composer.¹⁷⁰ To summarize, Brahms was most notable to these authors for his confrontation with the music aesthetic crisis in the mid-nineteenth century—namely the feud between the New German School and Brahms himself and his allies—by tackling great composers of the past and traditional genres, and synthesizing them to be his ammunition against the New German School.¹⁷¹

Walter Wiora, in the foreword to *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik* (1969), sums up the common understanding of musical historicism as a submersion in old music, and to recreate as accurately and faithfully as possible their historical periods, with period instruments.¹⁷² Therefore, in my assessment of Fellingner's "Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen (1969)," there is a secondary focus targeting Brahms's

¹⁶⁹ Virginia Hancock, "Brahms and His Library of Early Music: The Effects of His Study of Renaissance and Baroque Music on His Choral Writing" (DMA diss., University of Oregon, 1977), "The Growth of Brahms's Interest in Early Music, and its Effect on his Own Choral Compositions," in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary, and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 27-40, and "Brahms's Links with German Renaissance Music: A Discussion of Selected Choral Works," in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 95-110. Robert Pascall, "Brahms's Missa Canonica and its Recomposition in his Motet 'Warum' op. 74 no. 1," in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 111-136. Siegfried Kross, "Brahms the Symphonist," in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary, and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 125-145. Raymond Knapp, *Brahms and the Challenge of the Symphony* (Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1997). Walter Frisch, *Brahms: the Four Symphonies* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996). David Brodbeck "Medium and Meaning: New Aspects of the Chamber Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 98-132. Margaret Anne Notley, "Brahms's Chamber-Music Summer of 1886: A Study of Opera 99, 100, 101, and 108" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1992), ProQuest AAT 9413169.

¹⁷⁰ For example, see Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, The Oxford History of Western Music 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Donald J. Grout, Claude V. Palisca and J. Peter Burkholder, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009); Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984), 16-20; and Wolfgang Sandberger, ed., *Brahms Handbuch* (Stuttgart and Kassel: Metzler and Bärenreiter, 2009).

¹⁷¹ Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 405-434.

¹⁷² Walter Wiora, ed., *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik* (Regensburg, Germany: Gustav Bosse, 1969), 7.

performance practice. Other essays selected for this chapter, however, do not cover this topic.

While there is no lack of scholarship concerning these topics, as my survey of selected sources will show, there are certainly differences in the style of writing, the interpretation of analyses, and shifting of focuses from the 1960s to the 2010s. Part of these distinctions have strong connections to the ideological and methodological flux in the discipline of musicology, but even more important is the wider availability of sources, either by translation or by discovering new materials (or rediscovering forgotten sources), that allow constant renewal and new directions for Brahms scholarship.¹⁷³

An essay dealing with “the work,” no matter by which composer usually contains theoretical analysis and musical excerpts, because at times they explain the author’s arguments better than words. Staying faithful to the objective and methodology of this thesis, however, I am not dissecting Brahms’s works as a theorist or analyst. My aim, rather, is to interpret and assess the interpretation and assessment of selected scholars’ essays and to observe the extent to which there is a consensus on how these Brahms scholars interpret the conservatism, progressivism, and compositional historicism in Brahms. Such assessment will also highlight how these scholars see Brahms’s compositional (and performance) relationship with music history.

¹⁷³ James Hepokoski’s “The Dahlhaus Project and Its Extra-musical Sources,” *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 3 (Spring 1991): 221-246, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746536>, and *Grove Music Online* entries of “Historiography” and “Musicology” provide surveys of the trends in musicology and criticism. The credibility of Max Kalbeck’s biography *Johannes Brahms* is a notable example of such changes. The authority of the biography was not questioned until the 1980s. Kurt Hofmann and Kurt Stephenson, who questioned Kalbeck’s narration of Brahms’s early life, did archival research on Hamburg’s city documents, while Styra Avins cited Florence May’s biography. Nevertheless, this biography is still a very important source in researching Brahms. See Sytra Avins’s “Prelude 1833-1852,” particular footnotes no. 3 and 4, in *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 2-3. Some parts of Brahms’s early life are still in dispute; see the exchange between Jan Swafford and Charles Rosen at “Aimez-vous Brahms?” and “Aimez-vous Brahms?: An Exchange,” *The New York Review of Books*, accessed February 12, 2013, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1998/oct/22/aimez-vous-brahms/> and <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1999/mar/18/aimez-vous-brahms-an-exchange/>.

The first essay in this chapter, “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen,” (1969) written by Imogen Feller, has the distinction of being part of *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, probably the first book in music scholarship that employs “historicism” as its main theme and selection criteria. Chronologically this is also the earliest essay selected in this thesis, and Feller offers insights on conservatism and historicism that might be unique in the eyes of a twenty-first century reader.

3.2 Imogen Feller: “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen” [1969]¹⁷⁴

Imogen Feller presented her essay “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen” in one of these two musicology conferences in Germany, either in 1966, Kassel, or in 1967, Cologne.¹⁷⁵ Later she revised this essay for publication in *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*.¹⁷⁶ Its scope is quite large, covering many aspects of Brahms’s historicist practice, some in considerable detail, but without the “new musicology” rhetoric that many musicologists of the 1980s onwards began to favor.¹⁷⁷ Rather typical of the scholarship of its time, Feller draws observations, analyses, and conclusions from empirical evidence in the manner of traditional historical musicology,

¹⁷⁴ Imogen Feller, “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen,” in *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, ed. Walter Wiora, Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts 14 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1969), 147-167. There is no English translation available. For Feller’s biography, see this thesis, Chapter 2: Brahms as a Musicologist, footnote no. 106.

¹⁷⁵ Wiora, *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik*, 7. I could not find the programs for both conferences, therefore I could not determine where she actually presented the essay.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ While Adorno’s and Dahlhaus’s philosophical rhetoric started much earlier (see the “Adorno, Theodor” and “Dahlhaus, Carl” entries in *Grove Music Online*), rhetoric in musicology only became multi-faceted, sometimes even controversial and hostile, in a widespread manner around the 1980s with the rise of “new musicology” (see the “Musicology” entry in *Grove Music Online*). A detailed discussion of “new musicology” is beyond the scope of this thesis. Max Paddison, “Adorno, Theodor W.,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00216>, J. Bradford Robinson, “Dahlhaus, Carl,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07055>, and Vincent Duckles, et al., “Musicology.”

her citing of letters, survey of existing analytical literature, and analyses of Brahms's works, all having few controversial statements.¹⁷⁸ As a general observation, Fellingner does not concentrate on a specific genre or specific works, but touches on several of Brahms's compositions. The essay is in four sections, beginning with a comprehensive overview of Brahms's background that led him into the music of the past. The second section centers on Brahms's historicist compositional methods including some analysis, and the third deals with Brahms's performance practice with regard to early music. The fourth section serves as conclusion.

Fellinger's historical background to Brahms's historicist practice provides details of his systematic and unsystematic education, the former with Marxsen and the latter with Schumann, including his self-study of Romantic literature, theoretical treatises, strict forms, Baroque and classical styles, and exchanging counterpoint exercises with Joseph Joachim. Such a process of study had strengthened Brahms in two ways, Fellinger argues: improving his mastery of the "craft" and further convinced him to pursue his musical aesthetic as he continued to increase his musicological knowledge.¹⁷⁹

She also highlights the importance of counterpoint in Brahms's compositional outlook and in his works, evidenced not only in the advice he gave to his only composition student, Gustav Jenner, to learn counterpoint properly, but also in his particular use of rather independent voicing in his works. For Brahms, harmony always

¹⁷⁸ This as compared to the topics and methodologies of the so-called "new musicologists." See David Fallows, "New Musicology," in *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford University Press, 2011), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e4712>.

¹⁷⁹ Fellinger, "Brahms und die Musik Vergangener Epochen," 147-150. Fellinger mentioned "craft," but does not discuss it in detail. More recent scholarship that discusses the concept of "craft" extensively includes William Weber, "The History of Musical Canon," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 338 and 341-343. Weber names "craftsmanship" as one of the important elements in determining the formation and entrance to the canon, while Knapp, *Brahms and the Challenge of the Symphony*, 312, explained one of the reasons that made Brahms special and important in the German musical tradition is his craftsmanship.

has a strong presence, but it is within the grounds of the voice-leading.¹⁸⁰ It became part of the Brahmsian signature, since he even employed counterpoint in genres that are not usually associated with such technique. Consider, for example, his piano miniatures and his Lieder. In the case of his Lieder, these techniques associated with contrapuntal texture served largely as a unifying element and for expressive purposes rather than suggesting a particular interpretation of the text. For Brahms, while the vocal part is the main character of the Lied, the bass of the piano part is not merely an accompaniment but is reflective of the voice. The main melody, or a fragment of it, will also serve as ritornello in the form of a short prelude, interlude or postlude to the Lieder, and this practice can be traced back to such Baroque composers as Bach and Handel.¹⁸¹ In addition, his *Waltzes*, op. 39, inspired by the Schubertian waltzes, had no. 16 set in double counterpoint.¹⁸²

While the contrapuntal writing was an important aspect of Brahms's compositional process, the variation form also provided Brahms with both structural potential and innovation. As Fellingner addresses, Brahms not only developed his variation technique from the Schumann idiom, he also "arrived at a stricter notion of variation form, which emphasized the bass based on Bach's model and which preserved the equal importance of melody, harmony, and rhythm based on Beethoven, thus leading to a distinct synthesis."¹⁸³ Brahms's most famous result of such a synthesis is his 25

¹⁸⁰ Fellingner, "Brahms und die Musik Vergangener Epochen," 151.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid. Note that Brahms was thoroughly acquainted with Schubert's waltzes and Ländler, and his *Waltzes*, op. 39, are modeled after Schubert's. See David Brodbeck, "Brahms's Edition of Twenty Schubert Ländler: an Essay in Criticism," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George S. Bozarth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 229-250.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 152. Original text: "...gelangte Brahms zu einer strengeren Auffassung der Variationenform, die nach Bachs Vorbild den Baß betont, nach Beethovens Vorbild die gleichrangige Bedeutung von Melodik, Harmonik und Rhythmik wahrt und damit zu einer Synthese eigener Prägung führte."

Variations and a Fugue based on a Theme by Handel, op. 24,¹⁸⁴ a work that future scholars highlight the warm reception exhibited by Wagner and its ability to continuously attract performers' attention and scholarly praises.¹⁸⁵ Brahms's inclusion of canonic variations (Var. 6 and 16, with highly contrasting mood), a Baroque-style siciliano (Var. 19), and a fugue as the finale, points to Bach and Beethoven.¹⁸⁶ Two other Brahms works that paid homage to Bach's Chaconne and Passacaglia writings were the Haydn Variations, op. 56, which makes it a variation in a variations set, and the Fourth Symphony, both with passacaglias as their finale.¹⁸⁷

Fellinger pays special attention to the finale of the Fourth Symphony, presenting musical excerpts of the Chaconne theme from Bach's Cantata no. 150 "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich" and Brahms's Passacaglia theme of his Fourth Symphony for visual comparison.¹⁸⁸ Based on Alfred von Ehrmann's narration, Brahms was certainly aware of Bach's Cantata, and he expressed his idea of constructing a symphony movement by using the same subject to Hans von Bülow as he played it for the conductor.¹⁸⁹ Fellinger's concern, however, is the changes Brahms had made: extending it to eight measures, combining the long-short rhythm into dotted half notes to ensure continuity, but retained the simple triple pulse, and the chromatic leading A-sharp to the dominant pitch of E

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 228. Also see the annotations by Styra Avins, in *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 370.

¹⁸⁶ Johannes Brahms, *Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von Händel*, op. 24, Urtext ed. (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1978).

¹⁸⁷ Fellinger, "Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen," 152.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 153.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. See Fellinger's citation on p. 153. Alfred von Ehrmann wrote a Brahms biography: *Johannes Brahms, Weg, Werk und Welt* (1933). This is supported by two other sources cited in Robert Pascall, "Orchestermusik," in *Brahms Handbuch*, ed. Wolfgang Sandberger (Stuttgart and Kassel: Metzler and Bärenreiter, 2009), 522 and 539: one is the correspondence between Philipp Spitta and Brahms on the preparation of this Bach's Cantata as a gift to Brahms, and another one is by Siegfried Ochs, *Geseheenes*, *Geseheenes* (Leipzig and Zürich, 1922).

minor.¹⁹⁰ By these changes, in addition to tonal transitions and rhythmic changes through the passacaglia, and placement of the passacaglia theme as melody or motive, Brahms transformed Bach's theme into his own and went on to construct a full symphonic movement.¹⁹¹ For Fellingner, this Passacaglia finale is especially significant for providing a substantial closure to the Fourth Symphony's heavy first movement and the musical processes in the middle movements, by "[putting] a Baroque form into a new musical context, and gave it a new meaning."¹⁹² Several decades later, Walter Frisch agrees with Fellingner's assessment of this movement's significance for the craftsmanship and weight it presented, describing this movement as "the most extraordinary symphonic movement in the post-Beethoven and pre-Mahler era."¹⁹³ Other examples of Brahms hybridizing archaic techniques, forms, and processes, such as the usage of fugal technique and texture as structural and developmental devices, have included the fugal finale of Brahms's First Cello Sonata, op. 38, and the fugal development of the Rondo of Brahms's First Piano Concerto, op. 15.¹⁹⁴ With such examples, Fellingner differentiates Brahms's usage of fugal form from Schumann's and Liszt's, as they intended to evoke feelings or images of something sacred and monumental.¹⁹⁵ All three composers had different employments of musical historicism.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ Fellingner, 153.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid., original text: "Damit hat Brahms eine barocke Form in einen neuen musikalischen Zusammenhang gestellt und ihr eine neue Bedeutung verliehen."

¹⁹³ Frisch, *Brahms: the Four Symphonies*, 130. Frisch does not cite Fellingner, but their viewpoints are similar.

¹⁹⁴ Fellingner, 154.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., Fellingner also reiterated this in her essay "Brahms's 'Way': A Composer's Self-view," in *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 51.

¹⁹⁶ See Christoph Wolff, "Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-century Music: an Essay," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George S. Bozarth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7-11, on how Brahms and Wagner employed musical historicism.

By the nature of these aforementioned techniques, it was not surprising that what Fellingner calls the “principle of dialogue” is prominent in Brahms’s compositions, a principle that can be traced back to the style of early music, analogous with “the representation of changing passions of human emotions,” if compared to the prevalent homophonic and arpeggiated textures in the late 18th and 19th centuries.¹⁹⁷

Fellinger also gives prominence to Brahms’s performance practice. Other than reviving many early sacred choral works during his tenures with the Detmold Court, the Frauenchor in Hamburg and the Singakademie in Vienna, Brahms was a loyal performer of Bach’s keyboard works. He had already performed Bach in his very first recital on September 21, 1848, and had consistently programmed Bach in his concerts and recitals throughout his life.¹⁹⁸ Fellinger quotes Brahms’s comments on how to play Bach, particularly on the matter of ornamentation, from a letter Brahms wrote to Clara Schumann, which indicates that Brahms had firm ideas how Bach’s music should be played,¹⁹⁹ but it is difficult to determine the extent to which there is a consensus on Brahms’s historical performance practice and our modern historically-informed performance movement (HIP). Nevertheless, Fellinger sees Brahms’s rigorous study and adherence to C. P. E. Bach’s treatise on keyboard playing, his advocating of unaffected tempo, and renouncing of unreasonable tempo rubato in early music, all as evidence that Brahms was as historically faithful as possible in his performance of early music.²⁰⁰

Fellinger argues that the situations of Schumann in the 1830s and Brahms in the 1850s were different, as they had to tackle musical and political challenges of their own

¹⁹⁷ Fellinger, 155. Original text: “der Darstellung wechselnder Affekte der menschlichen Gemütsbewegung.”

