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A Comparative and Contextual Study of Schumann's Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 63 and Brahms's  
Piano Trio in B major, Op. 8 (1854 version): From Musical Aesthetics to Modern Performances

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Robert Schumann's influence on the two very different versions of Johannes Brahms's Piano Trio in B major, Op. 8 – the first version of 1854 and the revised version of 1889 (or Op. 8a and Op. 8b, respectively) – by establishing a biographical and compositional relationship with Schumann's Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 63 (1847), with particular reference to his writings. This comparative study firstly examines Schumann's important contribution to the piano trio genre and the musical aesthetics inherent in his work. His impact on the genesis of Brahms's Op. 8a beyond the biographical is considered in depth here for the first time in a scholarly study. By identifying Schumann's compositional methods from his middle-late period and his musical aesthetics as manifested in relevant compositions, my hypothesis argues that the young Brahms modelled his Op. 8a on Schumann's Op. 63; it also suggests a parallel performing tradition between the two works.

In contrast to the continuing musicological enquiries concerning the two versions of Op. 8, performers have paid little attention to Op. 8a owing to a number of misconceptions. The reconstruction of a performing tradition of the first version did not get under way until the 1980s, when the first recording appeared. Although it would seem reasonable to seek clues as to its interpretation from the performing tradition of Brahms's Op. 8b, the more widely known version, my hypothesis instead seeks to align Brahms's Op. 8a with Schumann's seminal work in the same genre, while also reframing Op. 8b in this context.

The notion of the 'Schumannesque' with respect to the composer's middle-late period will be examined, alongside a set of musical aesthetics based on Schumann's early *Davidsbündler* ideology. The ways in which these issues relate to Brahms's Op. 8a are reflected in my proposed performance guidelines for the work, which are substantiated through methods of practice-based research.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is not an exaggeration to state that the year 1853 marked a turning point in music history when the young Johannes Brahms met Robert and Clara Schumann. Not only was the meeting a catalyst for a series of significant events in the space of a few months that directly affected each of their personal circumstances, it was also the beginning of a deep-rooted and lifelong musical exchange between kindred spirits. Forty years later in 1892, Brahms acknowledged in a painful moment that the Schumanns were ‘the most beautiful experience of my life’.<sup>1</sup> The biographical aspects of Robert Schumann and Brahms have long dominated popular discussion of the two composers, resulting in somewhat skewed perspectives regarding the critical and performance-related issues associated with their music. In particular, when discussing Schumann’s influence on Brahms’s compositions, there has been a tendency, as Constantin Floros has noted, for authors to highlight the supposed differences between the two, that ‘the attitude of the two composers to the “poetic” and to subjectivity had been totally different’.<sup>2</sup> John Daverio has observed that ‘sustained commentary on the links between Schumann and Brahms has been somewhat slow to materialise’.<sup>3</sup> In connection with this point, there has been a tendency to attribute to both composers a common source of influence or inspiration from earlier composers, most notably J. S. Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert. While it is undoubtedly true that they shared an affinity for a common musical heritage, this approach effectively eschews an examination of the subsequent impact on Brahms of Schumann’s musical language in its own right.

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<sup>1</sup> Styra Avins, *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters*, trans. Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), p. 696.

<sup>2</sup> Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms ‘Free but Alone’: A Life for a Poetic Music* [Translation from the German edition, 1997], trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), p. 4.

The hypothesis at the heart of this study is that Schumann's Piano Trio in D minor Op. 63 (1847) served as a model for the young Brahms when he composed his Piano Trio in B major, Op. 8 (1854 version, henceforth Op. 8a). My argument is that both works reflect musical aesthetics and employ compositional techniques that Schumann developed. Moreover, although some of Schumann's works have been compared to those of Brahms, comparisons have yet to be made between the piano trios of the two composers. Between 1846 and 1847, a change in Schumann's ideas on composition was in process.<sup>4</sup> As evidenced by Schumann's diary entry in 1846, a 'completely new manner of composing began to develop'.<sup>5</sup> This self-acknowledged change in Schumann's compositional style has been discussed by a number of prominent Schumann scholars including John Daverio and Laura Tunbridge. Daverio stated that Schumann's Piano Trios in D minor and F major, Op. 63 and Op. 80, respectively, are the most impressive documents of this change, and he emphasised the novel aspect of thematic combinations by conducting an analysis of Schumann's Op. 63.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Tunbridge identified Schumann's new compositional style as demonstrable in Schumann's Op. 63 and suggested that the 'novel thematic combinations' are 'proto-Brahmsian'.<sup>7</sup> She also noted that 'recent scholars have implied that Brahms's motivic manipulation had its roots in Schumann's music'.<sup>8</sup>

Any study of Brahms's Op. 8 invariably draws attention to the comparison of both published versions of 1854 and 1889. The fascinating existence of the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8 has long been a musicological intrigue among Brahms scholars, since this is the only instance where Brahms made drastic changes to a published work. The first version of Op. 8 was composed at the beginning of 1854, just after the Schumann-Brahms meeting. The revised version, Op. 8b, resulted from a reworking of the original 35 years later in 1889. The result was in fact, more accurately, a

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<sup>4</sup> Laura Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), pp. 135, 152.

<sup>5</sup> John Daverio, "'Beautiful and Abstruse Conversations': The Chamber Music of Schumann", *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 223.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223–226.

<sup>7</sup> Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style*, p. 152.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

recomposition of Op. 8, as the work is sufficiently distinct to be regarded as a different entity. This presents a unique opportunity to examine Schumann's influence on Brahms at different stages of his career. Furthermore, the influence of Schumann's works on Brahms in the piano trio genre has so far not been considered.

### **The Concept of Influence**

Deeply embedded in this comparative study is an intertextual approach that involves the concepts of influence and allusion. Complex derivative theories based on literary criticism have been adopted and developed by musicologists, encompassing a wide spectrum of premises from Harold Bloom's 'anxiety of influence' at one end to T.S. Eliot's 'attitude of homage and reverence to respected ancestors' at the other.<sup>9</sup> Certain types of influence can lead to manifestations including plagiarism, borrowing, and quotation.<sup>10</sup> In the case of Schumann's influence on Brahms, there existed a strong element of personal and artistic compatibility, as noted by contemporary writers and critics in the mid-19th century, particularly Adolf Schubring, Eduard Hanslick, and Franz Brendel. Brahms's own statements on the importance to him of Schumann and his music, as well as the respective musical affinities of the two composers, offer a natural starting point for discussions of influence. Also considered in relation to the works studied are sources of influence shared by Schumann and Brahms, particularly those from Bach, Schubert, and Clara Schumann.

In order to gain a nuanced understanding of this influence in musical terms, it is necessary to analyse and compare a diverse range of evidence. The concepts of tradition and homage are crucial to this thesis, though the arguments supporting these lines of enquiry are by no means

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<sup>9</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Rosen, 'Influence: Plagiarism and Inspiration', *19th-Century Music* 4/2 (1980), p. 88.

comprehensive due to the sheer number of extant theories about the biographical and musical relationships between the two composers.

### **Allusions**

Closely related to the discussion of influence are those of modelling and allusion, which are intertwined in the present study. In this context, 'modelling' refers to a component of influence for which a long tradition had developed by Brahms's time, wherein junior composers modelled their works on those of senior contemporaries (this point will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 2). However, the concept and identification of a musical allusion is hardly straightforward and requires the outlining of a working definition from the outset.

It seems fitting to refer to a literary definition of allusion since it was initially a literary term. The definition of allusion in the *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* is as follows:

Tacit reference to another literary work, to another art, to history, to contemporary figures, or the like. Allusion may be used merely to display knowledge, as in many Alexandrian and medieval poems; to appeal to a reader or audience sharing some experience or knowledge with the writer; or to enrich a literary work by merging the echoed material with the new poetic context. Allusion differs from mere source-borrowing, because it [allusion] requires the reader's familiarity with the original for full understanding and appreciation; and from mere reference, because it is tacit and fused with the context in which it appears.<sup>11</sup>

In music, the term 'allusion' seems to be more difficult to define than its literary counterpart; there may be greater uncertainty in identifying intent without the composers' explicit statements. The above definition of allusion emphasises 'the reader's familiarity with the original', as well as its being 'fused with the context', these being the features that distinguish allusion from other forms of

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<sup>11</sup> Earl Miner, 'Allusion', *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1965), p. 18.

references such as source-borrowing or quotation. Several writers have endeavoured to define allusion specifically in relation to music. Christopher Reynolds builds on a definition given by Kenneth Hull: ‘an allusion is an intentional reference to another work made by means of a resemblance that affects the meaning conveyed to those who recognize it’,<sup>12</sup> whereas Hull’s earlier definition of the term was ‘an intentional, extra-compositional reference made by means of a resemblance’.<sup>13</sup> Reynolds’s definition similarly emphasises the part played by the perceiver of the allusion, that is, ‘those who recognise it’. He endeavours to study musical allusions systematically in his book *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content In Nineteenth-Century Music*, his stated aims being more broadly to understand ‘how allusions functioned semantically’.<sup>14</sup>

In the case of Schumann and Brahms, rarely is there documented evidence of direct acknowledgement regarding allusions. Although existing definitions of allusion depend on a strong similarity of musical material – for example, features outlined by Anthony Newcomb include interval contour, scale degree, structural position, instrumentation, and rhythm<sup>15</sup> – this alone is insufficient to differentiate between allusion and coincidental resemblance. My view is that an allusion is strongly tied to its context in relation to the rest of the work, as well as to the context of the source, especially when extramusical meaning is involved. Therefore, any analysis should be conducted on a case-by-case basis. In this thesis, my working definition of allusion in a musical composition is as follows:

A tacit reference to a pre-existing work through prominently distinguishable and/or recurring musical features, which, for those who are familiar with the source, creates a

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<sup>12</sup> Christopher Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2003), p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Ross Hull, ‘Brahms the Allusive: Extra-Compositional Reference in the Instrumental Music of Johannes Brahms’, PhD diss., Princeton University, 1989, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Newcomb, ‘Once More “Between Absolute and Program Music”: Schumann’s Second Symphony’, *19th-Century Music* 7/3 (1984), p. 240.

demonstrably new meaning, including extramusical significance, when incorporated within the new context.

I exclude from this definition coincidental resemblances, such as those that do not carry demonstrable and compelling significance other than sounding similar to pre-existing music that is known to the perceiver.

It should be stated at the outset that although the topic of allusion is relevant to the works discussed in this study, it is by no means a central aspect of this thesis. As just one component within a larger discussion involving biographical and musical analysis, as well as the performer's perspective, the significance of any identified allusion is considered in conjunction with compositional affinities and integrated into the wider concept of influence.

Brahms himself, along with scholars such as Tovey, had considered the recognition of parallel musical themes or motifs a futile endeavour. Such parallels could ultimately be coincidental, thereby adding little to our understanding of the work and its performance, or, worse, resulting in misinterpretation. Instead, the question becomes one of how a perceived allusion, which acts as a bridge between the original source and the new context, might impact the listener's appreciation and the performer's execution of the work. Despite the inherent ambiguity of many allusions, it is nonetheless important for performers to consider their potential significance, and to factor that significance into their interpretations.

### ***Davidsbündler* ideology**

As noted, a number of closely related arguments and research questions emerge from my central hypothesis. One of these concerns Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ('League of David') as the basis of an artistic ideology, which embodies his musical aesthetics and compositional techniques.