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 156.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 157. It difficult to assess how Brahms interpreted Bach; Fellinger also commented on the liberty Brahms would take at times in realizing figure basses.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 159.

time.²⁰¹ They had differing interpretations of J. S. Bach's *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*: Schumann saw the music as poetic, but it was not always so for Brahms, who saw the music more objectively.²⁰² Brahms's historical knowledge about music enabled him to travel on his own brand of romanticism and historicism, eventually arming him for the challenge of the symphony, while his humility and respect towards history caused him to be critical to himself.²⁰³

Fellinger interprets Brahms's method of studying, reinterpreting, and benefiting from the music of the past as a "self-reflection on the captive, eternal forces of the music itself, on its underlying immutable laws, as documented in the works of the great masters of the past," and Brahms perceived this "permanent music" that withstood the challenge of time as compositional models.²⁰⁴ Such interpretation goes against the "mutable" concept of historicism, since it suggests that Brahms saw the elements handed down by his predecessors as transcendental. I argue, however, that while Brahms absorbed this knowledge, he was in the process of what German philosophers called "*Verstehen*," and such implicit understanding has multiple layers, allowing Brahms's personal knowledge and ideas to fuse with them consciously or subconsciously. As he produced them, transforming these "transcendental" ideas, he was not merely imitating or copying, but amalgamating ideas of the past and the present into something that was uniquely Brahms. A Brahms fugue would sound very different from a Bach fugue. He may have perceived

²⁰¹ Ibid., 162.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 157 & 162.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 150. Original text: "Dies bedeutet ein Sich-Besinnen auf die unverlierbaren, überzeitlichen Kräfte der Musik an sich, auf die ihr zugrunde liegenden unwandelbaren Gesetze, wie sie sich in den Werken der großen Meister der Vergangenheit dokumentieren," and "Brahms orientierte sich an musikalischen Werken vergangener Epochen, die über ihre Zeit hinaus Gültigkeit bewahren, die nach seiner Meinung 'dauerhafte Musik' darstellten, und gelangte hierbei zu Vorbildern für verschiedene musikalische Gattungen, die fortan seine Musikanschauung bestimmten."

these traditions as eternal, but he was the person who, in a sense, “mutated” them. Certainly there will be some traditional musical laws that he followed, for example counterpoint writing and treatment of part writing, but he was also treating dissonance, parallel fifths and octaves, and tonal relations in a freer manner, much like his contemporaries. A change, no matter how small, is a change, and without the elements that did not change, it will be difficult to discern what has changed as time progresses.

Although Fellingner agrees that Brahms critically employed and evaluated historical compositional methods, she does not see the need to rescue Brahms from the label “conservatism,” unlike many scholars writing during the decades of the 1960s through the 1980s.²⁰⁵ In her opinion, his “strong sense of tradition, conservative attitude towards art and its history, and historical ambitions are uniquely bonding in the musical views of Brahms.”²⁰⁶ For Fellingner, “the conservative attitude is meant here in the sense to preserve the old, not to insist on this viewpoint, but to create the new on a historical basis.”²⁰⁷ As a comparison, it is necessary to present her interpretation of “historical efforts,” which are part of musical historicism’s *praxis*, as her historicism refers to the performance and revival of the music of the past.²⁰⁸ In the eyes of a twenty-first century

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 163, see also Margaret Notley’s dissertation “Brahms’s Chamber-Music Summer of 1886: A Study of Opera 99, 100, 101, and 108 (1992),” 54-55, where she explicitly expressed same opinion. Scholars who write on Brahms’s progressiveness and who try to rid that label include Arnold Schönberg and Leo Black, trans., “Brahms the Progressive,” in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein (New York: St Martins Press, 1975), 398-441 (This essay was originally a lecture in 1933 and first published in 1945), and J. Peter Burkholder, “Museum Pieces: the Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years,” *The Journal of Musicology* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 115-134, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” *19th-Century Music* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1984): 75-83, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746255>, and Christoph Wolff, “Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-century Music.”

²⁰⁶ Fellingner, 163. Original text: “Ausgeprägter Sinn für Tradition, eine konservative Haltung gegenüber der Kunst und ihrer Vergangenheit sowie historistische Bestrebungen gehen in der Musikanschauung von Brahms...ein.”

²⁰⁷ Ibid., original text: “Konservative Haltung ist hier gemeint in dem Sinne, das Alte zu bewahren, doch nicht auf diesem Standpunkt zu beharren, sondern auf historischer Grundlage Neues zu schaffen.”

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

student with ample sources on German historicist tradition, her definitions on conservatism and historicism seem to represent the polar opposites of current understanding. Her historicism indeed brought strong, reactionary connotations of epigone, but her conservatism, notwithstanding its disagreement with most scholars' definitions, alluded to a more neutral stance. To date, I have yet to see any review or essay that contains comment on her definitions, despite the fact that this essay has been widely cited.

The next essay selected from *The Music of Johannes Brahms* by Bernard Jacobson did not share Fellingner's interpretation on conservatism and historicist efforts, as the author more clearly accentuates the difference between conservatism and progressivism.

3.3 Bernard Jacobson: "Brahms and Music History" [1977]²⁰⁹

Bernard Jacobson's "Brahms and Music History" is the first chapter in his book *The Music of Johannes Brahms* (1977), placing historical influences on the top of the essay. He explains that "it will be useful to consider [Brahms's link in the two directions to the past and the future] before going on to analyze particular facets of his musical style in closer detail[,] and provides a context of music history before plunging into any specific Brahms's stylistic traits and works."²¹⁰ This chapter has two sections, in which the first

²⁰⁹ Bernard Jacobson, "Brahms and Music History," in *The Music of Johannes Brahms* (New Jersey: Associated University Press, 1977), 24-38. Bernard Jacobson has been a contributing editor of *Fanfare Magazine*, a music critic of *Chicago Daily News*, served as visiting professor of music at Roosevelt University in Chicago, program annotator and musicologist for the Philadelphia Orchestra. His publications include *A Polish Renaissance* (Phaidon Press, 1996), and he also writes several entries for *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1st ed. Dan Rottenberg, ed., "Bernard Jacobson," *Broad Street Review*, accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.broadstreetreview.com/index.php/main/author/bernard_jacobson.

²¹⁰ Bernard Jacobson, "Brahms and Music History," 24.

discusses the historical influences and the backward-looking aspects in Brahms's compositions, and the significantly shorter second section briefly discusses the forward-looking aspects. The chapter also focuses solely on historical influences in Brahms's compositions, without mentioning performance practice or musicological activities.

Jacobson is in consensus with Fellingner's assessment of Brahms that, despite being a composer, Brahms was unique for his achievement in his study of music history:

The depth and thoroughness of the absorption was the characteristically Brahmsian thing, for the concentration of his interest was as intense as that of most scholars and more detailed than any composer's until the twentieth century.²¹¹

For Jacobson, however, Brahms's practice was not at odds with his time, because "the second half of the nineteenth century was a period when organizations devoted to 'ancient music' were beginning to flourish."²¹²

In order to illustrate reminiscences, allusions, and paraphrases, Jacobson presents many musical examples of Brahms's music together in comparison with acknowledged or possible origins. The first musical example of Brahms's allusion to past music is the opening of Brahms's First Piano Sonata to that of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier Sonata*, a familiar one for many Brahms scholars.²¹³ It is, however, difficult to determine if Jacobson does find out other allusions, reminiscences, and paraphrases of Brahms to past composers himself, or his knowledge has foundations in other sources, as there is no citation. The musical examples through which Jacobson intends to show possible allusions suggest two problems: first, the fact that Jacobson does not always label the

²¹¹ Ibid., 25.

²¹² Ibid. Michael Musgrave, however, argues that Brahms's performance of early music is actually progressive, because such practice did occur but was not a convention during Brahms's time. See Michael Musgrave, "Brahms the Progressive: Another View," *The Musical Times* 124, no. 1683 (May 1983): 292-293, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/962911>.

²¹³ Jacobson, "Brahms and Music History," 27.

composers' name, works' title, and measure numbers with the musical excerpts.²¹⁴ This might be confounding for readers without a thorough knowledge of these works, as readers will have no idea which composer composed those four excerpts, and from which work they are extracted. The second problem is the lack of annotations. For example, where Jacobson mentions the similarities of Brahms's *First Serenade* to Handel's *Messiah*, and to Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, he supports this statement with only with a few measures of excerpts showing slight similarities, but without further details.²¹⁵ While Jacobson warns his readers that the allusion is approximate,²¹⁶ specialists might find them unconvincing. Indeed, in his review of this book, Gary Maas criticizes Jacobson for "letting the musical examples to speak for themselves."²¹⁷

Surprisingly, this second problem disappears when Jacobson introduces his focus on Brahms's later works, stating:

For the most part, specific allusions of this kind disappear after the first phase of Brahms's output. They are replaced by a more profound sense of identification or kinship by which the spirit, and occasionally the thematic matter, of earlier composers' works can be felt from time to time penetrating the entire fabric of a Brahms modulation or theme or movement.²¹⁸

He posits that Brahms's Fourth Symphony Finale passacaglia structure allows Brahms to evoke various styles and composers in fusion, in a single symphonic movement.²¹⁹

Jacobson also qualifies Brahms's connection with Schubert with regard to their use of harmonic language, as they both favored "shifts of tonal perspective...and major/minor

²¹⁴ For example, see Jacobson's attempt to connect Brahms's First Serenade's Scherzo to a few Beethoven works, including the Sonata for Violin and Piano, op. 24, the Septet, First and Second Symphonies, in *ibid.*, 27-28.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

²¹⁷ Gary L. Maas, review of *The Music of Johannes Brahms*, by Bernard Jacobson, *Notes, Second Series* 34, no. 3 (Mar. 1978): 611, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/898113>.

²¹⁸ Jacobson, "Brahms and Music History," 30.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

alternation.”²²⁰ In addition, using motivic analysis, Jacobson highlights the connection between Brahms’s Third Piano Quartet with Mozart’s Piano Sonata K. 533/494.²²¹ One can only speculate as to why there is such an inconsistency in Jacobson’s treatment of allusions.

Another problem in this chapter, and Jacobson’s book in general, is the lack of documentation. Although no extensive bibliography, there is a list of suggested readings. Maas, in his review, rightly finds tracing the sources of subjective statements troublesome and speculates that this problem might be especially annoying to music scholars.²²²

Jacobson wrote that “Beethoven had spoken enthusiastically of Mozart and Handel, and that Mozart had turned to Johann Sebastian and Wilhelm Friedemann Bach to further his contrapuntal studies and had produced an imaginative rescoring of Handel’s *Messiah*[,]” and he observes that Mozart’s historical research had [a] self-instructive purpose.²²³ In relation to his observation, I propose that the historicism in Brahms’s compositional methods was comparable to the “musical antiquarianism” of Beethoven and Mozart. This parallels one of Brahms’s motives of historical research, which was to learn the archaic techniques in order to improve craftsmanship, further synthesizing them into his historicist compositional processes. Jacobson’s comparison of Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms, however, hints at the difference of their “musical antiquarianism” (in this case some scholars might also use the term “historicism”), as “neither [Mozart and

²²⁰ Ibid., 32-33.

²²¹ Ibid., 34.

²²² Maas, review of *The Music of Johannes Brahms* by Bernard Jacobson, 611.

²²³ Jacobson, “Brahms and Music History,” 24.

Beethoven] could be said to have immersed himself in his forerunners' work deeply enough for his own writing to be much affected."²²⁴

Jacobson acknowledges that Brahms's "burden of the past caused him undue anxiety and deprived the world of much music that other composers would have been proud to have written."²²⁵ He does speak of the struggle of Brahms, but in a more sentimental manner and with less detail than would be the case for future scholars.

Instead of historicism or conservatism, Jacobson employs the terms "antiquarianism" and "ancient music,"²²⁶ and his choice of terms actually invites less controversy, since both vividly point to the past. There also exist convoluted adjectives, especially in Jacobson's description of Brahms's Fourth Symphony, which might point to the influence of Donald Tovey, as Tovey is one of the few sources that Jacobson actually cited in the text.²²⁷

While Fellingner characterizes Brahms's counterpoint as "independent treatment of linear voices while still giving sufficient attention towards harmony,"²²⁸ Jacobson, who traces the influence on Brahms's counterpoint by Bach and Handel, and his polyphony by sixteenth-century composers of church music, explains the difference between the two by stating that "counterpoint lays more stress on the combination—on the cohesion of the overall texture—while polyphony emphasizes the independence."²²⁹ Furthermore, he gives his assessment on Brahms's contrapuntal writing, by tracing his heritage back to the sixteenth century:

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., 26.

²²⁶ Ibid., 24-25.

²²⁷ Ibid., 30-31.

²²⁸ Fellingner, "Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen," 151.

²²⁹ Jacobson, "Brahms and Music History," 36.

[T]he emphasis in Brahms is on the sense of independence, of a number of distinct musics going their ways at the same time. It is this insistence on the integrity of the individual line, heightened by Brahms's resuscitation of genuine rhythmic freedom in the various parts of the texture, that seems to leap clear back over the previous two centuries to a time before the monodic revolution had shifted composers' concentration from the horizontal to the vertical aspects of music.²³⁰

When Jacobson then explains Brahms's "forward-looking" features in his compositions, he relies on Schönberg's writing,²³¹ highlighting the "richness and freedom of Brahms's harmonic language" and "rhythmic emancipation" that are "no less bold or personal than Wagner's."²³² While Jacobson grounds Brahms's harmonic language within functional harmony, in which tonal polarities determine the formal processes of traditional forms, such as sonata or variations, he does not link the past, the present, and the future as Fellingner does. While Fellingner concludes that Brahms "preserve[d] the old to create new historical foundations,"²³³ Jacobson almost draws a clear line between Brahms's backward-looking and forward-looking aspects in this chapter. I suggest that Jacobson might subtly points to such connection in the concluding paragraphs, as he briefly assesses Brahms's motivic elaboration, a technique that has strong relations to the "history of musical thought,"²³⁴ and continues to be employed by future composers. There is no mentioning of historicism or conservatism, and the historical influence or inspirations generally look backwards under Jacobson's pen.

Jacobson's book is written for general readers, aiming to provide a more accessible source that focuses on Brahms's music and style, not the life of the

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ It is unclear to which of Schönberg's writings Jacobson is referring, but the most possible answer is Schönberg's "Brahms the Progressive," since Schönberg writes extensively on Brahms's rhythmic innovations in the essay, and Jacobson includes this in the "Selected Writings" section, p. 178.