The idea of the *Davidsbündler* as encompassing the musical aesthetics of Schumann is not new. Daverio suggested that Schumann's '*Davidsbündler* persona' (to use Daverio's term) was incorporated into his late style, stimulated by his meetings with his younger colleagues, in particular Brahms and Joachim in 1853. For example, Daverio equated esoteric elements in Schumann's G minor Piano Trio, Op. 110 (1851) with the '*Davidsbündler* persona', and compared the trio with early works that he deemed representative of the idea.<sup>16</sup> As an extension to Daverio's argument, I firstly argue that the *Davidsbündler* is fundamentally an artistic ideology that broadly represents Schumann's musical ideals, and which goes beyond the mere manifestation of a 'persona'; secondly this ideology continued to develop into Schumann's middle-late period (defined below, p. 19), as exemplified in his output of large-scale works, including his Trio Op. 63.

The term 'ideology' is used here loosely as an artistic term, rather than a political one, defined in *The Dictionary of Art* as follows:

Term applied primarily to sets of beliefs that are explicitly held by social groups, are general in scope and have practical implications for participation in social life. The topic of these beliefs need not itself be social, religious beliefs as much as economic theories may be ideological.<sup>17</sup>

In discussing the difficulties in the analysis and identification of ideologies, the definition further acknowledges that 'ideological perspectives on art are not autonomous and that ideological theory is most plausible when integrated into other, more traditional, forms of aesthetic theory'.<sup>18</sup>

My view is that the overarching concept of an ideology in Schumann's case has its basis in the formation of his *Davidsbündler* in the early 1830s, and is therefore intertwined with his developing musical aesthetics. The contemporary reception of Schumann strongly suggested an

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<sup>16</sup> John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), pp. 478–481.

<sup>17</sup> Sebastian Gardner, 'Ideology', *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 98–101.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

artistic movement with him as its founder and leader. In 1840, Schumann referred to his own music as ‘music of the future’ in a letter to a friend.<sup>19</sup> Four years after Schumann’s death, in 1860, Brendel wrote, ‘there is now a little circle of Schumann’s admirers that seems to want to take his cult as its private possession’.<sup>20</sup> Brendel directed this comment specifically at Brahms, Joseph Joachim and their circle who had recently written a manifesto against Brendel’s journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, founded and originally owned by Schumann. In 1862, Schubring wrote a series of articles and reviews entitled ‘Schumanniana’ for Brendel’s journal and argued for a ‘Schumann School’ in which ‘Schumann’s legacy lived on in a small group of composers’.<sup>21</sup> In the same year, Hanslick’s review of Brahms’s output said that Schumann’s spirit ‘penetrates undeniably and decisively the musical atmosphere of the present’.<sup>22</sup>

Schumann’s musical aesthetics are implicitly interwoven into his *Collected Writings about Music and Musicians – Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker* (1854).<sup>23</sup> As early as 1876, the first translator of Schumann’s *Collected Writings* to English, Fanny Raymond Ritter, had observed that ‘from his reviews and criticisms – based as they are on the firm foundation of thorough knowledge ... a code of musical aesthetics might be gathered’.<sup>24</sup>

Aesthetics are often bound up within the complexities of western philosophy. In the case of Schumann, his musical aesthetics may be examined against the history of German Romantic musico-philosophical thinking about the subject, although that task is beyond the scope and purpose of the present study. Some aspects of this philosophical thinking have already been discussed in the

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<sup>19</sup> Eduard Hanslick, ‘Johannes Brahms (1862–63)’, trans., intro. and annotated by Kevin C. Karnes, *Brahms and his World*, revised edition, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Karnes (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009), p. 219.

<sup>20</sup> Brodbeck, ‘The Third Symphony and the New German School’, *Brahms and his World*, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Adolf Schubring: Five Early Works by Brahms (1862)’, trans., intro. and annotated by Walter Frisch, *Brahms and his World*, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Karnes, p. 195.

<sup>22</sup> Hanslick, ‘Johannes Brahms (1862–63)’, p. 219.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, 4 vols (Leipzig: Wigand, 1854).

<sup>24</sup> Fanny Raymond Ritter, ed., trans. and annotated, *Music and Musicians: Essays and Criticisms by Robert Schumann* (London: W. Reeves, 1880), p. xxxi.

Schumann literature by scholars such as Edward Lippman,<sup>25</sup> Daverio,<sup>26</sup> and Ulrich Taddy.<sup>27</sup> For instance, Schumann was familiar with Jean Paul's theoretical work *Introduction to Aesthetics* (1804).<sup>28</sup> The writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann in particular provide relevant points of reference in discussing Schumann's output as a music critic. Schumann certainly did not produce a philosophical treatise, but his *Collected Writings* is in itself evidence of a wealth of aesthetic ideas that remained constant throughout his life as a composer and writer. In his 'Theory and Practice of Schumann's Aesthetics',<sup>29</sup> Lippman described Schumann's criticism as belonging to applied aesthetics, which makes it fruitful to compare Schumann's writings with his own practice as a composer.<sup>30</sup> It is from this perspective that Schumann's musical aesthetics are integrated into my discussion.

I use the term 'musical aesthetics' to refer both broadly to aesthetic ideas, and specifically to stylistic and structural preferences. In his *Collected Writings*, Schumann directly referred to aesthetics as a broad term, claiming that 'the aesthetic principle is the same in every art; only the material differs'.<sup>31</sup> Hanslick refuted Schumann's statement in his own aesthetic theory, and argued that 'the beauty of an art is inseparable from its specific techniques'.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, by taking Schumann's words out of context, Hanslick ignored Schumann's preceding statement regarding the broader artistic goal: 'The cultivated musician may study a Madonna by Raphael, the painter a symphony by Mozart, with equal advantage. Yet more...the painter turns a poem into a painting, the musician sets a picture to music'. Rather than ignoring the apparent technical boundaries set by

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<sup>25</sup> Edward A. Lippman, 'Theory and Practice in Schumann's Aesthetics', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 17/3 (1964), pp. 310–345.

<sup>26</sup> John Daverio, *Nineteenth-century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (New York: Schirmer, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> Ulrich Taddy, 'Life and literature, poetry and philosophy: Robert Schumann's aesthetics of music', *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perry (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), pp. 38–47.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

<sup>29</sup> Lippman, 'Theory and Practice in Schumann's Aesthetics'.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>31</sup> Fanny Raymond Ritter, ed., trans. and annotated, *Music and Musicians: Essays and Criticisms by Robert Schumann* (London: W. Reeves, 1880), p. 76.

<sup>32</sup> Andrew Bowie, 'Philosophy of Music: III. Aesthetics, 1750–2000', *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, 23 Jan 2016, <<http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/52965pg3>>.

each discipline (for which Schumann was criticised by Hanslick),<sup>33</sup> Schumann seemed to maintain a poetic or spiritual view on this aesthetic principle, one that resonates across art forms.

One of the broader goals of my study is to investigate the pervasive ways in which Schumann's legacy was inherited by Brahms. For instance, how might Brahms have responded to Schumann's *Collected Writings* in the landmark year of 1854 when the book was first published? There is no doubt that Schumann placed great importance on his written work. In a letter of 6 February 1854, three weeks before his suicide attempt, Schumann wrote to Richard Pohl, a long-time acquaintance and music critic, as follows:

As long as I have written publicly I have considered it a sacred duty to check every word I said most carefully. And now I have the continuing satisfaction, in publishing my collected writings, of being able to leave almost everything unchanged. I am older than you, and through my many years of creating and working can penetrate into these secrets more deeply and clearly. Do not seek them in philosophical expressions or in subtle differences. A fool with a free, inward soul understood more of music than did the shrewdly thoughtful Kant.<sup>34</sup>

This strongly-worded letter conveys Schumann's stance on aesthetic values. He felt an injustice done to his music by Pohl's articles in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, written under the pseudonym 'Hoplit'. One of Hoplit's criticisms was Schumann's 'lack of objectivity', to which Schumann replied, 'are there really two kinds of creativity, one objective and the other subjective? Was Beethoven an objective [composer]?'<sup>35</sup> Schumann also stressed the importance of his writings in general. From this letter, Schumann seemed to be advocating a particular way of understanding his music, with a 'free, inward soul', which was apparently not adopted by Hoplit. He disagreed with his music being

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> John Michael Cooper, trans., 'Reminiscences of Robert Schumann (1878) by Richard Pohl', *Schumann and his World*, ed. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), pp. 259–261.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

understood in terms of philosophical expressions, such as objectivity and subjectivity and suggested that his writings could instead provide guidance for a better comprehension of his music.

Another indication of the central tenets of Schumann's aesthetics comes from the same letter to Pohl in which he wrote, 'I can never regard spiritual beauty in its most beautiful form as an "out-of-date view"'.<sup>36</sup> This echoes the idea that he stated in the first editorial of his journal in 1834.<sup>37</sup> In this letter from 1854, however, the context of his argument is opposition to the so-called 'music of the future' espoused by Liszt and Wagner at that time. Schumann clearly referred to 'spiritual beauty' as an aesthetic term, and explained to Pohl that two qualities were particularly important in his compositions,<sup>38</sup> humour (as put forward by Jean Paul<sup>39</sup>) and love, both of which Schumann saw as spiritual.

In the course of this thesis, I examine the notion of Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ideology, as well as its ramifications for his developing musical aesthetics – encompassing literary and stylistic elements, in addition to compositional techniques – in his Op. 63 and other large-scale works from his middle-late period, which I identify as being from around 1845 to 1850. As noted by Tunbridge, there are some disagreements as to whether 1840 or 1842 marks the beginning of Schumann's middle period, while his late period has generally been held to start in 1850.<sup>40</sup> With the end of Schumann's editorship of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1844, it was inevitable that he would reinvent his early ideals of the *Davidsbündler* through new outlets. During his middle-late period, Schumann explored new genres and focused on large-scale works. Aside from his piano trios Op. 63 and Op. 80 (1847), he wrote the Second Symphony, Op. 61 (1846), the opera *Genoveva*, Op. 81 (1849), and the musical drama *Manfred*, Op. 115 (1848–49), among others. In using the notion of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 38.

<sup>38</sup> Cooper, trans., 'Reminiscences of Robert Schumann (1878) by Richard Pohl', pp. 259–261.

<sup>39</sup> Taddy, 'Life and literature, poetry and philosophy: Robert Schumann's aesthetics of music', p. 42.

<sup>40</sup> Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style*, p. 11.

the *Davidsbündler* as a hypothetical reference point in this study, the research questions to be explored include:

- What characterises Schumann's musical aesthetics and compositional techniques in his middle-late period?
- How is Schumann's musical-aesthetic influence on the young Brahms manifested in Brahms's Op. 8a?
- How should Schumann's musical-aesthetic influence on Brahms's Op. 8a relate to his Op. 8b?

As a practitioner-researcher, I aim to incorporate the performer's perspective within the scholarly approach, which lends insights and yields output that might otherwise be overlooked, particularly since much musical analysis, in general, is not explicitly mindful of performance issues. For instance, there is a lack of commentary on the performing tradition of Brahms's Op. 8a, despite many scholarly comparisons of the two very different versions of this work.

The performer's perspective will be primarily explored from the viewpoint of the pianist. The reasons are threefold: firstly, the piano is traditionally the foundation of the piano trio, and warrants considerable attention on its own; secondly, the piano is the instrument that is prominently associated with the main figures – Schumann, Brahms and Clara Schumann – thereby making their views of a pianistic nature a focal point; finally, the practice-based aspect of this research is strongly influenced by my position as a pianist in a piano trio.