²³² Jacobson, 36-37.

²³³ Fellingner, "Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen," 163.

²³⁴ Jacobson, 38.

composer.²³⁵ Maas expresses a contrasting opinion, suggesting that musical examples and certain terminology are actually alienating to “non-specialist readers,” and would be more suitable for the musically literate group, such as music students, expert recording collectors, connoisseurs, and scholars.²³⁶ Similar to Kevin Korsyn’s criticism of Geiringer’s writing about Brahms thirteen years later,²³⁷ Maas also comments on Jacobson’s “love for the composer,”²³⁸ which might be the reason for Jacobson’s enthusiastic and warm writing style and language.

The next essay for discussion, written by Siegfried Kross, has a different focus and writing style compared to both Fellingner and Jacobson. In his essay, Kross does not present the backward-looking historicist aspects of Brahms as clearly as did Fellingner and Jacobson.

3.4 Siegfried Kross: “Brahms the Symphonist / Johannes Brahms – der Sinfoniker” [1983]²³⁹

1983 was a fruitful year for Brahms research, as it marked the sesquicentennial birth year of Brahms.²⁴⁰ To celebrate the occasion, music scholars organized conferences and

²³⁵ Jacobson, “Editorial Preface,” in *The Music of Johannes Brahms*, 11.

²³⁶ Maas, review of *The Music of Johannes Brahms* by Bernard Jacobson, 611.

²³⁷ Kevin Korsyn, “Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology,” *Music Analysis* 12, no. 1 (Mar. 1993): 93, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/854077>.

²³⁸ Maas, review of *The Music of Johannes Brahms* by Bernard Jacobson, 611.

²³⁹ Siegfried Kross, “Brahms the Symphonist,” in *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 125-146. Siegfried Kross is a German musicologist, graduated from Freiburg University and Bonn University. He has worked at the Beethoven Archiv (1954) and has served as lecturer and professor at the faculty of Bonn University and as editor of *Dokumentation zur Geschichte des deutschen Liedes*. He specializes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries music, and is a renowned Brahms scholar. From Wolfram Steinbeck, “Kross, Siegfried,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15577>.

²⁴⁰ Brahms was born in 1833.

published Festschriften and various specialized studies.²⁴¹ Siegfried Kross's original German edition is published in the fifth volume of the *Brahms-Studien* series in 1983.²⁴² The name of the translator of the English version remains unknown, and it is possible that Robert Pascall, the editor of *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, which contained the English version, is the translator.²⁴³ Another possible translator is the author himself.

Instead of blatant narrations of historical influences, allusions, and musical examples that show Brahms's connection to the distant past (as seen in Jacobson), Kross demonstrates the burden of the past in Brahms's present and assesses how Brahms reacted to it, by using analysis and biographical information.²⁴⁴ Two reviews I have consulted, however, criticize Kross's biographical information as "second-hand."²⁴⁵ I argue, however, that biographical information is probably not the focus of Kross, but of how he downplays the emphasis on the connection of Brahms's symphonic writing to Beethoven's, and his views of Schumann's legacy on Brahms's career decisions, all the way to the final formation of his First Symphony.

Indeed, there is arguably an ideology behind Kross's analysis and his conclusions from it, where he discounts Beethovenian tradition in Brahms's symphonic writing. By

²⁴¹ Heather Platt, in *Johannes Brahms: A Guide to Research* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 27-32, documents a significant amount of publication and conference reports in this year.

²⁴² Johannes-Brahms-Gesellschaft, "Brahms Studies," Johannes-Brahms-Gesellschaft Hamburg Internationale Vereinigung e.V., accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.brahms-hamburg.de/en/studies.html>.

²⁴³ This book was published as a Festschrift for Brahms. See Preface in Robert Pascall, ed., *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), vii.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Newbould comments that they are "summarized" in his review of *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, by Robert Pascall, *Music & Letters* 65, no. 1 (Jan. 1984): 74, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/736352>. Claudio Spies is even harsher in his review of *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, by Robert Pascall, *Notes, Second Series* 40, no. 4 (June 1984): 777, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/940692>.

pointing out Brahms's "particular solution"²⁴⁶ to the symphonic challenge, Brahms was not as close to Beethoven's symphonic tradition as thought so by von Bülow, who had called the former's First Symphony "Beethoven's Tenth,"²⁴⁷ a criticism that had a heavy impact in the reception of Brahms's First Symphony throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²⁴⁸ By distancing Brahms and Beethoven in this matter, Kross arguably is attempting to save Brahms from being merely retrospective and imitative of Beethoven,²⁴⁹ as he explains how Brahms went another way by his comparison of thematic and structural processes of the two composers:

...the structure of the themes is simply not comparable...In Beethoven's symphonies, the motivic development and treatment of themes in the development section had required the broadest space, moreover, it had penetrated the other sections of each movement and had finally led to the apotheosis of a theme; see for instance bar 632 of the first movement of the 'Eroica' Symphony. In Brahms's symphonies, however, the centre of gravity shifts back to the exposition: the development section is no greater in length and content than the exposition, as it is in Beethoven.²⁵⁰

Kross also compares Brahms's First Symphony to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony:

One needs only to think of Beethoven's Symphony in C minor, where the dynamic of development from the scherzo to the finale theme is so dominant that Beethoven repeats this transition again before the recapitulation, and to compare it with Brahms's gradual emancipation of themes, to understand how superficial is the thesis of continuity between Beethoven and Brahms in the concept of symphony.²⁵¹

Kross's further assessment of Brahms's Second and Third Symphonies resulted into similar conclusions.²⁵² The Fourth Symphony again received significant attention, because Kross concludes that the first movement has "no symphonic theme in the sense

²⁴⁶ Kross, "Brahms the Symphonist," 134.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 129.

²⁴⁸ For example, see Leon Plantinga's *Romantic Music* (1984), 421-22, and Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (2005), 694 and 719-722.

²⁴⁹ Kross, "Brahms the Symphonist," 135.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 132.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 134.

²⁵² Ibid., 137-145.

of the Classic-Romantic formal tradition,” when Brahms chose to construct the main subject area with “a compulsive sequence of equal intervals, seven thirds in the same direction...enclose all degrees of the diatonic scale.”²⁵³ By acknowledging such criticism expressed by the “mockers” of Brahms’s own time, Kross directs the Fourth Symphony towards the future. Readers familiar with Schönberg’s serialism can see the analogy of “enclos[ing] all degrees of the diatonic scale”²⁵⁴ with Schönberg’s twelve-tone technique which encloses all degrees of the chromatic scale. Kross also interprets the passacaglia finale of this symphony not in the tradition of Beethoven, but of J. S. Bach, providing supportive evidence by quoting Kalbeck’s recommendation of substituting “a final movement in the manner of the Beethoven tradition.”²⁵⁵

Similar to Fellingner and Jacobson, Kross includes the source of inspiration of Brahms’s Fourth Symphony passacaglia theme, which was from Bach’s Cantata BWV 150, but he questions the authenticity of the theme based on the research by Alfred Dürr, a renowned Bach scholar, while Fellingner and Jacobson did not.²⁵⁶ This is significant in the perspective of research in the twenty-first century, because a more recently published book in relation to the time I wrote this thesis — *Brahms Handbuch* (2009) — does not mention it.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Ibid., 141.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 142. It is also necessary for future scholars, however, to consider Raymond Knapp’s assessment of a few years later, in which he does not discount Beethoven’s variations-finale of the *Eroica Symphony* as possible model. See Raymond Knapp, “The Finale of Brahms’s Fourth Symphony: the Tale of the Subject,” *19th-Century Music* 13, no. 1 (Summer 1989): 9, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746207>.

²⁵⁶ Kross, 143, see footnote no. 22. Information on Alfred Dürr from Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht and Konrad Küster, “Dürr, Alfred,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/08403>.

²⁵⁷ Robert Pascall, “Orchestermusik,” in *Brahms Handbuch*, ed. Wolfgang Sandberger (Stuttgart and Kassel: Metzler and Bärenreiter, 2009), 522 and 539.

Kross appears to be questioning the extent to which Brahms was inheriting and continuing Beethoven's symphonic tradition, especially in the second half of this essay where he presents his analysis. Nevertheless, in comparison to that, the first half of the essay which involves biographical information, and in my opinion a history of Brahms's path to his First Symphony, requires a more detailed examination. By summarizing the processes and decisions Brahms had made during the compositional process of his First Symphony, Kross actually does not disregard Brahms's connection to history and tradition, for example:

For the first movement he had chosen a main theme of truly symphonic size with extraordinary potential for symphonic development. Its chains of trills are perhaps a result of his study of Hamburg musical history in the figure of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach.²⁵⁸

While Fellingner attributes Brahms's lifelong interest in early music studies to his education with Eduard Marxsen, Kross links it to Robert Schumann's emphasis on the study of Renaissance vocal polyphony, and such counterpoint/polyphony study was so important to Brahms that he did not publish any significant work in five years.²⁵⁹ Kross traces the heritage of Brahms's First Symphony to be closer to Schumann's Fourth Symphony, but does not provide more information or analysis that supports this claim regarding Schumann's legacy.²⁶⁰

Kross also gives an account of Brahms's thoughts of history, and in the case of symphonic composition, history and tradition had become a burden to Brahms. An inclusion of the Brahms's famous "giant footsteps" statement, which many scholars

²⁵⁸ Kross, 126. This "first" symphony later became Brahms's First Piano Concerto.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 125.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 131.

before and after Kross quote in their writings,²⁶¹ and another expression regarding symphony: “O God, if one dares to write symphonies after Beethoven they must look very different,”²⁶² culminating with Kross’s narrative of Brahms’s annoyance to allusions hunting of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in his First Symphony, all spoke of Brahms’s distress caused by the problems of “post-Beethovenian symphon[ic]” composition.²⁶³

Kross mentions historicism once in this essay, but it has a strong backward-looking connotation. He aligns “traditionalist,” “historicism” and “classicism” side by side, in order to bring forth Schönberg’s rescue of Brahms from these reactionary and academic labels.²⁶⁴ Kross’s overall assessment of Brahms’s symphonic compositions does exhibit an inclination of reversing Brahms from the reactionary, despite the fact that he does not mention explicitly that Brahms was being radical. Such an assessment, however, marks the difference of his essay to the previous two essays addressed above.

Kross publishes another essay on these issues fourteen years later, dealing with Brahms’s First Cello Sonata, furthering his stance on rescuing Brahms out of the pillory of epigone.

3.5 Siegfried Kross: “Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio? Die 1. Cellosone e-Moll op. 38” [1997]²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ Kross cites Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms* (Vienna: Wiener Verlag, 1904-1914), 1:165, accessed March 7, 2013, accessible from <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/254348101.html>, p. 130. The same quote also appears in Fellingner’s “Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen,” in which she cites Kalbeck as well, and Richard Taruskin in *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 686, also cites Kalbeck.

²⁶² Quoting Kalbeck’s *Johannes Brahms*, 1:339, through Kross.

²⁶³ Kross, 130.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

²⁶⁵ Siegfried Kross, “Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio? Die 1. Cellosone e-Moll op. 38,” in *Johannes Brahms: Quellen-Text-Rezeption-Interpretation*, Hamburg 1997, ed. Friedhelm Krummacher, et al. (Munich, Germany: G. Henle Verlag, 1999), 97-102. I am tremendously grateful to Dr. Nico Schüler for his generous help, as he translated, explained, and discussed this essay with me.

While the previous essay was written for the 1983 Brahms sesquicentennial birth year Festschrift, this essay, with specific focus on Brahms's Sonata for Piano and Cello in E minor, op. 38, was written for the Hamburg conference in conjunction with the centennial anniversary of Brahms's death, another year which Brahms scholarship flourished. Kross's essay "Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio" emphasizes the historical influence on Brahms's composition.

Similar to Kross's organization of materials in "Brahms the Symphonist," he first gives a context of the subject matter before plunging into analysis. While in "Brahms the Symphonist" Kross's summary of the historical development up to the successful formation of Brahms's First Symphony takes up a good portion of the essay, Kross begins here with a survey of the literature pertaining to the citation (*Zitat*) and allusions in Brahms First Cello Sonata. He cites Wilhelm Altmann, who first addressed Brahms's quotation of Bach in this cello sonata, in 1921.²⁶⁶ In 1973, William Klenz, in his essay titled "Piracy, Pillage, Plagiarism or Parody?," accuses Brahms of parodying Bernhard Romberg's Cello Sonata.²⁶⁷ Ten years later, the music historian, theorist, and composer Ellwood Derr presented a paper at the 1983 Brahms Conference in Vienna, arguing that Brahms formed his First Cello Sonata by a pastiche of various Schubert's works.²⁶⁸

By writing this essay, Kross wishes to rescue Brahms and his First Cello Sonata from the pejorative comments by Altmann, Klenz, and Derr, similar to his agenda in "Brahms the Symphonist," where he downplays the overemphasizing of Brahms's

²⁶⁶ Kross, "Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio?" 97.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. Also see Heather Platt's annotation on this entry in *Johannes Brahms: A Guide to Research* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 167-168.

²⁶⁸ Kross, "Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio?" 97. Information on Ellwood Derr: "Ellwood Derr, Music Theory," University of Michigan, accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.music.umich.edu/alumni_donors/documents/Derr.pdf.

connection to Beethoven in his symphonies. Although it is easy to attack Klenz's types of "Piracy, Pillage, Plagiarism or Parody" assessment of Brahms's First Cello Sonata, Kross does not disregard these types as means of aesthetic judgments.²⁶⁹ According to him, since this cello sonata was written around the time of the illness and death of Brahms's mother, scholars deem the work unlikely to be a parody, going against what Klenz has claimed. Therefore scholars are in a "Trilemma," trying to decide if the work is a result of piracy, pillage, or plagiarism, all while considering their analyses and findings in the context of the death of Brahms's mother, since such an unfortunate event probably resulted in the overall brooding and elegiac mood of this work.²⁷⁰

Kross, however, questions the validity of connecting Brahms's First Cello Sonata to his mother's death, after researching on Brahms's compositional history.²⁷¹ According to him, there is little to suggest that the unfortunate event has significant impact on the work, since part of it had been written a few years earlier, and a large part of it was composed at the same time Brahms worked on his Horn Trio, op. 40.²⁷² With this in context, for Kross it is arguably not appropriate to interpret the work emotionally or biographically.²⁷³ Despite disassociating the First Cello Sonata from biographical events by employing compositional chronology, Kross suggests that the parody interpretation is not correct and supports this view with his analysis of thematic construction and motivic development of the work.