Research questions that are closely aligned with performance include:

- In what specific areas can research and performance be integrated? How should performance guidelines for Brahms's Op. 8a be developed in this light?
- How does Schumann's influence on the young Brahms inform one's interpretation and performance of Brahms's Op. 8a?

My research methods encompass multiple approaches and resources including biographical and musical analysis, historical criticism and commentary, performing traditions and contemporary recordings. All of these offer perspectives that are crucial, particularly since one of my main goals is to provide guidelines for the establishment of a performing tradition for Brahms's Op. 8a by aligning it with Schumann's Op. 63. This research also fills a gap in the musicological research on Schumann and Brahms by articulating performance issues that arise from these piano trios. A broader discussion of what constitutes the 'Schumannesque' and the 'Brahmsian' is incorporated in the latter stages of this study.

One of the challenges in researching Schumann and Brahms is the relatively large volume of primary and secondary sources, from historical correspondence to modern scholarship, on a wide range of related topics. For this reason, a detailed literature review is incorporated within each of the four chapters. I found this to be expedient given the diversity of issues addressed in my thesis, which include the history of the piano trio genre, biographical studies, musical analysis, Schumann's compositional and musical-aesthetic influence on Brahms, performance studies and historical performing practice, performing traditions, recordings and contemporary performances, as well as stylistic definitions of the 'Schumannesque' and the 'Brahmsian'.

Primary sources such as diaries, household books, writings and correspondence of the Schumanns, the collected correspondence of Brahms, and historical musical criticisms are indispensable both in gaining firsthand biographical insights and contextualising compositional backgrounds. English translations of these sources are consulted, and checked against the original German wherever available, including Clara Schumann's diary,<sup>41</sup> the marriage diaries of Robert and Clara Schumann,<sup>42</sup> selections from the collected writings of Schumann,<sup>43</sup> an anthology of selected

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<sup>41</sup> Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life*, 2 vols. trans. and abridged by Grace E. Hadow (London: MacMillan, 1918).

<sup>42</sup> Gerd Nauhaus, ed., *The Marriage Diaries of Robert & Clara Schumann: From their Wedding Day through the Russia Trip*, trans. Peter Ostwald (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993).

correspondence of Brahms,<sup>44</sup> and Brahms's correspondence with the Herzogenbergs.<sup>45</sup> Many of the important writings have been quoted repeatedly, sometimes with new translations, in the Schumann-Brahms secondary sources in English.

Among the vast secondary sources, several have provided constant points of reference and stand as recent authoritative scholarship on Schumann and Brahms. On Schumann, they include John Daverio's *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"*<sup>46</sup> and the edited volume of *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*;<sup>47</sup> on Brahms, Michael Musgrave's *A Brahms Reader*,<sup>48</sup> the edited volume of *Brahms and his World* (revised edition),<sup>49</sup> and *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* by Styra Avins.<sup>50</sup> The monograph on Brahms that initially prompted further enquiry into the two versions of the composer's Op. 8 was Malcolm MacDonald's *Brahms*.<sup>51</sup> Constantin Floros's insightful *Johannes Brahms: Free but Alone*<sup>52</sup> includes a chapter entitled 'The Relation to Schumann', and states that research into questions of Schumann's influence on Brahms and their musical relationship is still in its infancy.<sup>53</sup> Floros's observation on Schumann-Brahms studies was shared by Daverio in his *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann & Brahms*.<sup>54</sup>

Schumann-Brahms scholars whose works have influenced and shaped my research include Michael Musgrave, Michael Struck, John Daverio, Constantin Floros, Laura Tunbridge and Eric Sams.

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<sup>43</sup> Ritter, ed., trans. and annotated. *Music and Musicians*. Henry Pleasants., ed., trans. and annotated, *The Musical World of Robert Schumann: A Selection from His Own Writings* (London: Camelot Press, 1965).

<sup>44</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*.

<sup>45</sup> Max Kalbeck, ed., *Johannes Brahms: The Herzogenberg Correspondence*, trans. Hannah Bryant (London: John Murray, 1909).

<sup>46</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"*.

<sup>47</sup> Beate Perry, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007).

<sup>48</sup> Michael Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000).

<sup>49</sup> Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Karnes, eds., *Brahms and His World*, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*.

<sup>51</sup> MacDonald, *Brahms*.

<sup>52</sup> Floros, *Johannes Brahms 'Free but Alone'*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>54</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*.

Musical analyses by Schumann revisionists such as Linda Correll Roesner<sup>55</sup> and Joel Lester<sup>56</sup> have informed my own analysis of Schumann's Op. 63. The biography of Clara Schumann by Nancy Reich, *Clara Schumann: the Artist and the Woman*,<sup>57</sup> remains an informative reference from a unique perspective among the Schumann-Brahms studies. Clara's role as pianist and composer, particularly concerning the performing traditions of Schumann and Brahms, is emphasised in this study beyond the usual biographical discussion. The bi-annual newsletters published by the American Brahms Society have also been useful in keeping up-to-date with recent research on Brahms.

Literature in the emerging discipline of practice-based research, general performance studies and issues concerning the relationship between musicology and performance has been consulted, which includes Robin Nelson's *Practice as Research in the Arts*,<sup>58</sup> and the edited volume of *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*.<sup>59</sup>

This thesis comprises four chapters. Chapter 1 begins by providing a wider context for the history of the piano trio genre, from its emergence in the late eighteenth century to its development from *Hausmusik* to the professional stage. As a genre in its own right, the piano trio has generally been relatively overlooked in scholarly literature. The chapter seeks to demonstrate how Schumann's Op. 63 was a pivotal work that contributed a new dimension to the genre, as well as marking a turning point in the composer's own output in which he began composing in a 'completely new manner'.<sup>60</sup> I discuss the connections between biographical and compositional aspects of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a, specifically exploring the implications of Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ideology.

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<sup>55</sup> Linda Correll Roesner, 'Schumann's "Parallel" Forms', *19th-Century Music* 14/3 (1991).

<sup>56</sup> Joel Lester, 'Robert Schumann and Sonata Forms', *19th-Century Music* 18/3 (1995).

<sup>57</sup> Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, revised edition (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

<sup>59</sup> John Rink, ed., *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> Daverio, "'Beautiful and Abstruse Conversations": The Chamber Music of Schumann', p. 223.

Chapter 2 offers a comparative analysis of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a, with reference to some aspects of Op. 8b. I explore features and compositional techniques at specific junctures relevant to the Schumann-Brahms relationship while offering evidence that Schumann's Op. 63 provided a model for Brahms's Op. 8a.

Chapter 3 seeks to synthesise the historical and analytical aspects of Chapters 1 and 2 with the performer's perspective. The allusions incorporated in Brahms's Op. 8a are explored in depth, while the implications for the performer are, to the best of my knowledge, considered for the first time in scholarly literature. By examining historical performing traditions and modern recordings of Brahms's Op. 8a, the aims are threefold: to propose guidelines for the performance of Brahms's Op. 8a by looking to Schumann's Op. 63; to demonstrate these musicological findings through my own performances; and to propose distinct interpretations for Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b.

Chapter 4 provides a critical comparison of the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8 and considers how Schumann's Op. 63 relates to Brahms's Op. 8b. I apply the *Davidsbündler* ideology as a framework to interpret the differences in the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8. After examining the wide spectrum of speculations in the Brahms literature on the motivation behind the recomposition of Brahms's Op. 8, I propose a new musical-aesthetic explanation by taking into account Brahms's explicit indebtedness to Schumann in both versions, while also considering the implications to the performance of these works.

Throughout this study, the issues of practice-based performance as research have shared the same goal as the written component: to interpret the little known original version of Brahms's Op. 8 with new insights derived from Schumann's Op. 63. There is a general misconception today that the so-called 'revised version' of Brahms's Op. 8 is only slightly adjusted from the earlier version, when in fact the two works are very different overall. Contrary to what appears to be Brahms's original intention, the revised version has altogether replaced the 1854 version on the

concert platform.<sup>61</sup> This is hardly surprising because the opening themes of each movement are almost identical in both versions of Op. 8. Performers, being largely unaware of the significant differences beyond their openings within all but the second movement, would naturally choose to play the more widely known revised version.

One of the goals of this research project, therefore, is to reintroduce Brahms's Op. 8a to the performance repertoire, and to help it regain its rightful place in the piano trio canon. For this purpose, I founded the Minerva Piano Trio as the practical component of this research, applying musicological findings and insights from rehearsals and performances in a mutually informative way. The Minerva Piano Trio have given concert performances and lecture recitals of Brahms's Op. 8a in London venues including St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Blackheath Halls, St. Mary's Perivale, the City University Concert Series, as well as elsewhere in the UK such as the Stratford-upon-Avon Chamber Music Society.<sup>62</sup> They have also worked on Brahms's Op. 8a in public masterclasses at ChamberStudio at King's Place with members of the former Florestan Trio (see Chapter 3).

Apart from the pairing of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a in concert, the Minerva Piano Trio have performed other repertoire alongside Brahms's Op. 8a in the same programme to further shed light on the work, including Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17 and Schubert's Piano Trio in E-flat major, D. 929 (Op. 100). Schubert's musical influence on Schumann and Brahms has received discussion in recent scholarly literature, such as in the chapter 'Schumann and Schubert's "Immortal" Piano Trio in E Flat, D. 929' by Daverio (discussed in Chapter 1).<sup>63</sup> Clara Schumann's Piano Trio, on the other hand, is examined in greater detail in relation to the works under discussion due to the paucity of scholarly attention it has previously received. The public's interest in and response to Op. 8a, particularly from those who were familiar only with the revised

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 339.

<sup>62</sup> The Minerva Piano Trio will perform Schumann's Op. 63 alongside Brahms's Op. 8a as part of the 2016/17 season at St. John's Smith Square, London, on 23 October 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, pp. 13–46.

version, have consolidated my belief in the importance of synthesising musicological research with live performance to establish performing traditions.

My studies of solo piano works by Schumann and Brahms have given further insights into this research. Although the solo piano works are not discussed at length in this thesis, they offer a wider context from which to explore performance issues regarding Schumannesque and Brahmsian features at different stages of their compositional output. For instance, the insights that I have gained from the study of piano works from Schumann's early period and Brahms's late period contribute to my discussions on defining, and refining, our understanding of the 'Schumannesque' and the 'Brahmsian'. Relevant solo works that I have studied and performed in the course of pursuing this research include Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, *Fantasie*, Op. 17, *Humoreske*, Op. 20, Sonata in G minor, Op. 22, and Brahms's *Klavierstücke*, Op. 117 and Intermezzo in A major, Op. 118.

This research project aims to contribute to the increasingly rich and multifaceted scholarship on Schumann and Brahms by focusing on the musical relationship between the two, as well as to add to existing knowledge in the literature on the piano trio genre. By examining Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b from multiple perspectives, my intention is to combine up-to-date research and performance insights in order to inform modern interpretations of these three influential works of the nineteenth-century.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE PIANO TRIO GENRE AND THE SCHUMANN CIRCLE

When Schumann and Brahms wrote their first piano trios, the genre was still relatively new. The direct ancestor of the piano trio was the accompanied keyboard sonata, in which the piano played a dominant role with *ad libitum* string parts.<sup>1</sup> In the late eighteenth century, Haydn wrote more than a dozen piano trios, some of which were still considered accompanied keyboard sonatas, and Mozart wrote six. However, the four-movement form for the piano trio that prevailed in the nineteenth century did not become the established practice until Beethoven wrote his ten piano trios (from 1793) and Schubert his two piano trios (1828). The piano trio's potential for complex contrapuntal elements became increasingly clear when the cello was emancipated to become an equal partner with the piano and the violin, as discussed in this chapter. Unlike other large-scale nineteenth-century genres such as the string quartet and the symphony, the piano trio has received little scholarly attention despite its increasing popularity among composers and performers since its emergence.

The extent to which the piano trio genre has been overlooked is reflected in the scant literature available. The only comprehensive work on piano trios referenced in the scholarly literature is Basil Smallman's *The Piano Trio: Its History, Technique and Repertoire*,<sup>2</sup> which is helpful insofar as it provides general information and insights into the piano trios by canonic composers. In a review of Smallman's book, Clive Brown cited various inaccuracies and inconsistencies throughout, and wrote that Smallman's 'failure to discuss or in some instances even to mention the work of

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Tilmouth and Basil Smallman, 'Piano trio', *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, 16 April 2012, <<http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/21647>>.

<sup>2</sup> Basil Smallman, *The Piano Trio: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

several composers who contributed significantly to the medium between 1790 and 1850 results in a distorted impression of the influences that were at work and the developments that took place during the first half of the nineteenth century'.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, used judiciously, Smallman's volume offers a helpful starting point for enquiry.

By contrast, Michael Kube wrote an article that specifically intended to put Brahms's Piano Trio in B major, Op. 8 (1854 version, henceforth Op. 8a) in its historical context, and supplied an appendix with a list of 25 composers contemporary with Brahms who contributed to the genre between circa 1835 and 1896.<sup>4</sup> The list by Kube fills a gap in Smallman's book by including a number of lesser known composers whose trios were nonetheless significant in the sense that they contributed to the development of the genre in the nineteenth century. In Kube's survey, the selection of piano trios written around the time of Brahms's Op. 8a includes names such as Onslow, Marschner, Franck, Kalliwoda, and Hiller, as well as Mendelssohn and Schumann. However, he did not include Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17 (1846). This omission is a conspicuous one, particularly since her trio, as will be discussed, probably served as a catalyst for Schumann's Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 63 (1847), which in turn influenced Brahms's Op. 8a.

This chapter begins by tracing the development of the piano trio starting with its ancestor — the accompanied keyboard sonata of the early eighteenth century. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was a crucial period for the newly established piano trio genre. Major changes that contributed to its evolution include the emancipation of the strings from the accompanied keyboard sonata, and the technical development of the piano through the first half of the nineteenth century. Another aspect of the popularisation of the piano trio genre involved a gradual

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<sup>3</sup> Clive Brown, 'Review: *The Piano Trio: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire* by Basil Smallman', *Music & Letters* 72/4 (1991), pp. 606–609.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Kube, 'Brahms' Klaviertrio H-Dur op. 8 (1854) und sein gattungsgeschichtlicher Kontext', *Internationaler Brahms-Kongress Gmunden 1997: Kongreßbericht. Series: Veröffentlichungen des Archivs der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien, No. 1*, ed. Ingrid Fuchs (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2001), pp. 31–57.

shift in demand for piano trios from amateurs for home music-making (*'Hausmusik'*) to the increasingly sophisticated music that culminated in complex works for connoisseurs and professional musicians in the concert hall, discussed later in this chapter.

The section that follows from the historical background explores Schumann's musical aesthetics for the piano trio genre. I argue that the *Davidsbündler* ideology provided an aesthetic basis for Schumann's Op. 63, which the young Brahms assimilated in his Op. 8a. The specific compositional features associated with the *Davidsbündler* are discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapters. The genesis of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a including autobiographical and compositional backgrounds, as well as contemporary reception, are examined in detail.

### **The emergence of the piano trio genre**

To understand the emergence and establishment of the piano trio genre, one has to trace its roots to the accompanied keyboard sonata. It was a genre very much in vogue during the mid-eighteenth century, where the string parts were often optional and the emphasis was on the keyboard.<sup>5</sup> As David Fuller noted, the accompanied keyboard sonata is a vast subject with a complex web of claims as to its origins.<sup>6</sup> While Smallman suggested that the growth of the piano trio led to the decline of the accompanied keyboard sonata,<sup>7</sup> Maria van Epenhuysen Rose attributed its end more precisely to around 1820 when the mechanical development of the piano reached a plateau.<sup>8</sup> On the historical development of the accompanied keyboard sonata, the article by Michelle Fillion

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<sup>5</sup> Michelle Fillion, 'Accompanied keyboard music', *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, 23 May 2012, <<http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00109>>.

<sup>6</sup> David Fuller, 'Accompanied Keyboard Music', *The Musical Quarterly* 60/2 (1974), pp. 222–245.

<sup>7</sup> Smallman, *The Piano Trio*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Maria van Epenhuysen Rose, "'Like Courtiers in the Presence of the Master": The Accompanied Keyboard Sonata and the Origins of Instrumental Balance in Piano Trios', *The Piano Trio: History, Technique, Performance*, conference on 12 November 2010, Senate House, London.

points to several seminal works on the subject.<sup>9</sup> Within Fuller's chronologically organised and critically in-depth essay, one strand in particular links the early piano trios of Haydn and Mozart back to their probable ancestor: the Viennese *Lauthenconcert* (suites for lute accompanied by a violin and a bass around 1700). Fuller referenced Wilhelm Fischer who stated that the *Lauthenconcert* were the 'direct precursors of the later Viennese keyboard trio'; however, he acknowledged that Fischer's hypothesis is supported by scant evidence. Nevertheless, he added that 'still, the assurance with which the combination is handled in the earliest classical trios argues for some kind of tradition lying behind them'. Fuller concluded by reiterating the need to investigate further 'the connection, if any, between the Viennese *Lauthenconcert* and the first Haydn trios'.<sup>10</sup>

Vienna and Paris had largely followed their own traditional models and courses of development with regard to the accompanied keyboard sonata. According to Fillion, the Viennese only gained international dominance in the genre in the 1780s 'with the establishment of a flourishing publishing industry and commercial market for music, the rise of the fortepiano and the arrival of Mozart'.<sup>11</sup> All these factors, plus the emancipation of the violin and cello, led to the rise of the piano trio genre. In France the accompanied keyboard sonata first emerged in the mid-eighteenth century when the instrumental balance was shifted to favour the keyboard, as exemplified by Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concerts avec un violon ou une flute et une viole ou un 2e violon* (1741).<sup>12</sup> The following excerpt from the preface to Guillemain's *Pièces de clavecin en sonates avec accompagnement de violon* (1745) highlights the popularity of the accompanied keyboard sonata in France at this time and the practical nature of instrumental balance:

My first thought had been to compose these works for keyboard alone, without any accompaniment ... but, in order to satisfy the present taste, I felt unable to dispense with

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<sup>9</sup> Fillion, 'Accompanied keyboard music', 23 May 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Fuller, 'Accompanied Keyboard Music', p. 254.

<sup>11</sup> Fillion, 'Accompanied keyboard music', 23 May 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Tilmouth and Smallman, 'Piano trio', 16 April 2012.

[the violin] part, which must be performed very softly so that the keyboard part may be easily heard. If desired, these sonatas may be played either with or without the [violin] accompaniment.<sup>13</sup>

This passage shows that the keyboard instrument was still at an early stage of development, lacking in sustaining power compared to the string instruments. The instrumental balance described above also highlights the subordinate role of the strings in the accompanied keyboard sonata, which was popularised in the 1760s by the Parisian Johann Schobert, and his 'virtuoso keyboard sonatas with largely optional accompaniment'.<sup>14</sup> Only gradually did the strings gain more independence, first in the accompanied keyboard sonatas, then the piano trios: the violin became an equal partner in Mozart's duo sonatas from at least the late 1770s, while the cello gained independence from the late Haydn piano trios onwards. As late as 1802, after the violin had attained equal status with the piano, Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata, Op. 47 still bears the designation 'per il pian-forte ed un violino obbligato' (for piano and violin obbligato part) on its title-page, emphasising that the role of the violin is 'obbligato' rather than optional.<sup>15</sup>

As the piano grew in power, size and technology, the musical and technical possibilities that it offered evolved considerably, directly influencing its role in chamber music genres. Fillion stated that the 1780s marked a period of rapid change for the accompanied keyboard music genres due to 'the vogue for the fortepiano, with its range of dynamics and articulation and its lyrical capacity, and the rise of a new class of virtuosos on the instrument'.<sup>16</sup> Most significantly, the new fortepiano was 'capable of holding its own in an ensemble with violin and cello' and 'no longer demanded subservience of its partners'.<sup>17</sup> The growth in prominence and prestige of keyboard instruments was a new factor in instrumental balance in the later stage of accompanied keyboard music. Instead of

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<sup>13</sup> Sandra Mangsen, et al, 'Sonata', *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, 23 May 2012, <<http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/26191>>.

<sup>14</sup> Fillion, 'Accompanied keyboard music', 23 May 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Mangsen, 'Sonata', 23 May 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Fillion, 'Accompanied keyboard music', 23 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

subordinating instruments to the keyboard, equality became the norm.<sup>18</sup> This status of equality amongst the instruments facilitated a new instrumental balance in the piano trio.

The pianos available to Schumann and Brahms in the mid-nineteenth century were those with Viennese actions. The Schumanns owned a Graf piano – presented by the eponymous Viennese piano builder to Clara in 1839<sup>19</sup> – until Robert bought a new piano made by J. B. Klems (who was based in Düsseldorf) for Clara as a wedding anniversary gift in September 1853. Clara gave Brahms the Graf piano as a souvenir later in 1856. The informative book *Company of Pianos*, a companion to the Finchcocks Collection, gives a detailed historical account of the Viennese pianos of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>20</sup> Conrad Graf, the maker of Graf pianos, was very conservative in his approach to the design of his instruments, basing them on eighteenth-century models. The tone colours could vary from instrument to instrument, from mellow to powerful. Like that of other Viennese pianos, the extreme treble in the Graf pianos is weak and there is a marked contrast in volume between bass and treble. In spite of this, Graf's pianos represented the highest standards of Viennese piano building and are usually regarded as 'loud, powerful versions of earlier instruments'.<sup>21</sup> Their bolder sonorities and the differentiation between the registers allowed the piano to contribute greater musical and technical substance without being overpowered by the violin and cello.

The emergence of the piano trio genre coincided with the development of public performance and other social aspects of music, and had important commercial ramifications for composers. The piano trio was originally intended as *Hausmusik*. Composers responded to the increasing demands of amateurs in the aristocratic and bourgeois circles for works that often did not require great technical virtuosity from the players. As Fillion stated,

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<sup>18</sup> Fuller, 'Accompanied Keyboard Music', p. 226.

<sup>19</sup> George Bozarth and Stephen Brady, 'The Pianos of Johannes Brahms', *Brahms and His World*, revised edition, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Karnes (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009), p. 73.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Burnett, *Company of Pianos* (Kent: Finchcocks Press, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124–5.