According to Kross, the formation of the main theme in the first movement is rather unique among the works in music history for its symmetry and its "Janus"

²⁶⁹ Kross, "Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio?" 97.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 98.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

characteristic, like a “snake in the prater.”²⁷⁴ Brahms developed the axis of the theme, which is a three-note step-wise descending figure, in inversions, augmentation, sequence, and variations, to serve as the motive for the construction and development in the first movement.²⁷⁵ Such techniques have a long history, dating back to Bach, which Kross describes as “classical form building.”²⁷⁶ On one hand, it is difficult to claim history by such techniques because they have such “presentness,” and on the other hand such techniques represent part of history that is also part of the present time. Therefore, I agree with Kross’s argument that such construction of materials and form of the work are not necessarily that strongly related to Schubert.²⁷⁷ Furthermore, Kross’s demonstration of the dense thematic and motivic processes throughout the first movement shows their construction as “rationally calculated,” which is unlikely so in the case of Brahms expressing his emotions on his mother’s death.²⁷⁸ Kross also identifies a canonic moment starting in m. 35, a compositional technique and texture that strongly evoke a sense of history, while noting that this moment especially demands the cello and piano perform as equal partners.²⁷⁹

Brahms removed the original second movement of this cello sonata due to its inefficiency to provide convincing contrast to the first movement and instead composed an Allegretto quasi Menuetto.²⁸⁰ The construction of this new second movement, which is based on the stepwise descending three-note motive from the first movement, solved the

²⁷⁴ I borrow the expression “snake in the prater” from Kalbeck’s description of a full circle, although Kalbeck was addressing another work when he used this phrase. Quoted in Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, 4:221, via Roger Scott Moseley, “Brief Immortality: Recasting History in the Music of Brahms” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2004), 266, ProQuest AAT 3146959.

²⁷⁵ Kross, 98.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 99.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 98.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 99.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 100.

formal and developmental problem posed by the cyclical form of this cello sonata.²⁸¹

Such construction based on the development of the domineering motive ensured the sonata's integrity as a whole.²⁸² In comparison to that, Kross does not explore Brahms's exhibition of his historicist tendency by writing a "quasi menuetto" movement, stylizing the graceful court dance popular in the Baroque and early Classical era but this time for chamber music or Hausmusik purpose.

As for the fugal finale movement, there are ample examples in the literature of Brahms employing fugal texture or technique in his compositions, and Fellingner also mentions this in "Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen."²⁸³ Kross views this fugal movement as a special case, however, because it is rare for a multi-movement work with cyclic form to close with a fugal finale, and Kross finds no fugal finale in other cyclical works by Brahms.²⁸⁴ It is also this fugal finale that sparks the Bach-citation discourse. Kross presents the opening subject of this movement by Brahms (marked as *Notenbeispiel 5a*), and the *Contrapunctus 13* from Bach's *The Art of Fugue*, BWV 1080 (marked as *Notenbeispiel 5b*) side by side for comparison, and they do have striking resemblances.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 100-101. See also Laurence Wallach, "Sonata no. 1 for Piano and Cello in E minor, op. 38", in *The Complete Brahms*, ed. Leon Bostein (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 90-93, for a history on this work.

²⁸² Kross, 100.

²⁸³ Fellingner, "Brahms und die Musik vergangener Epochen," 154.

²⁸⁴ Kross, 100. Another composition that I can draw a parallel to such an ending is Cesar Franck's *Violin Sonata in A Major*, which is in cyclical form. Its finale is not constructed of fugue texture or structure, but it is rather close—a canon. One can also argue that Brahms's *Fourth Symphony* is somewhat cyclical due to the motivic and thematic materials that connect the first and last movements, but the last movement is a *chaconne/passacaglia*.

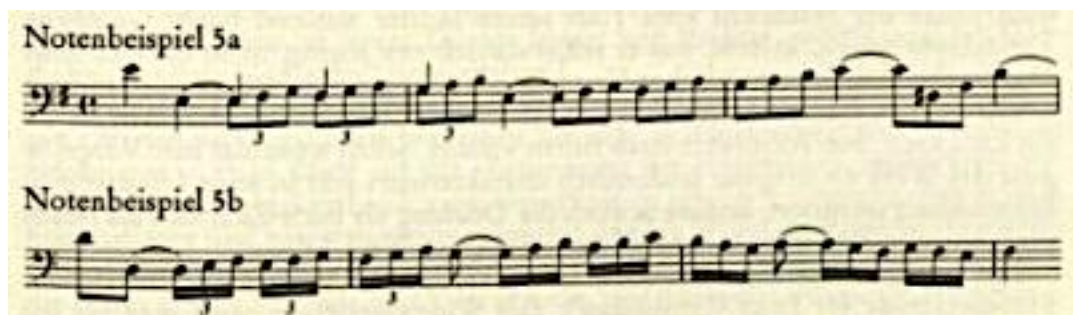


Figure 2: Kross's comparison between the subjects of Brahms (5a) and Bach (5b).²⁸⁵

For Kross, however, it is not as simple as labeling such resemblance as “citation” or “plagiarism.” Kross marks the notes E, F#, and G with upper stems, to show that the sequences that construct the fugal subject are developed out of the inversion of the three-note step-wise motive from the first movement.²⁸⁶ In addition, Kross views Brahms's emphasizing the leaning tone (C) to the dominant note (B) and the leading tone to tonic (D#) as consistent to similar emphases on leaning and leading tones in the first movement, causing Brahms to bring the subject to a close in a different way than Bach. Despite demonstrating that such a resemblance might develop rationally out of the first movement, Kross does not completely discount the possibility that Brahms was familiar with Bach's *Contrapunctus 13*. Kross suggests such similarity would have delighted Brahms, because the two composers started their work in different ways, but they ultimately arrived at similar development and conclusion, even with the temporal and functional distance.²⁸⁷

While Schönberg plays his part in rescuing Brahms by bringing forth his “progressive” elements in his compositions much earlier than most writers of music, both Fellinger and Jacobson, whose essays I explored above in this chapter, include examples

²⁸⁵ Kross, 101.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 101. Original text: “Da Brahms das Bach-Werk gekannt haben dürfte, wird es ihm verständlicherweise Vergnügen bereitet haben, von so gänzlich anderen Voraussetzungen her an einen Phänotypus Bachs herangekommen zu sein.”

of Brahms's usage of historical materials, which Brahms edited for his own uses, and for most of the times these (sometimes substantially) edited materials served very different purposes if compared to the originals.²⁸⁸ In their ways, Fellingner, Jacobson, and Kross lift Brahms off those negative accusation of epigone (which can be related to Klenz's "Piracy, Pillage, Plagiarism or Parody"), reactionary and downright conservative. It may not be surprising that Altmann sees Brahms as an epigone in the anti-romanticism and modernist early twentieth century,²⁸⁹ but the polemics by Altmann, Klenz and Derr on the compositional methods of Brahms's First Cello Sonata informs us that the scholarly assessment of this work remains volatile well into the late twentieth century. Kross explicitly states in his essay that even at the "turn of the century" (which initially refers to the progress from nineteenth to twentieth century, but also applicable to the final decade of twentieth century, before going into twenty-first century, of the time this essay is written), the debate on Brahms's usage of historical materials and the nature of such methods remain popular.²⁹⁰ By the date of this essay, Kross is offering another solution, not by reconciling both camps, but by purely musical means, showing that Brahms's conceptualization of motives and themes in this cello sonata might be a purely rational and organic compositional development, exhibiting rigorous craftsmanship in working out the ideas. Such analysis also downplays the significance of the death of Brahms's mother in relation to his First Cello Sonata.

²⁸⁸ For example, consider the allusion of the opening piano part from the finale of Brahms's Piano Quartet op. 60 to the opening piano part from the first movement of Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in C minor. See David Brodbeck, "Medium and Meaning: New Aspects of the Chamber Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms* ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 121-122, for more information regarding this connection.

²⁸⁹ Also see Peter Gay, "Aimez-vous Brahms?" in *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 231-256, and thesis chapter 4.2.

²⁹⁰ Kross, 97.

Therefore, Kross is highly critical of the accusation of Brahms plagiarizing or pirating the works of the dead masters, which he attributes to careless stylistic analysis and criticism of reminiscence recognition.²⁹¹ In addition, Kross is highly suspicious of allusion hunting activities, not only the blind hunting that other scholars attack as well, but also hunting that serves such speculations with little historical evidence.²⁹² Even if Kross does not mention or discuss musical historicism in Brahms in this essay, he nevertheless addresses elements of it: of Brahms “shaking hands” with Bach, of Brahms’s usage of archaic forms and techniques, and of Brahms developing his First Cello Sonata within the framework of not only Baroque and Classical contexts, but also his personal voice at his “present” time.

Kross’s “Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio?” essay was published near to the turn of the century. The topic of allusions in Brahms remains popular throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century, exemplified in Jacquelyn Sholes’s “Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism?” (2010) which I will discuss in the next section, where she addresses biographical, psychological, and historical aspects of Brahms in his First Piano Trio, and questions if one can reconcile physical, psychological, and temporal distances.

3.6 Jacquelyn Sholes: “Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism? Reconsidering Allusion and Extramusical Meaning in the 1854 Version of Brahms’s B-major Trio” [2010]²⁹³

²⁹¹ Ibid., 97 & 101-102.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Jacquelyn Sholes, “Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism? Reconsidering Allusion and Extramusical Meaning in the 1854 Version of Brahms’s B-major Trio,” *19th-Century Music* 34, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 61-86, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2010.34.1.061>. Sholes is currently a lecturer at Boston University. Prior to that she was a visiting assistant professor at Williams College, and has served on the faculties of Wellesley College, the University of Massachusetts-Boston, Brandeis University, and Harvard University. She has published articles and entries in *19th-Century Music* and *The*

Research interest on allusions in Brahms scholarship has always been popular, but in the early twenty-first century, scholars do not merely hunt for new allusions. They qualify and propose historical and biographical significances to both existing allusions in scholarship and newly discovered ones, largely by building on previous scholarship.²⁹⁴ For example, in 2004 Elaine Kelly brought scholarly attention to the more neglected Francois Couperin influence on Brahms.²⁹⁵ Earlier in the same year, Roger Moseley's doctoral dissertation included a substantial chapter on Brahms's Piano Trio op. 8. Giving scrupulous attention to historical details and allusions in his analysis of both the 1854 and the revised 1889 versions, Moseley highlights how Brahms directed historicist thoughts and practice to his works.²⁹⁶ (In 2007, he published an article on this specific topic.)²⁹⁷ One year later than Sholes, Heather Platt published an article on Brahms's allusions to Haydn, which according to her is a less explored topic compared to Brahms's allusions to Bach, Beethoven, and Schumann.²⁹⁸

For both Sholes and Moseley, this first published chamber work of Brahms is significant for two reasons. Firstly, this piano trio was composed during a remarkable period of Brahms's personal and musical life, a time in which he acquainted himself with

Grove Dictionary of American Music, 2nd ed., and is a recipient of the Karl Geiringer Scholarship award. She now holds the position of Program Chair for the New England Chapter of AMS. Her expertise is in nineteenth-century music, particularly Brahms. School of Music, "Faculty Profile: Jacquelyn Sholes," Boston University, accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.bu.edu/musicology/faculty/jacquelyn-sholes>.

²⁹⁴ Sholes gives a brief literature survey of allusion scholarship in "Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism?" See footnote no. 5, pp. 62.

²⁹⁵ Elaine Kelly, "An Unexpected Champion of François Couperin: Johannes Brahms and the 'Pièces de Clavecin'," *Music & Letters* 85, no. 4 (November 2004): 576-601, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/music_and_letters/summary/v085/85.4kelly.html.

²⁹⁶ Roger Scott Moseley, "Brief Immortality: Recasting History in the Music of Brahms" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2004), 1-96, ProQuest AAT 3146959.

²⁹⁷ Moseley, "Reforming Johannes: Brahms, Kreisler Junior, and the Piano Trio in B, Op. 8," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132, no. 2 (2007): 252-305, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30161409>.

²⁹⁸ Heather Platt, "Probing the Meaning of Brahms's Allusions to Haydn," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 42, no. 1 (June 2011): 33-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41228641>.

the Schumanns, later dealing with his feelings for Clara Schumann and the attempted suicide of Robert Schumann. Secondly, the work exhibits Brahms's awareness of "the loss of the musical past and expresses perspectives on his own historical position," when he composed the work in 1854 and revised it substantially in 1889.²⁹⁹ In regard to the first, youthful version of Brahms's Piano Trio op. 8, Sholes acknowledges the allusions addressed in previous Brahms scholarship, such as references to Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* and Schubert's *Schwanengesang*, both carrying extra-musical meaning that spoke of Brahms's feelings for Clara Schumann.³⁰⁰ In her article, however, Sholes highlights a neglected allusion, how Brahms "refers both clearly and in a structurally significant manner to Domenico Scarlatti's C-Major Sonata, K. 159."³⁰¹ With her analysis, she wishes to suggest the "possibility of interpreting Brahms's musical handling of historical reference as a reflection of his psychological orientation toward the music to which he refers."³⁰²

Sholes's analysis largely focuses on the first version of this piano trio, especially on the allusions suggested or more explicitly displayed in the work. In the first section, "Three Allusions in the 1854 Trio," Sholes identifies, as had most scholars on the subject, Brahms's allusions to Beethoven's "Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder," which is the last song in the cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*.³⁰³ This allusion, according to her, is probably via Robert Schumann, but the conceit of the song carries an act of lamenting and

²⁹⁹ Sholes, "Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism?" 62.

³⁰⁰ See Sholes's footnote no. 5 in "Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism?" 62. She cites Kenneth Hull's "Allusive Irony in Brahms's Fourth Symphony" (1998), David Brodbeck's "Brahms, the Third Symphony, and the New German School" (1990) and "Medium and Meaning: New Aspects of the Chamber Music" (1999), Raymond Knapp's "Brahms and the Anxiety of Allusion" (1998), among others. Also see Moseley, "Brief Immortality: Recasting History in the Music of Brahms," 6-7.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid., 63.