From this time accompanied keyboard music, especially the trio, was widely represented among the Viennese publishers' offerings. Much of this music was written for amateurs, with Kozeluch, Pleyel, Vanhal and even Haydn specializing in trios with brilliant but accessible keyboard parts and easy string accompaniments.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps the first step in the genre moving away from *Hausmusik* for amateur musicians was taken by Haydn when he wrote his London keyboard trios in 1797 (Hob. XV: 27–29). They were dedicated to the professional pianist Therese Jansen, and were considered the most brilliant of his late piano trios. They clearly reflect Haydn's acquaintance with professional concert life in London.<sup>23</sup>

According to Florence May, the status of the piano trio as a public genre was established in 1836 by the concertmaster Ferdinand David of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the original quartet evenings in the anteroom of the Gewandhaus concert hall that had started some two decades before, David introduced, under the direction of Mendelssohn, 'as the middle number of the programme some work of pianoforte chamber music'.<sup>25</sup> Due to the increasing number of subscribers for these evenings, they were soon moved to the main concert hall. As May stated, 'it was in this way that the tradition was finally broken by which the chamber works of the great masters for pianoforte and strings had been reserved for private hearing'.<sup>26</sup> This signifies a watershed in the history of the piano trio, among other piano chamber music, when it became a public, professional genre for a larger audience. Schumann and Brahms certainly would not have missed this development, whose impact – as the piano trio moved from *Hausmusik* to the concert hall – forms a critical basis for my hypothesis on the relationship between Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a.

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<sup>22</sup> Fillion, 'Accompanied keyboard music', 23 May 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Katalin Komlós, 'The Viennese Keyboard Trio in the 1780s: Sociological Background and Contemporary Reception', *Music & Letters* 68/3 (1987), pp. 222–234.

<sup>24</sup> Florence May, *The Girlhood of Clara Schumann* (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), pp. 153–4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153–4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

## Schumann's musical aesthetics of the piano trio

### Schumann's writings

The paucity of scholarly literature on the piano trio genre means that primary sources such as historical reviews are of indispensable value in understanding the history of the genre. Many of these reviews often focused on the compositions themselves rather than the particular interpretation of the performance, suggesting that the piano trio perhaps did not have a regular presence on the concert stage. One notable example is a review of Beethoven's Piano Trios Op. 70, No. 1 and No. 2 in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1813 by E.T.A. Hoffmann.<sup>27</sup> Schumann and Brahms would surely have had knowledge of this review since its shortened version later appeared in the famous chapter 'Beethoven's Instrumental Music', in Hoffmann's book *Kreisleriana*<sup>28</sup> (the cycle of musical writings which inspired Schumann's solo piano work *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16). Such influential reviews by prominent literary figures of the period may have shaped the development of the genre in important ways. In this review, Hoffmann wrote:

The fortepiano will remain an instrument more appropriate for harmony than for melody...Trios, quartets, quintets, and so on, with the usual stringed instruments added, also belong fully in the realm of piano compositions, because if they are composed in the proper manner, that is to say genuinely in four parts, five parts, and so forth, then they depend entirely on harmonic elaboration and automatically exclude brilliant passages for individual instruments.<sup>29</sup>

As demonstrated by his writings and compositions, Schumann shared the ideal proposed by Hoffmann as to the focus on genuine part writing in piano chamber music.

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<sup>27</sup> David Charlton, *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, the Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), pp. 300–325.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96–102.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

Schumann's writings as a music critic often reveal his own compositional principles. In his 1840 review of Mendelssohn's Trio in D minor, Op. 47 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Schumann suggested that in a piano trio a balance should ideally be 'achieved between musical substance and a virtuosic piano part'.<sup>30</sup> Elsewhere, Schumann articulated his ideal for the piano trio when he wrote that 'no instrument dominates, and each has something to say',<sup>31</sup> which is reminiscent of Hoffmann's view.

Schumann's writings show that he had specific aesthetic concerns for the piano trio genre. Importantly, he applied these concerns to his compositions. The piano writing in his Op. 63 has a texturally complex and technically demanding role, as discussed and analysed in detail in Chapter 2. He put emphasis on a contrapuntally complex piano part, balanced by equally important musical input from the violin and cello. At no point do the instruments fall into a secondary role, and the piano part is crucial in determining the balance and integration of the whole piece.

Schumann's familiarity with the piano trio repertoire is evidenced by his reviews of works by contemporary composers, and by his playing them. As early as 1828, long before making music at home with Clara, he formed a piano quartet while still a law student at the University of Leipzig.<sup>32</sup> A diary entry for one of the many private chamber music sessions shows that Schumann played Beethoven's 'Archduke' Trio, Op. 97, and the first movement of Schubert's Trio in E flat major, D. 929. Later in 1836, he expressed his veneration for Schubert through his review in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* of Schubert's two piano trios, when the one in B flat major had just been published posthumously.<sup>33</sup> In this review he wrote:

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<sup>30</sup> John Daverio, "'Beautiful and Abstruse Conversations': The Chamber Music of Schumann", *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 219.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>33</sup> John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), p. 19.

A glance at Schubert's trio, and all miserable human commotion vanishes, and the world shines in new splendour ... This recently published trio [D. 898] seems to be an older work. To be sure, its style does not refer to any earlier period, and it may well have been written a short time before the famous one in E flat major.<sup>34</sup>

This passage not only shows Schumann's love of Schubert, it also reveals his knowledge of Schubert's output and stylistic evolution which enables him to speculate on the composition date of the posthumously published trio. He continued:

Inwardly they differ in essential ways. The first movement of the E-flat work is a product of deep anger and boundless longing, while that of the B-flat trio is graceful, intimate, and virginal. The slow movement [the adagio], which in the former is a sigh intensified to the point of an anguished cry of the heart, appears in the latter as a blissful dream, an ebbing and flowing of beautiful human feeling. The Scherzos are similar, though I prefer the one in the second trio [in E-flat]. As for the finales, I cannot decide. In a word, the second trio is more active, masculine, and dramatic, while in contrast, the other one is passive, feminine, and lyrical.<sup>35</sup>

Schubert's Trio in E flat major had a significant impact on Schumann. Particularly relevant to the present study is the point that both composers cultivated a characteristic song-like lyricism in their instrumental works, as well as the imitative Scherzo movements in the piano trios, which would be echoed by the young Brahms in his Op. 8a.

### **Schumann's *Davidsbündler***

Schumann's writings showed an idealistic fervour geminated in his youth, which eventually manifested itself in an all-encompassing ideology in the *Davidsbündler*. As a precursor to the

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<sup>34</sup> Stephen E. Hefling and David S. Tartakoff, 'Schubert's Chamber Music', *Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 109–110.

<sup>35</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, p. 19.

*Davidsbündler*, Schumann had regular meetings with a group of like-minded individuals to discuss their ‘displeasure over the current musical scene’, and considered himself the ‘visionary of the group’ in opposing those they saw to be the philistines in art.<sup>36</sup> Table 1 provides a background for the evolution of Schumann’s *Davidsbündler*.

**Table 1.** Timeline for the development of Schumann’s *Davidsbündler* ideology<sup>37</sup>

| Timeline                                   | Schumann’s <i>Davidsbündler</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1831</b><br><br>June                    | Diary entry: ‘more beautiful and fitting names’ for his friends; characters in <i>Die Wunderkinder</i> , the projected ‘musical novel’<br><br>Fragmentary tale ‘ <i>Der Davidsbündler</i> ’ (the same title as the 1833 essay) by Schumann used themes associated with <i>Die Wunderkinder</i> and included his ‘friends’ as per the above diary entry |
| <b>1833</b><br><br>March<br><br>December   | Founding of the music journal <i>Neue Zeitschrift für Musik</i><br><br>Schumann’s article ‘ <i>Der Davidsbündler</i> ’ published in three instalments in the journal <i>Der Komet</i>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>1834</b><br><br>January                 | Schumann became sole editor of the <i>Neue Zeitschrift für Musik</i> and declared his mission statement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>1854</b><br><br>January<br><br>February | Schumann defined the <i>Davidsbündler</i> as ‘more than a secret society’ in the introduction to his collected writings<br><br>Letter to the music critic Richard Pohl reaffirming the <i>Davidsbündler</i> ideology                                                                                                                                   |

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 118–119.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 73, 113–117, 478–479, 481.

Schumann brought together the personalities from this real-life group with his own imaginary characters, while he was planning to write a musical novel, *Die Wunderkinder* in 1831, which never materialized. Shortly thereafter, the *Davidsbündler* guided the founding philosophy of his music journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. In Schumann's first editorial for his journal in 1834, he wrote:

Our fundamental attitude was established at the outset. It is simple, and runs as follows: to acknowledge the past and its creations, and to draw attention to the fact that new artistic beauties can only be strengthened by such a pure source; next, to oppose the recent past as an inartistic period, which has only a notable increase in mechanical dexterity to show for itself; and finally, to prepare for and facilitate the advent of a fresh, poetic future.<sup>38</sup>

Twenty years later, in 1854, shortly before his suicide attempt, Schumann was to define the *Davidsbündler* in the introduction to his *Collected Writings* as being 'more than a secret society', and to affirm that it 'runs like a red thread through [my] journal, uniting poetry and truth'.<sup>39</sup> Although Schumann did not explicitly describe the *Davidsbündler* in musical terms, given the joint literary and musical origin of the *Davidsbündler* it is entirely plausible that his compositions reflect this ideal as expressed in his writings, and vice versa.

In drawing compositional parallels between Schumann's early and late works, Daverio noted that Schumann's piano works in the 1830s often refer to his *Davidsbündler* ideal. For example, the title of the last movement in his *Carnaval*, Op. 9 is 'March of the Davidsbündler against the Philistines'. His *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6 also helped to immortalise it. More specifically, Daverio attributed Schumannesque features such as mosaic-like structures, musical ciphers, and general esotericism to the function of his *Davidsbündler* persona.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 478.

I agree with Daverio that what Brahms found upon his meeting with Schumann in 1853 would have been reminiscent of Schumann's young *Davidsbündler* days when he gathered with other like-minded musicians. This new comradeship in 1853 was evidently stimulating for all involved, and the immediate result was the F.A.E. Sonata, a work of four movements for violin and piano jointly composed by Schumann, Brahms, and Albert Dietrich as a gift to Joseph Joachim. Daverio discussed how Schumann, in his contribution to the F.A.E. Sonata, 'translates a verbal motto into a musical cipher, which then serves as the basis for a seemingly endless array of varied motivic shapes, a practice reminiscent of the generation of material in *Carnaval*'.<sup>40</sup> What he is referring to is that the notes F-A-E were used as a musical cipher for Joachim's motto 'Frei aber einsam' ('free but alone') throughout the sonata. Similarly, the core motif in Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9 was based on the name of the home town, Asch, of his erstwhile fiancée Ernestine von Fricken. Under the German musical alphabets A.S.C.H. was then translated into two sets of musical notes and appeared as two motifs: A flat-C-B and A-E flat-C-B, respectively. Despite the fact that Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9 and the F.A.E. Sonata were written twenty years apart, the similar use of musical ciphers suggests a common aesthetic at work.

As discussed before, the piano trio genre grew out of *Hausmusik* and became a genre that appealed to the public in the early nineteenth century. Like Schumann's early *Davidsbündler* group intended as a 'secret society' with a public agenda, Schumann's piano trios in 1847 provided *Hausmusik* for his selected professional circle of musicians that included his wife Clara and Joachim. In this regard, the *Davidsbündler* and the piano trio genre share in their simultaneous private and public nature. In a similar way to Daverio, I will examine compositional and genre-related traits in Schumann's Op. 63 and relate them to the *Davidsbündler* ideology.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 479.