³⁰³ Ibid. See also Sholes's footnote no. 7 on the same page.

reconciliation of physical distance.³⁰⁴ The next allusion to Schubert's "Am Meer" from the *Schwanengesang*, D. 957, however, is a lament of both physical and psychological distance, but without a solution.³⁰⁵ Sholes gives most attention to Brahms's allusion to Scarlatti's Sonata, K. 159, noting the importance of the possible horn-call imitation opening of the sonata in Brahms's First Piano Trio. She also identifies sections in which the allusion can be heard most clearly and convincingly:

The Trio's clearest reminiscence of Scarlatti is heard at the climax of the first movement, at the end of the recapitulation's second theme group... Starting in m. 396, a one-measure phrase pervades the music, consisting of precisely the sequence of pitches that begins Scarlatti's Sonata..., except for an added leap to the dominant³⁰⁶

Sholes then draws parallels to how Brahms closed phrases by evoking the Baroque-style of ornamentation, usually trills, at the cadences.³⁰⁷

To support her argument for the Brahms-Scarlatti connection, Sholes examines the historical context of Brahms's studies of the dead composer in the next section titled "Brahms and Scarlatti."³⁰⁸ Drawing from both primary and secondary sources, she shows that Brahms was well acquainted with Scarlatti's works as early as the time he worked the op. 8 Trio for publication (1854) and continued to champion Scarlatti throughout his career.³⁰⁹ In the section titled "Broader Thematic-Structural Implications of the Scarlatti Reference," Sholes first surveys the literature of the reception and analysis of the Scarlatti allusion and how the allusion plays its part in the unification and distribution of thematic and motivic material in the op. 8 Trio, and then she expands it with her own analysis.³¹⁰

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 64.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 65-68.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 68.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 71-78

Sholes argues that the “unrealized fugato in the exposition and its counterpart in the recapitulation” is one of the more prominent pieces of supporting evidence on the notion that Brahms was deliberately evoking Baroque idioms.³¹¹ Sholes also suggests that Brahms deals with the “anxiety of influence” subconsciously.³¹² Despite such use of allusions as thematic and motivic material for musical construction, she posits, the work is still Brahmsian in character, as his thumbprints of “heavy emphasis on parallel thirds and sixths” can be seen in the trio movement’s theme.³¹³

Sholes, in the remaining sections, addresses the “lovelorn lamentation” of Brahms to Clara Schumann. Even the lack of dedication of this trio has only further implicated Brahms’s expression to Clara, and the allusion to Scarlatti also supports such a connection, particularly because of Clara’s pioneering Scarlatti’s music in her concert programs, Sholes argues.³¹⁴

Indeed, Sholes supports her hypothesis of Brahms’s reference to irreconcilable physical, psychological, and temporal distance to his “beloved,” to his youth, and to history, with an analysis that highlights the fragmentation and various musical “paintings” or hints of these possibilities, which finally ends in a tragedy, signified by brooding and stormy finale movement of the Piano Trio op. 8, which ends in minor mode.³¹⁵ This reflects her title of the article, of Brahms lamenting on his lovelorn feelings with histrionic historicism, to both Clara Schumann and historical past.

³¹¹ Ibid., 74.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid., 75.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 80-81.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 78.

While previous scholarship on Brahms and allusions carry pejorative criticism – see, for example, Brahms’s pastiche of Schubert’s works by Ellwood Derr,³¹⁶ Sholes argues that Brahms’s compositional process suggests that he was conscious of his historical position, an observation that is in consensus with the writings discussed in this chapter. Sholes’s concept of “historicism” in this article has a strong backward-looking connotation, instead of the German historicist’s flux of change. In her analysis of Brahms’s allusions to Beethoven, Schubert, and Scarlatti, however, Sholes offers the possibility of Brahms “singing Scarlatti back to history” as a bridging gesture of temporal distance, acting on Beethoven’s “advice” and using Scarlatti as the “object,” but ultimately accepted the Schubertian “loss.”³¹⁷

Sholes not only studies Brahms’s allusions to suggest their meanings, but she also accentuates the significance of their deletion, when Brahms revisited the Trio in 1889, which can be interpreted, she argues, as Brahms removing the immature and the tragic romantic character from the work.³¹⁸ At the same time, Sholes ponders on purely musical reason for such revision, which is the taming process, a possibility that is also addressed by Moseley in his dissertation.³¹⁹ Such revision has different repercussions, since critics, musicians, and scholars have received it in motley ways in different times. As Sholes and Moseley suggest, Brahms might be proving his technical mastery and the needlessness to rely on allusions, signifying his outgrowth of such activity that was encouraged by Schumann’s generation of composers in his youth.³²⁰ Moseley goes further by positing

³¹⁶ Mentioned in Kross, “Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio?” 97.

³¹⁷ Sholes, 82.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 84. Also see Roger Moseley, “Brief Immortality: Recasting History in the Music of Brahms,” 1-96, which is the first chapter of his dissertation.

³²⁰ Sholes, 85, and Moseley, “Brief Immortality,” 14.

that Brahms's was critiquing or "objectifying" his Piano Trio op. 8 by such revision.³²¹ Indeed, Moseley notes Brahms's friends and critics of his time received the revised version by lamenting of the loss of nostalgic memories evoked in the former version, and of the coolness and rationality exhibited in the latter.³²²

Sholes's essay includes an impressively extensive bibliography and citations, such thoroughness also seen in Kelly's 2004 article, not so much in both of Kross's essays, and almost missing in Jacobson's chapter all discussed above. In spite of such careful documentation, extensive analysis, historical research, and basing interpretations on these evidences, Sholes is careful not to hit the final and conclusive nail into any suggestion of what meanings the allusions can bring, or Brahms's decision in revising the op. 8 Trio. Perhaps it is even harder to conclude or reconcile multi-faceted opinions as scholarship continues to grow in many different directions. This article may seem to be suggestive at its closure, but it certainly is a valuable addition to the study of Brahms's use of allusion specifically and historicism scholarship.

3.7 Conclusion

The publications I have discussed in this chapter compel me to address this seemingly ever-lasting question: is Brahms a conservatively historicist composer or a progressively historicist composer? Short answer: it depends on whose scholarship one consults. Considering the authors discussed above, different writers would provide analytical and historical evidence in support of their ideology. Fellingner and Jacobson do not see Brahms as progressively historicist composer, although Fellingner does address Brahms's

³²¹ Moseley, "Brief Immortality," 61.

³²² Ibid., 72.

inclination of constructing music of the present by utilizing the past. Schönberg's famous "Brahms the Progressive" essay is not discussed here, but it clearly supports Brahms as a progressive composer, which in turn exposes his ideology.³²³ Kross, in contrast, views Brahms on the composer's own terms, neither supports the conservative nor the progressive side explicitly but does note the continuous need of rescuing Brahms from negatively epigone and conservative pillory. In the hands of Sholes, such discourse is less relevant compared to the significance of the composer's decisions. Ultimately this question remains difficult to answer. The assessments of Kross,³²⁴ which point to Brahms's dialectics to history by his symphonic answer to Beethoven, seemingly conservative yet progressively different in thematic, motivic, and formal construction, and the conclusion by Wolff where Brahms can be regarded as progressive as Wagner,³²⁵ are reconciling suggestions that alleviate the tension of this question.

There is also a large and more general problem pertaining to Brahms's historicizing methods in composition (and performance practice, discussed less in this chapter), of which many scholars are suspicious.³²⁶ Brahms's reliance on music history caused them to question Brahms's inner creativity. Was Brahms covering for his lack of creativity and musical expression by over-reliance on historical materials and "plagiarism," or was he synthesizing available materials of the past and present cleverly and artfully, by his eclectic selection of materials? Must Brahms's musical historicism

³²³ See Golan Gur, "Arnold Schoenberg and the Ideology of Progress in Twentieth-Century Musical Thinking," 7, accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.searchnewmusic.org/gur.pdf>.

³²⁴ Kross, "Brahms the Symphonist," and "Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio?"

³²⁵ Christoph Wolff, "Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-century Music: an Essay," in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George S. Bozarth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11, is discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

³²⁶ For example, consider the writings by Altmann, Klenz, and Derr in Kross's survey for "Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio?". Michael Musgrave, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xix-xxi (Preface), which also addresses this phenomenon.

suggest the conservative, reactionary, and epigone? This chapter shows that scholars especially before the 1990s and the turn of the century find it necessary to answer to the “lack of creativity” accusation, and in the twenty-first century, such a subject is not a huge concern in Brahms scholarship, and Brahms’s prowess in expression, creativity, and craftsmanship are highly valued.³²⁷

Finally, what role does musical historicism plays in Brahms’s compositions? It is possible to consider musical historicism in five ways: the deconstructor, the reconstructor, the conservative, the progressive, and the synthesis.

Historical materials available to Brahms were in a sense also the present because they survived as music and documents into his time, and from there he deconstructed them, adapting for his own uses, which is also a synthesizing process. By combining these two processes, Brahms also deconstructed the distance between the past and his present. At the time where composers had to deal with the burden of history, Brahms employed historicism to reconstruct traditional genres and their functions in his time, showing what still could be done with archaic forms, genres, and techniques. His study and active performance of early music also reconstructed history in a sense, by ensuring the continuous breath of life of early music and their history. Brahms’s relationship with music history was undeniably conservative, but by arming himself with history, combined with his manipulation of complex rhythm and musical materials, which are even deemed as “modern,” he played his part in constructing music history and ensured its progression.

³²⁷ Just to name a few, see Moseley’s “Brief Immortality” (2004), Kelly’s “An Unexpected Champion of François Couperin” (2004), Sholes’s “Lovelorn Lamentation or Histrionic Historicism?” (2010), Platt’s “Probing the Meaning of Brahms’s Allusions to Haydn” (2011), Taruskin’s *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (2005), and Taruskin and Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music: College Edition* (2013). Some scholars address this subject more subtly than others.

CHAPTER IV

IMMORTALIZING AND HISTORICIZING BRAHMS

4.1 Introduction

The reception history of Brahms the historicist is a colorful one, and some scholars might even describe it as volatile, but certainly not controversial. The assessment of reception history, notwithstanding the targeted composer or work, requires us to collect empirical data such as concert and performance statistics, reports, and scholarly writings of different times.³²⁸ Since reception history depends heavily on social responses and the prevalent aesthetic of the time, a survey of such materials reflects the fickleness of human nature. Reception histories cannot be neutral, as Leon Botstein expresses “we distort biography and history to fit our judgments, justifying our own tastes through the medium of scholarly historical explanation.”³²⁹ Reception history itself is a record of value judgments, therefore our dealings with the hermeneutics have to be more than “neutral opinion-collecting” while avoiding the thought that reception history outlines “improvement.”³³⁰

³²⁸ Jim Samson, “Reception,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed March 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40600>. Other data that could be collected include editions, advertisements, recordings, and the reaction of the composer by any medium, including his/her later works, and musical works or writings by later composers.

³²⁹ Leon Botstein, “Brahms and his Audience: the Later Viennese Years 1875-1897,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 51.

³³⁰ Progressivism invites many interpretations, including “improvement,” which in this case might bring a biased connotation. See Jim Samson, “Reception.”

While “reception studies, of their very nature, imply unstable, even receding, or ‘vanishing’ meanings of the artwork,” they also address the changing identities and social status of the creator of the artwork.³³¹ Brahms, alive or dead, and his compositions, cannot escape the roller-coaster ride that is characteristic of reception history. One example of such reception is the multifarious and sometimes paradoxical labels that various scholars and critics have applied to Brahms. Among these labels, Brahms the “Conservative” would be the most persistent, but Schönberg shines new light on Brahms with his 1933 lecture titled “Brahms the Progressive.”³³² Schönberg argues that Brahms’s rhythmic innovations and motivic development are highly complex and forward-looking but easy to be dismissed, because they are not as clearly progressive as Wagner’s complex harmony or *Gesamtkunstwerk* concept. In a sense this is ironic, because many scholars, particularly after the 1960s, would take the baton from Schönberg and then would conclude their studies more or less with such lines as “Brahms, commonly labeled a conservative composer, was a progressive composer as well, who did not need to yield to any ‘progressive’ composers.”³³³ At the same time, many Brahms scholars continue to celebrate Brahms and his interests in the music of the past without highlighting his “progressivism,” as I have shown in Chapter Three of this thesis. In the 2010s, the

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Arnold Schönberg, Leo Black, trans., “Brahms the Progressive,” in *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein (New York: St Martins Press, 1975), 398-441. Originally a lecture for radio audiences in 1933, published later in 1950 (information from Michael Musgrave, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, xx), and collected in the book *Style and Idea*, 1975.

³³³ For example, see Karl Geiringer, “Brahms the Ambivalent,” Christoph Wolff, “Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music: an Essay,” 1-4 & 7-11, and the Preface by Musgrave in *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, xix-xxii.

literature of pinning Brahms with labels is numerous, and this phenomenon will probably continue.³³⁴

Indeed, the increasing temporal distance between Brahms's own time and Brahms scholarship in motion allows us to assess and reassess not only Brahms's labels or historical interest, but also the significance of these events and his legacy. This chapter is a reception study of Brahms the historicist in the musicological or scholarly field, of how scholars, in their respective reception studies, address and interpret Brahms's historicist thinking and practice. While this study inevitably touches on general reception history, musicological/scholarly reception history is different than general reception history, as they are done from the perspectives of various scholars in musicological or social/cultural historians, and will examine the composer, artworks, legacy, social and historical context, and general reception history itself.³³⁵ This study will also address the historicist nature of Brahms reception history, as it changes under the impact of societies, ideologies, cultures, and politics in different times, while impacting future changes, eventually immortalizing Brahms as a major figure in music history.

The first essay discussed in this chapter was not written by a music scholar but rather by a renowned cultural historian, Peter Gay. While not focusing on Brahms's works, his life, or his practices, Gay gives an interesting account of the chaotic reception of Brahms in his targeted eras: late nineteenth and first half of twentieth centuries.

³³⁴ Geiringer, "Brahms the Ambivalent," Margaret Notley, "Brahms as Liberal: Genre, Style, and Politics in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna," *19th-Century Music* 17, no. 2 (Autumn 1993): 107-123, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746329>, and Peter Gay's expression of "Brahms the conservative difficult modern classicist" in "Aimez-vous Brahms?" in *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 246. This chapter is originally published in *Salmagundi*, no. 36 (Winter 1977): 16-35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40546958>. Gay's label brings the most paradoxical adjectives together.

³³⁵ Suggested by Christoph Wolff, "Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-century Music: an Essay."

4.2 Peter Gay: “Aimez-vous Brahms? On Polarities in Modernism” [1978]³³⁶

Taking his title from the 1959 fiction “Aimez-vous Brahms?” for the fifth chapter in his book *Freud, Jews, and Other Germans*, cultural historian Peter Gay presents the scene of a “knowing, modern woman” who represented the audience of her time (mid twentieth-century), rejecting Brahms without even listening to a complete recording of one of his works, viewing Brahms as “sentimental, low in emotional appeal, a museum piece on the order of antimacassars, china sculpture and virginal brides...a dusty relic from those old days.”³³⁷ In the mid-twentieth century, Brahms was already a confirmed member of the museum of classical music, with much of his music as staple repertoire. Even in the age of early modernism, which was just within decades of his death, Brahms was not “new.” His compositions seemed to be conservative, lack of direct emotional appeal, and contain no shock value to audiences of the modern era, as exemplified by the “modern, knowing woman” shown by Gay. When audience and critics of that era heard Brahms, they either saw his historicism as a lack of originality and refusal to invent, and his music was easily accessible compared to the difficult music by such modern composers as Schönberg and Stravinsky. Gay explains why Brahms had become the past, and the past was out of fashion, by articulating the psychology of modernist thinking with such statements as “familiarily had always bred contempt...Here, unpopularity is the precondition of

³³⁶ Peter Gay, “Aimez-vous Brahms?” in *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 231-256, originally published in *Salmagundi*, no. 36 (Winter 1977): 16-35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40546958>. The 1978 version is largely similar with some extensions. Peter Gay, born Peter Joachim Fröhlich (Berlin, 1923). He is a German Jew who migrated to the United States in order to escape the atrocity of the Nazis. He studied at University of Denver and Columbia University and served in the history department as professor of history at Columbia University and Yale University. He changed his German surname to its English equivalent: Gay. He specialized in Freudian psychology, nineteenth-century Weimar culture, modernism, and the Enlightenment. He is widely regarded as a prolific author, distinguished professor, and one of the most important cultural historians of our time. Information from Peter Gay, “A Life of Learning,” American Council of Learned Societies, accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.acls.org/Publications/OP/Haskins/2004_PeterGay.pdf.

³³⁷ Gay, “Aimez-vous Brahms?” 233.

popularity,” and “in our high culture...one must be damned to be saved, and the saved are damned.”³³⁸

Audiences and critics ranging from Brahms’s time to the post-World War II period might have known the allusions, the classical method of motivic development and variations, and the difficult counterpoint and canonic writings in Brahms’s compositions. These were Brahms’s most distinguished qualities, showing how well he knew the past, an amalgamation of both archaic and innovative musical elements. By writing on the modern audience’s rejection of the guidance of history and Brahms, Gay accentuates the “self-fulfilling prophecies” of high culture, where high art should be difficult, misunderstood, and rejected by the mainstream, which in turn forces the mainstream to uncritically accepted modern works characterized by “difficulty and alienation.”³³⁹ Under these criteria, to consider Brahms as a progressive composer is a blasphemy.

Gay’s opening of his polemic is a set-up for the next section, as he rather suddenly changes the time and scene back to the late nineteenth century, the era of Brahms. He argues that if modernism in the twentieth century was characterized by difficulty and alienation, then Brahms was “modern,” as anachronistic as the term is in Brahms’s era.³⁴⁰ The general public of Brahms’s time had different expectations than the modernist audience, as music was supposed to be expressive, full of emotion and beauty. As modernist audiences found Brahms easy to listen to, the late nineteenth-century audiences were not unanimous on the subject. Many of them had trouble feeling or

³³⁸ Ibid., 234.

³³⁹ Ibid., 235.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 238-241.

extracting such aesthetics out of Brahms's music.³⁴¹ Gay emphasizes the difficulty of understanding Brahms's music in his time:

In short, the public found Brahms difficult. And serious critics, like professional musicians, agreed with amateur performers or listeners that Brahms was difficult... [Hans von Bülow] still thought [Brahms's Variations on a Theme by Haydn] to be 'terribly difficult — furchtbar schwer'.³⁴²

Gay documents the reaction of Brahms's contemporaries towards his music. Indeed, some of Brahms's music gave his audience the impression of being cold and calculating³⁴³ — adjectives that are usually reserved for Schönberg's serial music decades later. He also posits that Brahms, who had tremendous knowledge of music history, had gained respect especially among music scholars for his mastery of difficult compositional techniques, but did not guarantee emotional arousal or understanding of all members of the audience.³⁴⁴ To support his claim on how "difficult" Brahms was to his contemporaries, Gay even includes the narration of Richard Strauss, a widely acknowledged progressive composer of that era, who found Brahms very obfuscating and lacking imagination in his orchestrations.³⁴⁵ Many critics and musicians, amateur or professionals, especially those in the cult of the New German School, found fault with Brahms's historicist compositional methods, finding it much easier to deduce that Brahms had worked diligently in developing his musical ideas or ironing out the kinks in

³⁴¹ Ibid., 239.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid., 238 and 250. On reaction to Schönberg's music see also Hermann Danuser and Gareth Cox trans., "Schoenberg's Concept of Art in Twentieth-Century Music History," in *Constructive Dissonance: Arnold Schoenberg and the Transformations of Twentieth-Century Culture*, eds. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 183-184, accessible from <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft52900620>.

³⁴⁴ Gay, "Aimez-vous Brahms?" 240.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 240-241.

his works.³⁴⁶ Gay's studies of criticism from the French, and literally Europe in general, also showed similar opinions, as they called Brahms's symphonic music as "brain music."³⁴⁷

Only after such startling paragraphs on Brahms's difficulty did Gay provide us the familiar reception of Brahms the traditionalist who, in the opinions of his contemporaries, was at best the follower of Beethoven, Haydn and Schumann, an "epigone."³⁴⁸ Now the picture painted by Gay is clear: from Brahms's own time to the modern era, the public disparaged Brahms for either sounding too "modern," too traditional, too difficult, or too easy.³⁴⁹ Since Gay presents Brahms reception in the modern era first, then only goes back to the late nineteenth-century, the contrast between Brahms's receptions in his time to that of the modern era is even more striking. Nevertheless, this distinction reflects the flux of Brahms's reputation, especially on his historicist practice. As Gay put it:

The history of taste is, after all, full of such shifts to which not even Dante, not even Shakespeare, have been immune. Only stability needs explaining. But more went into the making of the twentieth-century Brahms than this. What changed was not merely a judgment but a mode of judgment...It warns the historian that not evaluations alone, but even presumably stable categories, are far from permanent or absolute.³⁵⁰

Throughout the essay, Gay displays a strong historicist belief in constant historical changes. He also presents the rather chaotic reception history of Brahms the historicist from the perspective of the high-art culture and society, which consists of many paradoxical reactions, parallel to the myriad interpretation of "historicism." Similar to the

³⁴⁶ Ernest Walker, "Brahms," *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 25th Sess. (1898-1899): 131-133, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/765156>. See Mr. Davey's commentary in discussion section.

³⁴⁷ Gay, 250-252. Hugo Wolf, a composer of younger generation to Brahms, also described Brahms's music as "*Gehirnmusik* (brain music)." From Margaret Notley, *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9.

³⁴⁸ Gay, "Aimez-vous Brahms?" 247.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 246.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

idea of historicism that brought many seemingly paradoxical meanings together, modernism and history are entangled in a web, being positioned at two sides of that web with many connections that eventually reconcile them. Nevertheless, we would not label Brahms as a modernist, because his “modernity” in late nineteenth century has smoothed out by repeated performances and recordings in twentieth century, neutralizing the “difficult” perception and had become very familiar.³⁵¹

Gay rarely calls Brahms a progressive and does not rely heavily on Brahms’s musical style in his essay. One reason is possibly due to his training as a cultural historian and not a musicologist. Another more plausible reason is the theme of his book, calling for assessment on Brahms, if the composer is a victim or a master of the culture and society he represents. He labels Brahms as a modernist more frequently, which is in consensus with the writings of Schönberg and several other professional musicians or critics. More importantly, his writing justifies his claims of the myriad paradoxical qualities in Brahms: “a traditionalist and an innovator...a conservative and a radical...a craftsman and a creator...an emotional intellectual.”³⁵² Brahms was “without crippling conflicts, without paradox” in Gay’s eyes, and undoubtedly in the eyes of future Brahms scholars, because Brahms constructed his present and left a legacy for the future by building on the past. Gay, together with many historicists, believes that an innovation out of nothing is not realistically possible.³⁵³

Similar to many scholars who believe and exhibit the concept of historicism during the time of Gay’s writing, he never mentions the terms historicism or historicist, despite the notions of constant changes and the synthesizing of past and present. It is

³⁵¹ Ibid., 254

³⁵² Ibid., 255.

³⁵³ Ibid., 254.

possible that “historicism” during his time and in the art, music, and culture-related fields, still held a strong pejorative ring with its backwards-looking connotation.³⁵⁴ Despite some scholars’ attempts to clear such assumptions since the 1950s and 1960s, the impact was not immediate.³⁵⁵ In the 1980s, music scholars employed the term more frequently, as seen in J. Peter Burkholder’s essay “Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years (1983),” but historicism still brings with it the sense of the importance of history.

4.3 J. Peter Burkholder: “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music” [1984]³⁵⁶

Burkholder, at an early stage of his career as a musicologist, published two essays dealing with historicism in the modern era: “Museum Pieces: Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years” (1983)³⁵⁷ and “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music” (1984). They complement each other well, and build on the modernism-historicism literature after Peter Gay.³⁵⁸ “Museum Pieces” is groundbreaking in the sense that Burkholder employs the term “historicism” to identify the trend that Gay and other scholars had observed in the modern era, a trend which included 1) realistically

³⁵⁴ See the general survey on musical historicism in the Chapter One of this thesis.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ J. Peter Burkholder, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” *19th-Century Music* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1984): 75-83, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746255>. Burkholder was a rising musicologist in the early 1980s. He later became a contributing author of Norton’s *A History of Western Music*, first with its 5th edition, and *Norton Anthology of Western Music* since its 3rd edition. He earned his PhD under the supervision of Robert P. Morgan and Howard Mayer Brown, and he served in musicology faculties of University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Indiana University. His expertise includes modernism, meaning in music, musical borrowing, Charles Ives, Brahms, and Berg. Paula Morgan, “Burkholder, James Peter,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed December 4, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46961>.

³⁵⁷ J. Peter Burkholder, “Museum Pieces: the Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years,” *The Journal of Musicology* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 115-134, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/763802>.

³⁵⁸ Burkholder does cite Gay in “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” 75-76, but not in “Museum Pieces.”

acknowledging that no progression is possible without the foundations laid by history; 2) that modern classical composers were in fact synthesizing their past and present in their personal ways; and, 3) the aesthetic tastes, and therefore reception change as time progresses. Burkholder also plays his part to further shedding historicism of its negative “epigone” connotation.³⁵⁹ While “Museum Pieces” addresses a general phenomenon in the Western classical music culture, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music” focuses on the reception of Brahms’s compositional legacy, how composers in the twentieth century received Brahms, and the twentieth-century classical music culture reception of the Brahmsian spirit.³⁶⁰ Curiously, Burkholder did not use the terms “historicism” and “historicist” in this essay, despite their frequent appearance in the earlier 1983 essay, but his ideas in “Brahms and Twentieth-century Classical Music” are historicist.³⁶¹

The opening section of “Museum Pieces” presents to us what Burkholder calls “the longest sustained period of chaos in the history of Western art music.”³⁶² Here Burkholder narrates one dilemma of modernism in music history: that the need to categorize by universal styles could not be fulfilled, due to the existence of such diverse musical languages, techniques, mediums, styles, and philosophies. Therefore, on the surface at least, a “mainstream” seems not to exist.

In order to find the elements that can unify trends and schools so diverse and some so seemingly at odds with each other, Burkholder asks scholars to think outside the

³⁵⁹ Burkholder, “Museum Pieces,” 127. Here Burkholder connected the “progressive and emulative sides” to historicism.

³⁶⁰ Burkholder, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” 75-83.

³⁶¹ No reviews on the “Museum Piece” could be found.

³⁶² Burkholder, “Museum Pieces,” 115.

box — “to revise our ideas of modernism,”³⁶³ by finding the answers not in the musical works or stylistic traits in them, but to consider the social and collective mode of thinking about music. With such thought in mind, Brahms was, in Burkholder’s opinion, “the single most important influence on twentieth-century classical music.”³⁶⁴

When a common ground has to be sought, the battle between the conservative and the progressive camps becomes less important. Brahms “the conservative” seems to belong to the dead past, having no place in modern era. Burkholder, however, largely reverses such thoughts, by suggesting scholars to consider a more subtle legacy of Brahms: composers after Brahms are composing for the museum, following his footsteps, wanting to be included in the canon and enjoying a lasting reputation.³⁶⁵ Burkholder associates the “ephemera of the virtuosi” to the development of the musical historicism movement, as composers and the musically literate audience who seek for “higher” artistic reward and gratification looked to the music of the past, resulting in such phenomenon of writing for museum.³⁶⁶ By comparison, composers who composed for entertainment purposes, from popular to technical display music, came in and fell out of favor very quickly.³⁶⁷ The purpose of “serious” music was to withstand the challenge of connoisseur listeners, critics, and history, and to transcend listeners’ perception. By the mid twentieth century, the concert hall had a selective group of listeners, which were elitist in a sense, as the communication between composer, music, and audience became

³⁶³ Burkholder, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” 76-77.

³⁶⁴ Ibid, 75.

³⁶⁵ Burkholder, “Museum Pieces,” 119.

³⁶⁶ Burkholder, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” 77. The adjective “higher” contains value judgment in our twenty-first century eyes.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

less prominent, compared to the artistic value of music.³⁶⁸ The rest, Burkholder writes, had to turn to somewhere else for functional music.³⁶⁹

Brahms was stuck between the past and present music prevalent in his time. On the one hand, he received education that featured heavily both classical music and piano technical studies, and on other hand, he had to survive the legacies of Beethoven, Liszt, Schumann, and Wagner. To answer the aesthetic demands of his time, the increasing awareness of the progression of music history, and the canonization of museum pieces, Brahms presented his dialectics contrasting to the New German School by borrowing from the past and present—Beethoven, Haydn and Bach for motivic development technique and formal/structural innovation, Bach again for archaic structural process such as fugues, canon and counterpoint, Mozart and Chopin for “melodic grace, ornament, and chromaticism,” and Schumann for his orchestration.³⁷⁰ Burkholder argues that Brahms was eclectic in his choices, as the composer synthesized the aforementioned techniques, processes, and materials into something uniquely his, infusing the result into his own signature style.³⁷¹ Some members of the audience, critics, and opponents during Brahms’s time and in the modern era, however, put Brahms in the pillory for “imitating” and “epigone.” To be fair, a reviewer of Brahms’s First Piano Concerto in a 1889 performance recognized Brahms’s debt to Beethoven but was also impressed by the “genuine grandeur of style and a wealth of ideas seldom equaled in compositions of the present day,” appreciating the personal voice of Brahms which would later become a

³⁶⁸ Burkholder, “Museum Pieces,” 123-124.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁷⁰ Burkholder, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” 78.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

Brahmsian idiom to younger composers.³⁷² In Burkholder's opinion, Brahms stands out significantly in the modern era with his achievement of "making Haydn shake hands with Bach,"³⁷³ at a time when modernism allowed so many schools of thought taking central stage with little conciliation. Brahms's ability to synthesize seemingly contrasting musical styles and languages, even using those of Liszt's and Wagner's, showed future composers a way out, Burkholder argues.³⁷⁴ Burkholder is not the first who hails Brahms for such qualities. During Brahms's own time, his ally Eduard Hanslick already saw what Brahms did as "the only path" to move forward, passing the baton of the Germanic tradition to Mahler and Schönberg by "transform[ing] the art of his forebears into the living music of the present age," on one hand confirming his place in music history, and on the other hand serving as the linkage between the past and his contemporaries.³⁷⁵

By the second half of the twentieth century, Burkholder argues that contemporary classical composers sought to impress the listeners of the musical museum—largely musically literate amateurs, students, professionals, and music scholars—by showing their mastery on the techniques, processes, and forms of the past, and how they can integrate "history" into their present, personal style.³⁷⁶ Such philosophy and technique in their compositions bring to the audience a sense of familiarity and at the same time a stroke of freshness. It might be difficult to relate composers as diverse as Debussy, Ives,

³⁷² Quoting a reviewer in *Musical Opinion* (Sept 1, 1889) via Gay, "Aimez-vous Brahms?" 243, see Gay's footnote no. 23 on the same page. For the influence of Brahmsian idiom to younger composers, see Walter Frisch, "The 'Brahms Fog': On Analyzing Brahmsian Influence at the Fin de Siècle" in *Brahms and His World*, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin Karnes, rev. ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 117-134.

³⁷³ Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, The Oxford History of Western Music 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 716.