## Schumann's Op. 63: its autobiographical and compositional background

Written at the height of his career in 1847, Schumann's Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 63 is his first published work for the medium. By this time, he had already written two of his four symphonies, Op. 38 and Op. 61, as well as other large-scale chamber music works in 1842 – his so-called 'chamber music' year. Schumann believed that it was important to have a deep-rooted understanding of a genre's history before attempting to write in it, a comment he made about the composition of string quartets.<sup>41</sup> Presumably, this was viewed by Schumann as a prerequisite whether one stays within or breaks away from the established rules of that genre. In the case of the piano trio, Schumann respected the genre's tradition given that he refrained from calling his *Phantasiestücke*, Op. 88 for piano, violin, and cello (1842) a piano trio. According to Linda Correll Roesner, the *Phantasiestücke* is so 'unorthodox in structure that he apparently felt it could not represent the genre'.<sup>42</sup> Even though Schumann had experimented with, and published, works for different combinations of piano and strings since 1829, he did not write an actual piano trio until 1847. He wrote not only one, but two piano trios in 1847 – Op. 63 and Op. 80 – and then the third trio was written in 1851. As Daverio outlined in his survey of Schumann's chamber music, Op. 63 was composed between June and September 1847 and was first performed privately in September 1847 on Clara's birthday. In the same year, Op. 80 was first sketched in August and was completed in November.<sup>43</sup> The two works share common compositional techniques, most notably the rich contrapuntal elements. However, the apparent differences in the thematic content and the ways in which they develop suggest that they are not conceived as a pair.

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<sup>41</sup> Daverio, "Beautiful and Abstruse Conversations": The Chamber Music of Schumann', p. 216.

<sup>42</sup> Linda Correll Roesner, 'The chamber music', *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perry (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), p. 133.

<sup>43</sup> Daverio, "Beautiful and Abstruse Conversations": The Chamber Music of Schumann', p. 209.

While Schumann's Op. 63 partly resulted from his contact with the concert masters of the Court Orchestra in Dresden, Franz Schubert and Friedrich Kummer,<sup>44</sup> a number of scholars including Daverio also suggest that Schumann wrote his first piano trio in response to Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17 (1846).<sup>45</sup> Therefore, a brief examination of this major work in Clara's output (see also Chapter 3) is warranted to gain a more complete perspective on the genesis of Schumann's Op. 63. Clara Schumann's biographer, Nancy Reich, provided some rarely encountered background information about Clara's Trio.<sup>46</sup> A particularly revealing comment comes from a letter written by Joachim: 'I recollect a fugato in the last movement and remember that Mendelssohn once had a big laugh because I would not believe that a woman could have composed something so sound and serious.'<sup>47</sup> Concerning the last movement, Joan Chissell wrote,

Not only can the first theme be regarded as a metamorphosis of the opening phrase of the Andante, but in the development section its own rhythm is changed into a stern, quasi-fugal subject which, juxtaposed with the second subject, is explored with a contrapuntal cunning of which Mendelssohn would not have been ashamed even if a little too academic for Schumann.<sup>48</sup>

It is indeed soon after Clara completed her Trio that Schumann had 'thoughts about a trio', which resulted in his Op. 63.<sup>49</sup> Reich noted that the expertise and quality of her husband's work shook Clara's confidence in her own, despite admiration from Schumann and many other musicians. Daverio, on the other hand, suspected 'an unmistakable element of one-upmanship' on Schumann's part when he responded with two trios in the space of just a few months. He further observed a parallel between Clara's fugato in the last movement, and the contrapuntal textures in Schumann's

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Musgrave, *The Life of Schumann* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), p. 135.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>46</sup> Nancy Reich, *Clara Schumann: the Artist and the Woman*, revised edition (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001), pp. 214–216, 231–232.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>49</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"*, p. 323.

two piano trios of 1847.<sup>50</sup> While Reich wrote that Clara was not convinced about the worth of her trio and that she 'played her husband's trios far more often than her own and seldom programmed her Trio', she stated elsewhere that Clara's Trio was 'often paired with Schumann's first [Op. 63] in concerts during his lifetime and was frequently performed during the nineteenth century'.<sup>51</sup>

Schumann reminisced in a letter in 1849 that his Op. 63 was written in a 'time of gloomy moods'.<sup>52</sup> It was indeed a time when Schumann's firstborn son Emil died at eighteen months in June 1847. In considering the genesis of Schumann's Op. 63 against an autobiographical background, one cannot escape from the fact that most biographies of the composer link his physical and (particularly) mental health with his music. Unlike Brahms, where autobiographical events often contributed positively to posterity's understanding of his works, Schumann's life, as woven by some biographers, sheds a less favourable light on his creative output. Unfortunately, it seems to have become standard practice for biographers to cast the shadow of Schumann's tragic end in the mental asylum in Endenich over his entire life and output,<sup>53</sup> in which case the works are inevitably tainted with skewed, or downright negative, interpretations. In this respect, Daverio pointed out several instances of a 'dubious conflation of life and artwork' by what he labelled as 'psychobiographers'.<sup>54</sup> Recent endeavours to apply a critical approach to Schumann are generally less biased in the ways they reconsider his life and works from various perspectives. A handful of revisionist Schumann scholars in both the English and German literature (including Daverio, Roesner and Joel Lester in English, and Michael Struck and Reinhard Kapp in German) have provided new directions in understanding the composer's works, particularly from purely musical viewpoints. In this respect, I aim to follow in the footsteps of the revisionists and to approach Schumann's Op. 63 from a musical-aesthetic and analytical standpoint informed by the multifaceted life that continued

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 323.

<sup>51</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, pp. 216, 231.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>53</sup> John Worthen, 'The Necessary Ignorance of a Biographer', *The Art of Literary Biography*, ed. John Batchelor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 234.

<sup>54</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"*, p. 302.

to evolve in his final years, rather than characterising his works as supposed signs of illness that culminated in a decline of his creativity.

During his Dresden period from 1844 to 1850, Schumann's musical activities ran parallel with his many complaints of illness. Consider the two letters he wrote in January 1845 to his publisher Härtel: 'I am still not at all well: the attacks of great nervous prostration have unfortunately rather increased than decreased, and so I often look very anxiously into the future'.<sup>55</sup> But again in the same month, he wrote to Härtel on a matter that demonstrates his scholarly and entrepreneurial mind:

I have had an idea in my head for a long time, about which I should like to know your opinion. The fact is, I consider that we lack a really good edition of J.S. Bach's Wohltemperirtes Clavier. [...] Then there are the various readings, which complicate matters still more, so that nobody knows which edition to depend upon. But as many of the different readings are Bach's own, I think it would be of great interest to be able to compare them in print. [...] My object is to obtain as correct an edition as possible, based upon the original manuscript and the oldest editions, and quoting the various readings... I am firmly convinced that this undertaking would also prove profitable to the publisher.<sup>56</sup>

The above quotations show the juxtaposition of the different sides of Schumann's personality, which is a dominant theme in his life and works. It is imperative to note how hypersensitive Schumann was towards his physical and mental health; some writers feel the urge to sensationalise his recorded health-related complaints as evidence of his waning creative powers at a given moment. For example, he wrote about the C major symphony, also written during this period, as follows: 'I had hardly got over my illness, and it seems to me as though the music betrayed as much. Only in the last movement did I begin to feel myself again, and I really began to get better after having finished

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<sup>55</sup> Musgrave, *The Life of Schumann*, p. 126.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

the whole work'. One could perhaps infer, based on this comment, that the act of composing had a therapeutic effect on Schumann. However, it would seem over-reaching to conclude, for example, that the last movement is satisfactorily good and that any faults in the first three movements are to be attributed to his illness.

An important oversight in the popular understanding of Schumann is his scholarly and pragmatic qualities. As noted by Jon Finson in his review of Gerd Nauhaus's edition of Schumann's household accounts, these records reveal 'the contradictions in Schumann's personality', in which 'intense pragmatism and fantasy were at once combined'.<sup>57</sup> Clearly, a deeper understanding of his life and works will benefit from more circumspect interpretations. The effect that Schumann's 'gloomy moods' had on his Op. 63 should therefore be placed alongside a host of other biographical and musical circumstances: the death of his son Emil, inspiration from Clara's Piano Trio, and a fresh medium in which to experiment with his 'new manner of composing'.<sup>58</sup>

Schumann's Op. 63 marks a new phase in his compositional development. A period of intensive contrapuntal study in 1845 triggered a crucial turning point in his compositional method, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Among the most prominent features is the new way in which Schumann incorporated Baroque elements within his works. For instance, Musgrave observed that the opening theme of Schumann's Op. 63 parallels a 'neo-Baroque' symphonic passage in the fourth movement of his 'Rhenish' Symphony (1850).<sup>59</sup> This is one of the many instances where Schumann alludes to his own works, creating dialogues across different musical genres<sup>60</sup>—a point further explored in the discussions of allusions and self-allusions in Brahms's Op. 8 in Chapters 3 and 4.

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<sup>57</sup> Jon Finson, 'Tagebücher. Band III: Haushaltsbücher, 1837–1856 by Robert Schumann: Gerd Nauhaus', *The Journal of Musicology* 2/4 (1983), p. 462.

<sup>58</sup> Daverio, "'Beautiful and Abstruse Conversations': The Chamber Music of Schumann", p. 223.

<sup>59</sup> Michael Musgrave, 'Symphony and symphonic scenes: issues of structure and context in Schumann's "Rhenish" Symphony', *Analytical Strategies and Musical Interpretation: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Craig Ayrey and Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), pp. 126–129.

<sup>60</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"*, p. 26.

## **Brahms's Op. 8a: its autobiographical and compositional background**

Brahms's Op. 8a has been described by Eric Sams as an 'autobiographical fantasy',<sup>61</sup> a point of view that is both fascinating and controversial among Brahms scholars. According to Constantin Floros, many of Brahms's works reflect personal experiences such as 'unrequited and uncontrolled love, illness and death of persons close to him', as was the case with many composers of the Romantic period.<sup>62</sup> Much effort has been made to investigate the autobiographical aspects of the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8. Instead of directly relating autobiographical events to Brahms's Op. 8a, my hypothesis is that the musical-aesthetic elements in the work demonstrate both an affinity with, and influence from, Schumann.

Brahms first came to know and respect Schumann's works in the summer of 1853 during his stay at the home of the Deichmanns in Mehlem, who were wealthy patrons of the arts and Schumann devotees. This was one month before he met Schumann, and Brahms would have had the opportunity to familiarise himself with Schumann's works. In a letter to Joseph Joachim in October 1853 Brahms described the enormous effect that the meeting of Schumann had on him:

What shall I write to you about Schumann, shall I break out in hosannas over his genius and character, or shall I lament that once again people are committing the great sin of misjudging a good man and divine artist so much, and of honouring him so little. And I myself, how long did I commit this sin. Only since leaving Hamburg and especially during my stay in Mehlem, did I learn to know and honour Schumann's works. I should like to beg his forgiveness.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Sams, 'Brahms and His Clara Themes', p. 434.

<sup>62</sup> Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms 'Free but Alone': A Life for a Poetic Music* [Translation from German edition, 1997], trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 42.

<sup>63</sup> Styra Avins, *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters*, trans. Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), p. 21.

Brahms met Robert and Clara Schumann for the first time at the end of September in 1853, also the day Clara discovered she was pregnant with her eighth child. Through the Schumanns, Brahms met Albert Dietrich and Julius Otto Grimm, who were pupils of Robert Schumann. He had met Joachim a few months previously and it was Joachim who brought Brahms into contact with the Schumanns by providing a letter of introduction. During his month-long stay in Düsseldorf, Brahms saw the Schumanns and their friends almost every day. As a yet unpublished composer, Brahms played for his new friends his early compositions, including the Piano Sonatas Op. 1 and Op. 2, and Scherzo Op. 4.

**Table 2.** Significant events surrounding the genesis of Brahms's Op. 8a

| Dates                           | Events                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1853</b><br>End of September | First meeting between Brahms and the Schumanns, extended until November 2                           |
| October 17                      | Mention by Brahms of Schumann's letter introducing him to the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel          |
| October 28                      | Schumann's 'Neue Bahnen' article proclaiming Brahms as the 'chosen one'                             |
| December                        | Brahms's first four opuses published by Breitkopf & Härtel                                          |
| <b>1854</b><br>February 27      | Schumann's suicide attempt and subsequent incarceration at a mental asylum                          |
| March 26                        | Clara heard Brahms's Op. 8a for the first time, played by Brahms and others                         |
| March 27                        | Schumann's piano trios were performed in the Schumann household; Brahms either heard or played them |
| April 17                        | Brahms's Op. 8a played by Clara and Joachim in the morning and evening                              |
| June                            | Clara Schumann gave birth to her eighth and last child Felix on June 11; Brahms's Op. 8a published  |

Table 2 shows the timeline of significant events surrounding the composition of Brahms's Op. 8a in the space of just a few months between 1853 and 1854. Following the initial excitement of Brahms's first meeting with the Schumanns and his first public success as a published composer, the

tragic event of Schumann's incarceration in the mental asylum in February 1854 had proven to be devastating for the young Brahms. Brahms's mother wrote in distress to her son:

We received a very sad and distracted letter from you. We are immensely sorry that Schumann is so ill. You did the right thing in travelling there immediately, you owe much to those kind people ... You, poor youngster, are in a very sad position.<sup>64</sup>

Compounded by the love that Brahms admitted he had towards Clara in a letter to Joachim in June 1854,<sup>65</sup> Brahms's Op. 8a was written against a dramatic and deeply personal set of events.

The start date for the composition of Brahms's Op. 8a cannot be definitively established. Max Kalbeck claimed that Brahms started work on this trio during August 1853, though he provided no evidence for that date.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, Brahms mentioned a Fantasy in D minor for Piano, Violin, and Cello (Largo and Allegro) on 17 October 1853, and considered having it published as his Op. 1.<sup>67</sup> While this work was never published and has disappeared, it could have been this Trio to which Kalbeck referred. The fact that only the first four opuses by Brahms were published at the end of 1853 by Härtel also suggests that Op. 8a did not come into existence until later. Although Brahms inscribed January 1854 on the manuscript of his Op. 8a, the Trio was not sent to the publisher until June 1854. Two letters from Brahms to Joachim suggest that Brahms was still making changes to the Trio after January 1854. On 1 April 1854, he wrote, 'I suppose we will have to play my Trio once more for Frau Schumann. I still want to change a few things in it...', and on 19 June, 'I would also have liked to hold back the Trio, since I would certainly have made changes in it later.'<sup>68</sup> It is also important to note that the Trio was not published until November that year,<sup>69</sup> which means further

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>66</sup> 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* 34/1 (2010), p. 62.

<sup>67</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*, pp. 22–23.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 44, 47.

<sup>69</sup> Michael Struck, 'Noch einmal Brahms's B major Trio: Where Was the Original Version First Performed?', *The American Brahms Society Newsletter* 9/2 (1991), p. 8.

changes would still have been possible. In terms of its stylistic maturity, Op. 8a was clearly set apart from the earlier opuses by Adolf Schubring in his reviews of Brahms in 'Schumanniana', who likened the development of Brahms's first 18 opuses to the wine-making process and grouped them as such: Opp. 1–6, fermenting must; Opp. 7–10, transitional group of less stable, more variable coloration; Opp. 11–18, clear wine.<sup>70</sup>

The meeting with the Schumanns was overwhelming for Brahms on many levels, but most importantly, he realised the close affinity that he shared with Schumann in terms of his musical and literary aesthetics.<sup>71</sup> It is plausible that Brahms would have had knowledge of Schumann's piano trios at any time from August 1853. I have noted evidence in the diary of Clara Schumann that Brahms had heard or played Schumann's piano trios in March 1854 in the Schumann household: 'In the evening, we played Robert's 3 Trios to Mother' (*Fantasiestücke*, Op. 88 was likely to be the one not considered by Clara as a piano trio).<sup>72</sup> This is significant since it was during the same month that Brahms first played his Op. 8a in this private setting. With this new evidence, it is important to consider how private performances of Brahms's Op. 8a and Schumann's piano trios in the Schumann household potentially shed light on the compositional history of Brahms's Op. 8a. The role of Clara Schumann on the performing tradition of these works is discussed in Chapter 3.

During Brahms's month-long meeting with the Schumanns in October 1853, *Hausmusik* was one of their main activities; the collaborative work of the F.A.E. Sonata between Schumann, Brahms and Albert Dietrich during this time indicates that music-making at the home of the Schumanns inspired the composition of piano chamber music. As mentioned previously, the joint composition of the F.A.E. Sonata achieved unity through a collective use of the musical cipher. This was the first known instance of Brahms adopting Schumann's musical aesthetics. Since Brahms found in

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<sup>70</sup> Adolf Schubring, 'Five Early Works by Brahms', *Brahms and His World*, ed. and trans. Walter Frisch (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009), p. 198.

<sup>71</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*, p. 20.

<sup>72</sup> Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life*, 2 Vols., trans. and abridged by Grace E. Hadow (London: MacMillan, 1918), p. 68.

Schumann a model with which he shared a musical and literary affinity, it follows that he would likely seek to emulate the master in his next composition. As it was with Schumann's *Davidsbündler* as a 'secret society', the environment in the Schumann household was undoubtedly conducive to composing a piano trio for like-minded professional musicians. Table 3 gives a list of piano trios and other piano chamber music works that were written by the Schumann circle in the context of Brahms's Op. 8a.

**Table 3.** The Schumann Circle: Output of piano chamber music in the context of Brahms's Op. 8a

|      | Johannes Brahms                                                    | Robert Schumann                                                          | Clara Schumann                   | Albert Dietrich<br>(composer)               | Joseph Joachim<br>(violinist and<br>composer) |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1842 |                                                                    | Op. 88<br>Fantasiestücke<br>for Piano, Violin<br>and Cello               |                                  |                                             |                                               |
| 1846 |                                                                    |                                                                          | Op. 17, Piano<br>Trio in G minor |                                             |                                               |
| 1847 |                                                                    | Op. 63, Piano Trio<br>in D minor<br><br>Op. 80, Piano Trio<br>in F major |                                  |                                             |                                               |
| 1851 |                                                                    | Op. 110, Piano<br>Trio in G minor                                        |                                  |                                             |                                               |
| 1853 | F.A.E. Sonata –<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> movement:<br>Scherzo in C minor | F.A.E. Sonata –<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup><br>movement       |                                  | F.A.E. Sonata –<br>1 <sup>st</sup> movement | F.A.E. Sonata<br>(dedicatee)                  |
| 1854 | Op. 8a, Piano Trio<br>in B major                                   |                                                                          |                                  |                                             |                                               |
| 1855 |                                                                    |                                                                          |                                  | Op. 9, Piano Trio<br>in C minor             |                                               |

The reception history shows that Brahms's contemporary critics offered both positive and negative criticisms of Op. 8a. In Schubring's review of 1862, for example, more than two-thirds of his article was given to criticising what he saw as a lack of a unified shape in the first movement. The part that was criticised most severely was the fugue. However, Op. 8a was not only admired and

performed by Brahms's associates, it was also the first of his works ever to be performed in America,<sup>73</sup> and within just eighteen months of its publication.

The world première took place in Danzig on 13 October 1855, as confirmed by Michael Struck, as part of the 'Trio-Soirées' organised by Haupt (piano), Braun (violin), and Klahr (cello), and it received much less attention in the press than the American première did in the American press.<sup>74</sup> The American première in New York soon followed on 27 November 1855 in Dodworth's Hall at the inaugural Mason-Thomas Chamber Concerts. The performers on this occasion were pianist William Mason (1829–1908), a student of Franz Liszt who had met Brahms in 1853, violinist Theodore Thomas (1835–1905) and cellist Carl Bergmann (1821–76).<sup>75</sup> The Trio was programmed amidst other chamber works by Schubert, Wagner, Chopin, Heller, Mendelssohn and Nicolai — as Mason pointed out that the purpose of these concerts was to feature 'chamber-works which had never been heard here, especially those of Schumann and other modern writers...'.<sup>76</sup> The Trio was to be performed again in Boston a month later on 26 December 1855. As recorded by Mason in his memoirs, the newspapers spoke well of Brahms's Op. 8a in general, but it was by no means all positive as he noted that some regarded the work as 'constrained and unnatural'.<sup>77</sup> The Scherzo movement seems to have won approval ('would be attractive to any audience', 'more after the type of great writers'<sup>78</sup>). The structure was described as 'not novel in its form or construction' and 'the movements preserve ordinary forms, while in substance they are nearly all episodical'. The Boston reviewer noticed in the first movement 'long recitatives, first on the piano, then in the strings'. The same reviewer also mentioned a 'curious, wayward sort of fugato', which echoed the criticism by Schubring.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Struck, 'Noch einmal Brahms's B major Trio', p. 8

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>75</sup> George Bozarth, 'Brahms's B major Trio: An American Première', *The American Brahms Society Newsletter* 8/1 (1990), pp. 1-4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 2

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

In his 1862 review of Brahms's opuses, Schubring analysed Schumann's 'Neue Bahnen' article (see Table 2) about Brahms. The famous article undoubtedly had a profound effect on Brahms, as the Boston reviewer in 1855 had already noted that Brahms had the great burden of living up to the reputation established by Schumann when he wrote of him as 'the Messiah of a new era in music'.<sup>80</sup> Quoting Schumann's article, Schubring wrote as follows:

[Schumann] concluded by predicting that he himself was destined soon to give up his magic wand; he called together his little band of followers: "There exists a secret bond between kindred spirits in every period. You who belong together, close your ranks ever more tightly, that the Truth of Art may shine more clearly, diffusing joy and blessings over all things."<sup>81</sup>

Given these extraordinary personal and professional circumstances, it seems inevitable that Brahms's Op. 8a was composed with an idealistic fervour kindled by Schumann's *Davidbündler*,<sup>82</sup> which by now would have accepted the twenty year old Brahms as a new member. As a result, Brahms would likely have incorporated high-minded musical aesthetics associated with Schumann's *Davidbündler* ideology, and modelled his Op. 8a on a work in the same genre by Schumann.

The revision of Op. 8 in 1889 and the question of allusions, which are explored in Chapter 3, certainly complicate any modern understanding of the work. At the time of the revision, Brahms's circle was divided in their opinions about it. Clara wrote in her diary that 'I find the Trio becoming much more unified, but it does not please me throughout...in the last movement the second motive [bars 64ff.] is for me nothing short of horrible [*entsetzlich*]!'. Elisabet von Herzogenberg, on the other hand, wrote to Brahms: 'Who would not welcome this piece, with its wise face and its youthful complexion?'<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Schubring, 'Five Early Works by Brahms', p. 196.

<sup>82</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"*, p. 114.