³⁷⁴ See Wolff, "Problem of Historicism," 8.

³⁷⁵ Information on Hanslick's thoughts from Kevin C. Karnes, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History: Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 71-73.

³⁷⁶ Burkholder, "Museum Pieces," 124.

Bartok, Boulez, Britten, Crumb, Stockhausen, and Shostakovich to Brahms. Burkholder argues, however, that these composers largely compose with the same objectives and inspiration as Brahms, even if they might reject such connection, as their compositional concepts of organicism, motivic development, and musical architecture can be traced back to Brahms.³⁷⁷ In this sense, Burkholder believes that it was Brahms, not Wagner, who held and dictated the future of classical music, because while “Wagner and Liszt provided new musical tools, Brahms helped established the framework for using those tools.”³⁷⁸ As scholarship continues to rediscover and study the more neglected composers of Brahms’s time, perhaps one might argue that Brahms was not alone in his historicist manner or thinking, but Brahms was certainly the pioneer and representative of this brand of historicism, justifying Burkholder’s claim on Brahms’s status in the twentieth century.

I do not know if Burkholder’s elevation of Brahms’s status in the modern era has any connection with the 1983 Brahms’s sesquicentennial birth year, a year that Brahms scholarship blossomed. By that time, many scholars (especially those studying Brahms) also began to deconstruct the meanings of “conservative” and “progressive,” as what Burkholder had done, providing the field with opportunities to reinterpret the concept of historicism.³⁷⁹ This is evident in Wolff’s essay, which I will discuss below. Both Burkholder and Gay, writing just a few years apart, assess the reception of Brahms in a similar historical context, and both agree that progression is not possible without the foundations of history. While Gay’s aim is to give evidence of the volatile nature of

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 130. Other historicist composers who are currently living that I can associate with Brahms’s kind of historicism include Lowell Liebermann and Robert Muczynski.

³⁷⁸ Burkholder, “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” 82.

³⁷⁹ See also Dahlhaus’s definition of historicism in *Foundations of Music History*, 61 and 70, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed., 4:335, his historiographical study of nineteenth-century historicism in *Nineteenth-Century Music* (California: University of California Press, 1989), 320-328, and Leon Plantinga’s section on historicism in his book *Romantic Music*, 16-20.

reception history, of human opinions and aesthetic tastes, Burkholder is more specific in addressing musical phenomenon and problems of music history, since he is writing for specific readers, mostly scholars, students, and members of the musical discipline, a perspective not surprising, given his musicological training, in contrast to Gay's expertise in cultural history. The difference of background and intended audience might be the reasons of why Gay does not further his provocative thoughts of Brahms the "modern historicist."

From the standpoint of twenty-first century scholarship, Burkholder might appear to some as rather fanatical about Brahms, even though he has sound reasons. Indeed, Kevin Korsyn, in "Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology" (1993), expresses his suspicions of an ideology regarding the boom of Brahms research in the 1980s.³⁸⁰ Walter Frisch also remarks on the grandeur of Burkholder's intention in his essays.³⁸¹ The impact of these two Burkholder essays, however, remained strong in future Brahms and historicism scholarship.³⁸² For another take on this issue, I shall address Christoph Wolff's perspective, as he explores historicism in the context of the nineteenth century, comparing Brahms's and Wagner's perspectives to the music of the past.

4.4 Christoph Wolff: "Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music: An Essay" [1983 / 1990]³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Kevin Korsyn, "Brahms Research and Aesthetic Ideology," 89-103. See, for example his criticism of Geiringer's "hero-worship" of Brahms.

³⁸¹ Walter Frisch, "Brahms Fog," 118.

³⁸² According to the record in JSTOR, "Brahms and Twentieth-century Classical Music" was cited in seven items, and "Museum Pieces" was cited in fourteen items.

³⁸³ Christoph Wolff, "Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music: An Essay," from *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George Bozarth, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7-11. Christoph Wolff, born and educated in Germany, teaches in the United States. He served as faculty members at Columbia and Harvard Universities, on the editorial boards of collected editions of Samuel Scheidt, Buxtehude, C. P. E. Bach, and Brahms, and of journals such as *Journal of the American Musicological Society* and *Musical Quarterly*. His research interests include early

Christoph Wolff wrote this essay for his presentation at the 1983 Brahms Conference in Washington, D. C., and probably revises and expands it between 1983-1989 for its publication in *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives* (1990).³⁸⁴

Therefore, a version should have already existed when Burkholder published his “Brahms and Twentieth-century Classical Music,” and Burkholder is possibly aware of the conference presentation by Wolff, but he does not cite Wolff.³⁸⁵

Unlike Gay and Burkholder, Wolff urges us to face the definition problems of historicism, especially its derogative connotation and the labeling of Brahms as a historicist without addressing the history of historicism or the German historicist movement.³⁸⁶ Most Brahms research around Wolff’s time revolved around the progressive elements of Brahms’s music, his interests in music history, continuous theoretical analyses of Brahms’s works and Brahms’s historical position.³⁸⁷ When these scholars brought Wagner into the discussion, the most highlighted aspects of Wagner was his historical and aesthetic position in relation to Brahms, and few would assess Wagner in the same light as Brahms. Wolff, however, does so by comparing how these two seemingly opposite composers applied historical knowledge, in the age of nineteenth-century historicism.

keyboard music and music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and he is one of the most prominent Bach and Mozart scholars of his generation. Paula Morgan, “Wolff, Christoph,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed February 1, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30501>.

³⁸⁴ George S. Bozarth, ed., *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), viii. It is uncertain the extent to which Wolff revised this essay for publication, as Bozarth does not provide further details.

³⁸⁵ Since this essay is published much later than the two essays by Burkholder, in this thesis I consider it after Burkholder’s “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music.”

³⁸⁶ Wolff, “Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism,” 7.

³⁸⁷ For example, see Robert Pascall, ed., *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary, and Analytical Studies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), and Michael Musgrave, ed., *Brahms 2: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), both published in the 1980s.

At the time when Wagner and Brahms were active, musical historicism “figures historical consciousness most prominently.”³⁸⁸ Wolff argues that Brahms was more obviously the composer who revered history and actively used the legacies of the past in contrast to the New German School composers who claimed to take the path of “artwork of the future.” Hence, Brahms was a historicist with negative connotation, Wolff explains.³⁸⁹ Wolff further elaborates that the revision of Brahms’s old labels such as “epigone,” “reactionary,” and “conservative” did not help the case, as “historicist” became another convenient label that replaced the old ones, without changing the essential meanings.³⁹⁰ Therefore, Wolff argues that it is highly necessary for scholars to reinterpret and survey historicism critically, and to relate such mode of thought or practice between multiple disciplines in order to understand historicism in a less biased perspective. This would not only help to bring meaning to the usually blind allusion hunting in Brahms’s case, as Wolff shows in his essay, but also Wagner’s study of history and the historicist elements in his music dramas.³⁹¹

Compared to Brahms, who was good friends with the prominent musicologists of his time, Wolff argues that Wagner’s study of history had the disadvantage of being neglected by music scholars, despite the fact that he had a larger library than Brahms, and based his music dramas on mythology and folklore, a subject matter that had a place in history and tradition.³⁹² If Wagner was extravert in voicing his aesthetic thoughts and promoting a new religion in music, Wolff sees Wagner at the complete opposite when Wagner dealt with music history. For Wagner, allusions were made to evoke a sense of

³⁸⁸ Wolff, 7.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 8.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid., 9-10.

temporal distance and historical events, and the private playing and enjoyment of music of the past were quite enough.³⁹³ Unlike Brahms, who explored the potential for the development of early music in both composition and performance, Wagner possibly saw such music and techniques as already past and gone, and his musical aesthetics had no place for them.

Wolff also reinforces the reception of Brahms by music scholars during his time, expressed best in his concluding paragraphs:

[Brahms] used his historical experience not to conserve traditions but to reinterpret and change established practices — at times radically[,]³⁹⁴

and

Although [Brahms] never claimed to write music of the future, he nevertheless did so, in his own way. He indeed pursued ‘new paths’ as predicted by Schumann and, from the vantage-point of today rather than the biased perspective of the late nineteenth century, Brahms need not stand in second place as regards newness of musical language.³⁹⁵

Wolff appears to be rather vague with his take on musical historicism. He names an art historian and a philosopher who define historicism derisively, and he draws different types of historicist practices in nineteenth century, those by Liszt, Wagner, and Brahms, in which one definition will not apply to the other.³⁹⁶ This suggests that for Wolff, historicism is a process of how history is handled in different hands. Therefore, yielding different results, legacies, and definitions were not his concern here. Liszt’s and Wagner’s uses of historical material did not point to the future; they continued music history by their innovations with their brand of chromatic harmony and tonality. Wolff does not discuss matters beyond the nineteenth century, but considering Burkholder’s

³⁹³ Ibid., 10.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 11.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. Note that the “today” was during the time Wolff wrote this essay.

³⁹⁶ The philosopher was Ludwig Feuerbach, and the art historian was Nikolaus Pevsner. Ibid., 11.

observations in “Museum Pieces” and “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music,” they inform us that even though Liszt, Wagner, and Brahms constructed a part of music history in their own ways, the selection of history by capable twentieth-century composers will reconcile or even synthesize their differences.³⁹⁷ If previous Brahms scholarship underwent changes from placing Brahms beneath Wagner to above Wagner, Wolff’s essay had positioned them at the same level.

4.5 Leon Botstein: “Brahms and His Audience: the Later Viennese Years 1875 – 1897” [1999]³⁹⁸

At the time of the publication of Michael Musgrave’s *Cambridge Companion to Brahms* (1999), the reception of Brahms had been different from preceding eras. As Gay, Burkholder, and Wolff advocated before, Brahms was “a pioneer in reclaiming the past,” as he was among the earliest and most distant historicist composers “in this historicizing era.”³⁹⁹ Reflecting the observations of Burkholder, Brahms’s brand of historicism, in which he synthesized historical elements and emphasized “unity” and “structure,” places him as “the link between the musical past and present.”⁴⁰⁰

The writers of the previous essays in this chapter survey the constant flux of Brahms’s reception, from his own time well into modern and post-modern eras, and

³⁹⁷ Burkholder, “Museum Pieces,” and “Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music.”

³⁹⁸ Leon Botstein, “Brahms and His Audience: the Later Viennese Years 1875-1897,” from *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. Michael Musgrave, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 51-75. Leon Botstein was born in Zürich but was educated and has continued to work in the United States as a music historian and conductor. He was appointed music director of the American Symphonic Orchestra in 1992 and director of the American Russian Youth Orchestra in 1995. He founded the Bard Music Festival in 1990. He is committed to performance of late nineteenth-century repertoires and music of living composers, and his writings have covered such composers as Brahms, Mendelssohn, Richard Strauss, Schumann, Dvorak, Bartok, Ives, Haydn, and Tchaikovsky, usually placing them and their music in a larger cultural context while connecting his scholarship to other related disciplines. Richard Wilson, “Botstein, Leon,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed February 3, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50532>.

³⁹⁹ Michael Musgrave, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, xx.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., xx-xxi.

challenging Brahms's "conservative" label from the perspective of the second-half of the twentieth century. In contrast, Botstein's essay offers a detailed examination of Brahms's reception by his audience, by projecting his perspective to the *fin de siècle*. Botstein examines the shifting social context from Brahms's migration to the music capital Vienna in the early 1860s to his death in 1897 and explains Brahms's ideology behind his brand of historicism, especially within his symphonic works and also considering social, economic, and political contexts. By dealing with such topics and problems outside pure musical works and bringing sociology and cultural context into his dialectic, Botstein's narrative informs us of the historical origins between the aesthetic feud of Brahms and Wagner.

The first of three sections Botstein has the subtitle "Music in the public sphere: Brahms and the specter of Wagnerism" and includes a comprehensive biography of Brahms's life in Vienna, the mixed reception of his legacy that leans toward musical academicism, and how Brahms processed the weight of history and demands of present aesthetic in this historicizing era against the methods and the "white heat" of Wagner.⁴⁰¹ The second section, "Standards of musicality: the Viennese debate," furthers Botstein's historical narration and surveys of the social, political, and economic circumstances contributing to the "decline of musical standards" in Vienna from the perspective of Brahms and his circle of friends. Botstein traces the beginning of this phenomenon well before Brahms and Wagner took central stage of the musical life in Vienna, and by the time they took over, Brahms strongly felt that Wagner and his aesthetics of composition

⁴⁰¹ Botstein, "Brahms and His Audience," 51-60, and quoting Max Reger's adjective of Wagner and Strauss (1928) via Walter Frisch, "The 'Brahms Fog:' On Analyzing Brahmsian Influence at the *Fin de Siècle*" in *Brahms and His World*, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin Karnes, rev. ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 117.

aggravated the situation, because Wagner and his camp of composers provided the public with music that appealed to everyone.⁴⁰² In the last section, “the social context of Viennese musical politics,” Botstein addresses the changing musical life in late nineteenth-century Vienna, which was increasingly influenced by the politics of that time, with power shifting from the intellectual middle-class professionals’ Liberalism to Christian Social political radicalism, anti-Semitism, and racist nationalism.⁴⁰³

Unlike the previous essays that see Brahms and his reception from a distance by standing firmly in the twentieth century, Botstein chooses to narrate the events surrounding Brahms during *his time*, thus almost creating the strange sensation that Brahms was alive. One of the main points in this essay is Brahms’s perception of his “lateness” in music history, and his attempts to live with it.⁴⁰⁴ Another main point of Botstein’s is that the audience that appreciated Brahms’s works that displayed his synthesizing of history by the technical mastery, depth of ideas, and inherent logic, received Brahms well even after Brahms’s death.⁴⁰⁵ This audience, mostly friends and supporters of Brahms, shared the same concerns as Brahms did and was against the radical extremists associated with Wagnerian ideology. Botstein also narrates on how Brahms and Wagner engaged each other with aesthetic discourse in the form of compositional rhetoric, subtly addressing the path of Viennese musical culture during

⁴⁰² Botstein, “Brahms and His Audience,” 60-66. Margaret Notley also wrote on Brahms and his position in the fin de siècle, addressing similar problems in the decline of musical literacy, in her book *Lateness and Brahms* (2007).

⁴⁰³ Botstein, 66-75.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁰⁵ See the survey of scholarship in the preface of George S. Bozarth, ed., *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), v.

their time, and their works and ideologies even continued to play a part in the political rifts after the death of Wagner in 1883 and Brahms's in 1897.⁴⁰⁶

Brahms was proud of the Viennese classical music heritage, which can be traced directly back to Schubert, Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn. Botstein invites us to rethink the weight of history towards Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms, as he provides an explanation for Mendelssohn's Bach revival and Schumann's advocating the music of the past as "turning history against itself" and to use Bach to lessen the impact of the legacy of Beethoven.⁴⁰⁷ Botstein argues that by taking the Viennese classical music heritage and continuing Mendelssohn's and Schumann's take on historicism, Brahms eventually proved that a new path in music, built on history, was possible, and in a way negotiated with the distance of history, an opinion that many scholars agree upon.⁴⁰⁸ Botstein compares Brahms to Wagner, as the latter sought to infuse history, music, and art together in his concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which was unique and "magical" at the "musical surface," appealing strongly to the emotions of the public, but then Brahms could not see Wagner's idea work in instrumental music.⁴⁰⁹ Due to this reason, Botstein suggests Brahms was worried of the predominance of Wagnerian aesthetic over the musical life and tastes in Vienna, as it would destroy the Viennese classical heritage, valuable to and protected by the intellectual middle-class professionals and aristocrats who were amateur classicists.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁶ Botstein, 51-75.

⁴⁰⁷ Botstein, 56.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 59 and 66. Peter Gay's "Aimez-vous Brahms?" also notes Wagner's widespread emotional appeal even in the modern era.

⁴¹⁰ Botstein, 59 & 66.

Botstein also addresses the question of why Brahms had so firmly followed the path he chose. The status of Brahms as one of the most important composers in Vienna during the late nineteenth century required him to choose his alignments and allies carefully, as the public's reception and interpretation of Brahms's stance in music and politics would depend on his behavior in public. If Brahms was progressive in his composition in the Wagnerian way, then he would be doing the opposite in his viewpoint of music education and his belief of the legacy of music, Botstein argues.⁴¹¹ He draws on many of Brahms's ideologies and beliefs to support his arguments. For example, Brahms believed in what the German and Viennese master-composers of the past had believed, in associating "cultural standards, love of learning and humanity" together, which was peaceful, forgiving, and spiritual in nature.⁴¹² In spite of these, Botstein posits, Brahms and his circle were fighting a rapidly losing battle against the Wagnerians, anti-Semitists, extreme nationalists and the Rightist radical movement.⁴¹³ Such political extremities eventually led to the two World Wars and the rise of Nazi Germany, which were among the most painful lessons in history that ultimately influenced later reception history of both Wagner's and Brahms's musical aesthetics, political beliefs, and their patriotism.⁴¹⁴

Botstein's essay has, in its own way, shed light on the legacy that Brahms intended to leave for us. In some respect, our musical world has absorbed his and his predecessors' belief in humanity and tolerance. Taking ideas from Botstein and Brahms, we continue to negotiate ours and Brahms's "lateness" and distance in history and music

⁴¹¹ Botstein, 55.

⁴¹² Ibid., 75.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 66-75.

⁴¹⁴ Daniel Beller-McKenna authored an excellent study of the changing reception in relation to nationalism in "The Rise and Fall of Brahms the German," *Journal of Musicological Research* 20 (2001), 187-210, <http://ehis.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=77f19a28-4496-496f-96f1-11b736265223%40sessionmgr4&vid=2&hid=107>, and in his book *Brahms and the German Spirit* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

scholarship and try to acknowledge any information the world directed at us, as permitted by our intellectual limit.

4.6 Conclusion

An assessment of the essays selected for this chapter suggests that these authors agree that Brahms was a historicist. There might be slight differences in how they classify Brahms, but then the hermeneutic potential of historicism allowed and even reconciled these slight differences. As mentioned before, Peter Gay does not call Brahms a historicist, but his critical survey of the reception of Brahms characterizes Brahms as one. The gradual removal of the negative connotations of historicism throughout the years, in both Anglo-American and German scholarship, encourages scholars not only to employ the term more consistently in late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, but also to venture into deeper significance of the historicist Brahms. Botstein's and Notley's connections of Brahms and musical historicism to Brahms's own time and world, fusing related disciplines such as sociology, cultural history, and political history to musicology would be a good example.⁴¹⁵ While the consensus achieved in this chapter is compelling, the confidence with which I draw such result is contingent upon the breadth of study, and shall not represent how other scholars receive Brahms. Moreover, the reception of Brahms will continue to go through the constant flux of history, and such changes also impact future changes.

The necessity to explain the historical context that resulted in the stereotyping of Brahms as the conservative and absolutist composer permeates the scholarship in

⁴¹⁵ Botstein, "Brahms and His Audience," and "Time and Memory: Concert Life, Science, and Music in Brahms's Vienna," in *Brahms and His World*, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin Karnes, rev. ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3-25, and Notley, *Lateness and Brahms*, 2007.

different eras, well into the late twentieth century. While this phenomenon informs us of a possible over-emphasis on reversing Brahms's old labels, especially in the more specialized musicological realm, it nevertheless warns us of the seriousness of the entrenchment of those derogative labels in Brahms reception. It might be of future interest for scholars to conduct a reassessment of the usage of these two labels, using Paula Higgins's philological examination of the label "genius" as a model.⁴¹⁶

Gay's and Burkholder's essays address modernism and historicism, and after reading their essays one is perhaps compelled to think that the two terms are the same. They do hold many similarities, and modernism is not possible without historicism, but they are essentially not the same. Modernism has a strong relationship to a particular era in many histories (namely, around the first half of twentieth century), and its dealing with various happenings is largely confined by human's periodization of historical events. Historicism, however, is a continuous process with changing purposes and methods, depending on the academic discipline. While acknowledging Gay's and Burkholder's placing of Brahms's historicist legacy in the twentieth century, I am not proposing Brahms and his brand of historicism as the universal truth that covered the musical culture of that era, as historicism is not an answer to our need of finding a philosophy of history.⁴¹⁷ Such an assumption would bring back some of the negative connotations of historicism.

It would be too ambitious to suggest a future of the reception study of Brahms the historicist. At the time of this writing, we have a more distant perspective to see the

⁴¹⁶ Paula Higgins, "The Apotheosis of Josquin des Prez and Other Mythologies of Musical Genius," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 480-487, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jams.2004.57.3.443>.

⁴¹⁷ See Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 8.

future of Brahms, which is of course not accessible to Brahms, and can only remain as a topic of speculation. We will not know if one day Brahms will fall out of favor and lost in the myriad currents of history in the future, but for now Brahms's status is confirmed and reconfirmed by people who know him, disregarding their affiliation to whatsoever disciplines or philosophies or the museum. Brahms is currently immortal as a historical figure.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis is in a sense a journey of musical historicism, not only of Brahms the man, the composer and the scholar, but also of what historicism in music represents in its own terms. Nineteenth-century musical historicism was initially a method to cope with the legacy of Beethoven immediately after his death, as an agenda of the first generation of composers directly after Beethoven.⁴¹⁸ It is familiar knowledge that Mendelssohn (the Leipzig School) went one way, and Berlioz and Liszt (the New German School) went another way. Mendelssohn's path, which is widely regarded as *the* historicism in music, is associated with activities related to archaic objects, such as his mastery of counterpoint and classical forms, but especially the revival and revitalized performances of early music. More than a century later, Walter Wiora's and Imogen Fellingner's conception of musical historicism is similar to these Mendelssohnian activities.⁴¹⁹ In the 2010s, the historicism of Mendelssohn is all but just one type, as Richard Taruskin explicitly casts the New German School as "historicist," on the grounds that historicism also brings the meaning of constant flux in history, which supports changes and progresses.⁴²⁰ If we

⁴¹⁸ Leon Botstein ed., *The Compleat Brahms* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 19-21.

⁴¹⁹ Wiora, ed., *Die Ausbreitung des Historismus über die Musik* (Regensburg, Germany: Gustav Bosse, 1969).

⁴²⁰ Richard Taruskin, "Midcentury" in *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, The Oxford History of Western Music 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 411-416.

doggedly pick a side, such a perspective will render the other side as anti-historicist. Since the interpretation of musical historicism (even historicism in other fields) remains multi-faceted in the 2010s,⁴²¹ I concur with Taruskin's view that there are two types of musical historicism, in regard to such an argument.

By the mid-nineteenth century, when the historicism movement in academe and philosophy was in its golden era,⁴²² musical historicism was present in the same venue as well, as an ideological movement, negotiating the status of music history as a science.⁴²³ At the same time, the repercussion of the emphasis on the music of the dead masters, together with the daunting legacy of Beethoven (whose music never dies), increased its weight onto the musical culture at an alarming rate. By the late nineteenth century, the extremities of academia's reliance on the traditional aspects of musical historicism or even historicism in general alarmed philosophers such as Nietzsche and young composers who propelled the "progressiveness" of art.⁴²⁴ I propose that by this time musical historicism became a philosophy of music history. In the fin de siècle, Brahms's reputation as a conservative, as the antipode of Wagner, and his reputation in academia did not help reversing the declining status of musical historicism.⁴²⁵ Therefore to circumscribe musical historicism within the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that historicism in music is negatively epigone, reactionary, and conservative, in both scholarly and general receptions of the term.

⁴²¹ Refer to Chapter One of this thesis.

⁴²² Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 23.

⁴²³ Vincent Duckles, et al., "Musicology."

⁴²⁴ Botstein, ed., *The Compleat Brahms*, 23.

⁴²⁵ See Walter Frisch, "The 'Brahms Fog:' On Analyzing Brahmsian Influence at the Fin de Siècle" in *Brahms and His World*, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin Karnes, rev. ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 117-134.

While scholars especially in the field of philosophy, such as Meinecke, Ranke, Collingwood, Droysen, and Troeltsch write extensively on historicism, interpreting and examining historicism within its own term throughout the twentieth century,⁴²⁶ scholars researching Brahms at the same time still ascribe historicism in music as relating to the past—how composers (and individuals active in the musical field in general) employed and treated music history. At the same time, most of them⁴²⁷ also present their rhetoric or engage in dialectics to rescue Brahms from the conservative, epigone, and reactionary label, they hardly relate the conservative and progressive Brahms together and synthesize those two sides as the historicizing process. Ironically, many writers who indeed connect these two sides of Brahms, of his awareness of historical distance and his situation in history or his synthesizing of such temporal distance, rarely call it historicism or relate this Brahms solution to historicism.⁴²⁸

I would not suggest that there is a “progression” in the interpretation of musical historicism, and I would rather not fall into the false assumption that the understanding of musical historicism in relation to Brahms is continuous.⁴²⁹ My survey and assessment in this thesis strongly suggest that the term historicism sprung out here and there without a statistical concentration on any chronological period in the scholarship of Brahms. More important is the question: to what extent is there a consensus how scholars interpreted the historicism in Brahms? If I were to assess strictly by using the term “historicism” as a

⁴²⁶ See Chapter One of this thesis, and Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*.

⁴²⁷ Most, but not all. Kross’s survey of literature in “Bach-Zitat oder Schubert-Pasticcio? (1997)” essay shows that Altmann, Derr, and Klenz still cast Brahms in negative labels.

⁴²⁸ The examples that writers indeed reconcile all these components in explicit manners include J. Peter Burkholder, “Museum Pieces: the Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years” (1983), Christoph Wolff, “Brahms, Wagner, and the Problem of Historicism in Nineteenth-century Music: an Essay,” (1990), and Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (2005), and with Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music: College Edition* (2013). Burkholder and Wolff agree that Brahms was a historicist, but Taruskin’s opinion is more reserved.

⁴²⁹ I am taking this warning from Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, 33-43.

yardstick, the answer is no. Consider the two grounds of historicism: First, on the traditional, backward-looking grounds of historicism, it is impossible to discount the burden, influence, and inspiration of history on Brahms (at least as of now); and, second, on the progressive, ever-changing, and modernizing grounds, several scholars have been rather reserved in their opinions. We may recall that some publications discussed in this thesis, by starting with Fellingner and Wiora, whose similar interpretation of musical historicism is largely conservative in 1969, to Carl Dahlhaus who advocates the Janus characteristic of historicism in the 1970s and 1980s, and then to Burkholder and Wolff in the 1980s who also see historicism more neutrally. Around the same time, however, Kross still sees historicism in the conservative perspective. Even well into the twenty-first century, the “historicism” addressed by Sholes (2010) and Taruskin (2005, with Gibbs in 2013) in regard to Brahms, points heavily towards the past, despite Taruskin who acknowledges the “presentness” of Brahms’s compositions.

While it is difficult to arrive at a conclusion in regard to statistical concentration in the chronology of the usage of musical “historicism” in Brahms scholarship, I believe it is possible to see a pattern in general references and textbooks of music. As mentioned in the first chapter, the various editions of *Grove Dictionary* and *New Grove* do not have the entry of historicism, and such phenomenon persists even in the current *Grove Music Online*, despite the fact that one can find the term in several entries.⁴³⁰ The inclusion of the term in both editions of *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*⁴³¹ perhaps indicates

⁴³⁰ Entries that contain the term “historicism” in *Grove Music Online* including Vincent Duckles, et al., “Musicology,” and George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, “Brahms, Johannes,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001-), accessed April 3, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51879>.

⁴³¹ Carl Dahlhaus, “Historismus,” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1st ed., ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1979), 16: 693-702, and by Carl Dahlhaus and Friedhelm Krummacher, 2nd ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), 4:335.

that German scholars have recognized the importance of historicism in music, especially the philosophy, ideology, and the resulting *Praxis* associated with the term. The ever-popular and domineering textbook *A History of Western Music* by Grout, Palisca, and Burkholder also does not include historicism even in the current eighth edition (2009).⁴³² In comparison to this, Plantinga's inclusion of a historicism section in the introductory chapters in his *Romantic Music* is a rare example.⁴³³ In the Anglo-American sphere, however, historicism does gain importance in general music scholarship starting in the 2000s, as we see the Routledge Key Guides' *Musicology: the Key Concepts* (2005) have an entry,⁴³⁴ while Taruskin (2005 and with Gibbs in 2013)⁴³⁵ and Walter Frisch (2012)⁴³⁶ write extensively on historicism in *The Oxford History of Western Music* and *Music in the Nineteenth Century: Western Music in Context*, respectively, elevating it as important as any other movements, ideologies, and thought processes in music history. On a side note, the authors who include such entry in these publications do not always associate it with Brahms. Such "inconsistency" is historical as well, because as previously stated it is a false assumption that history progresses in a recognized pattern of linear line, or that history "progresses" at all.

As historicism in music makes its way into textbooks and references, it is perhaps logical to expect a growth in scholarship dealing with musical historicism, not only in Brahms, but to other composers, music, and the field in general. I think that, however, the multi-faceted nature of historicism does present some problems. Its Janus character

⁴³² Grout, Palisca, and Burkholder, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009).

⁴³³ Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music*, 16-20.

⁴³⁴ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: the Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 80-81.

⁴³⁵ Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (2005) and with Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music: College Edition* (2013).

⁴³⁶ Walter Frisch, *Music in the Nineteenth Century: Western Music in Context* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012).

allows interpretation and emphasis on both the past and the present, in the construction of history. Furthermore, the “constant flux” and “web of influence” factors in historicist interpretation recognize and even encourage diverse and contradicting opinions, analyses, and discourses. It is exactly because of such enormous borders and almost infinite possibilities that it might succumb to irrationalism, recklessness, and ignorance in scholarship. One might also see its seemingly limitless coverage as another “philosophy of history” that attempts to explain the metaphysics of music history and to serve as a universal theory of music history, and this is exactly the path that the German historicists painstakingly tried to denounce and avoid. As for now, after this study that starts from some point and ends at some point, showing the volatility of historical changes, I can only hope for future scholarship on Brahms and historicism to further enrich this fertilized topic.

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