<sup>83</sup> Bozarth, 'Brahms's B major Trio: An American Première', p. 4.

For a long time, the Anglo-American literature has stated that Brahms rewrote his Op. 8 when his publisher Simrock acquired the rights to Brahms's early works, and offered him the opportunity to revise his works in 1888. In fact, Michael Struck made it known that it is unclear when Brahms first started to revise his Op. 8, and there is no evidence that Simrock asked Brahms to choose any works to revise from his early output published by Breitkopf & Härtel.<sup>84</sup> There is some evidence, however, of a revision in 1871: one section in the development of the first movement of Op. 8a was removed at Brahms's wish in a Vienna performance, according to a report by Kalbeck.<sup>85</sup> If the idea for a major recomposition had begun then, it was certainly not known to Brahms's close circle, judging by the strong reactions of his friends at the announcement of a new version. Not even the source material for Op. 8a helps to determine the timeframe of the revision process.<sup>86</sup> Even though Simrock was probably not the catalyst for the revision, it seems likely that it was not until the late 1880s that Brahms worked intensively on the changes that resulted in the new version.

The speculations frequently offered by musicologists regarding the motivations behind Brahms's recomposition of Op. 8 seldom helps one get closer to Brahms's Op. 8a. If anything, all the conjectures seem to alienate the early version, and any hermeneutical interpretations seem to have only further obscured the matter. Among performers, this is demonstrated by the fact that there are only a handful of existing recordings of this work, some of which are compared in Chapter 3. But it is important to keep in mind that Brahms did not explicitly seek to suppress Op. 8a. The two versions spanned Brahms's entire compositional output, and each inevitably focuses on its own set of musical aesthetics. By aligning Op. 8a with Schumann's Op. 63 and Schumann's *Davidsbündler*, the present study argues that Op. 8a is sufficiently distinct from Op. 8b to be considered a

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<sup>84</sup> Struck, 'Gewinn und Verlust: Abrechnung mit den Klaviertrios op. 8', *Spätphase(n)? Johannes Brahms' Werke der 1880er und 1890er Jahre*, Internationales musikwissenschaftliches Symposium Meiningen 2008, eine Veröffentlichung des Brahms-Instituts an der Musikhochschule Lübeck und der Meiningener Museen, hrsg. von Maren Goltz, Wolfgang Sandberger und Christiane Wiesenfeldt, München 2010, p. 113.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>86</sup> See my discussion in Chapter 2, pp. 62–63.

composition in its own right; it attests to Brahms's early musical language which was strongly influenced by Schumann.

As with the F.A.E. cipher, the allusions and the Clara cipher in Brahms's Op. 8a are discussed alongside Schumann's *Davidsbündler* musical aesthetics in Chapter 3. Following in the footsteps of Schumann's Op. 63, Op. 8a was certainly not written as *Hausmusik* for the average household, but instead, with the Schumann circle in mind: Joachim, Clara Schumann, Julius Otto Grimm, and himself. Even though Schumann could not be present at these private gatherings when Brahms's Op. 8a was played, his *Davidsbündler* was surely inseparable from them. The work was sent to the publisher in June 1854 and soon found a place on the concert stage internationally for professional musicians.

### **The piano trio from private to public performance**

The piano trios of Schumann and Brahms's Op. 8a represent a pinnacle in the development of the genre, enhanced by the fact that they both had a circle of virtuoso performers, including Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, Brahms, and members of professional orchestras. The availability of professional musicians for all three instruments would have inspired greater musical and technical challenges in the compositions, which was not always the case in piano trios by earlier composers. It is worth noting that of all Haydn's piano trios, only one was performed publicly during his lifetime,<sup>87</sup> and those by Mozart were all performed privately, mostly in the homes of patrons.<sup>88</sup> Schumann's and Brahms's circle of professional performers also ensured that their piano trios would reach the concert halls, further establishing the piano trio as a large-scale public genre. These technically and musically challenging piano trios were undoubtedly written as an antithesis to the then current

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<sup>87</sup> Michelle Fillion, 'Intimate expression for a widening public: the keyboard sonatas and trios', *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn*, ed. Caryl Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), p. 133.

<sup>88</sup> Komlós, 'The Viennese Keyboard Trio in the 1780s', p. 233.

trend of virtuosity for its own sake with little musical substance, a 'philistinism' disapproved of by Schumann and his circle, as against the principles of the *Davidsbündler* ideology.

The new dimensions that Schumann contributed to the piano trio genre were significant. As exemplified by his Op. 63, he imbued the genre with musical aesthetics that reflect his ideals and those of the German Romantics such as E.T.A. Hoffmann. By combining high-minded fugal elements for the connoisseurs, allusions for the 'insider' listener, and technically challenging elements for the professional performers, Schumann and the young Brahms in masterly fashion carried this intimate genre from the private home to the public stage. In this way, Schumann's *Davidsbündler* had gone beyond his early literary and journalistic endeavours. He had transformed his ideology into musical aesthetics of the highest order and had found in Brahms a new young devotee.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A COMPARISON OF SCHUMANN'S OP. 63 AND BRAHMS'S OP. 8a, WITH REFERENCE TO BRAHMS'S

#### OP. 8b

Taking into account the recently emerged revisionist view of Schumann's oeuvre,<sup>1</sup> particularly concerning the study of his large-scale structures and compositional techniques, it is timely to reconsider Schumann's influences on Brahms beyond the biographical aspects. One of the earliest critical writings that discuss Brahms's music in the context of Schumann dates back to 1862, when the music critic Adolf Schubring gave a critical account of Brahms's early output in 'Schumanniana'.<sup>2</sup> While he did not draw analytical comparisons between Schumann's and Brahms's works, he did include an extensive review of Brahms's Op. 8a. Unlike modern scholars who face the task of comparing the two versions of Op. 8, Schubring did not have such a dilemma since only the original existed then. Schubring could therefore assess Op. 8a without the hindsight of Brahms's later recomposition, whereas modern scholars generally compare Op. 8a unfavourably against Op. 8b. Schubring, however, instead placed Op. 8a in the context of Schumann's legacy, or what he termed 'Schumanniana'.

Only in recent decades have substantial scholarly endeavours delved into the influence of Schumann's works on Brahms. Daverio explored various aspects of Brahms's modelling of his works on Schumann's across genres. He discussed in depth a compositional technique that he called 'thematic combination', which first occurs in the opening bars of the first movement of Schumann's Op. 63, illustrating his arguments with reference to a couple of examples showing how Brahms used this technique in string quartets and symphonies.<sup>3</sup> Daverio provided a review of writings by other Brahms scholars such as Constantin Floros, Siegfried Kross, Reinhold Brinkmann and David Brodbeck,

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Correll Roesner, 'Schumann's "Parallel" Forms', *19th-Century Music* 14/3 (1991), p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Frisch, ed., *Brahms and His World* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), pp. 116–118.

<sup>3</sup> John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), pp. 172–175.

who explored other ways in which Brahms was influenced by Schumann across a broad spectrum including literature, earlier music, and symphonic ideas. He noted that Floros's writings focused on 'uncovered points of contact in matters of aesthetic posture, poetic sensibility, and musical character' in the piano music of both composers, as demonstrated in his books *Brahms und Bruckner: Studien zur musikalischen Exegetik* and *Johannes Brahms 'frei aber einsam': Eine Leben für eine poetische Musik*. The latter book has recently been translated and published in English as *Johannes Brahms 'Free but Alone': A Life for a Poetic Music*,<sup>4</sup> providing non-German speaking readers with access to an important German-language resource on the Schumann-Brahms scholarship. One of Floros's theses in this well-researched and insightful book is that 'the creative process with Brahms was frequently triggered by strong personal experiences, so that many of his works need to be viewed against a personal, biographic[al] background'.<sup>5</sup> This notion is central to the genesis of Brahms's Op. 8a. In the chapter 'The Relation to Schumann', Floros points out that:

For any historical and aesthetic classification of Brahms' oeuvre, a proper understanding of his relation to Schumann – not the personal relationship, which is clear enough, but the artistic one – is of crucial importance. What does Brahms owe to Schumann, and how does he differ musically from him? Research into these important questions is still in its infancy.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, in order to understand fully the artistic evolution of Brahms's works, it is necessary to approach them from the standpoint of Schumann's own output. As exemplified by the revisionist literature on Schumann of recent decades, a comparative study of Schumann's and Brahms's works, such as the present chapter, should seek to shed new light on both composers.

Apart from a handful of seminal works mentioned above in relation to Schumann's musical and aesthetic influence on Brahms, the literature in this area is few and far between. There is a surprisingly small body of analytical studies on specific Schumann compositions, compared to those

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<sup>4</sup> Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms 'Free but Alone': A Life for a Poetic Music* [Translation from German edition, 1997], trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

of Brahms. A case in point is an initial search in RILM Abstracts of Music Literature which reveals scant scholarly work on Schumann's Op. 63, yielding merely two results, compared to more than sixty results on Brahms's Op. 8 (granted, the interest in Op. 8 is augmented by the distinctive existence of the two versions). Nevertheless, the importance of Schumann's Op. 63 within its historical context is such that it warrants in-depth analysis, and neither of the two RILM abstracts related to Schumann's Op. 63 focuses on the work itself. One is a doctoral dissertation on Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17, which suggests a resemblance to Schumann's Op. 63; the other is Markus Waldrura's 'Four Romantic piano trios in D Minor compared: Mendelssohn-Schumann-Hensel-Berwald', which is an article in a volume of conference proceedings, whose scope therefore precludes in-depth analyses.

A substantial amount of work written on Brahms's Op. 8 has focused mainly on the comparison of the 1854 and 1889 versions. A smaller number of scholarly writings that concentrate on the 1854 version tend to bring other facets of historical context into discussion. None of the Anglo-American or German literature specifically refers to Brahms's modelling his Op. 8a on Schumann's Op. 63, except for an article by Michael Kube that placed Brahms's Op. 8a in the context of piano trios composed by his contemporaries and argued that Schumann was 'unmistakably his model'.<sup>7</sup> According to Kube, among the piano trios written by Brahms's contemporaries that reportedly demonstrate Schumannesque elements is Albert Dietrich's Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 9 (1855). Like Brahms's Op. 8, Dietrich's Op. 9 is his first published piano trio. As discussed in Chapter 1, since the Schumann circle of musicians was intimately connected, they undoubtedly influenced one another's artistic development and choice of compositional genres. It seems highly likely that Dietrich, who was Schumann's pupil at the time of the Schumann-Brahms meeting, and famously co-authored the F.A.E. Sonata in October 1853 with Brahms and Schumann, found a superior model in

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Kube, 'Brahms' Klaviertrio H-Dur op. 8 (1854) und sein gattungsgeschichtlicher Kontext' [Brahms's piano trio in B major, op. 8 (1854) in the context of genre history], *Internationaler Brahms-Kongress Gmunden 1997: Kongreßbericht. Series: Veröffentlichungen des Archivs der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien, No. 1*, ed. Ingrid Fuchs (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2001), pp. 31–57.

Schumann's piano trios. Written just one year after Brahms's Op. 8a, Dietrich's work could likely have been inspired by Brahms's modelling his Op. 8a on Schumann's Op. 63. Kube observed that 'the compositional dependence on [Schumann's] Trio in D minor, Op 63 is quite striking' (Die satztechnische Abhängigkeit vom Trio d-Moll op. 63 ist geradezu frappant), supporting his view with reference to the following critical reception of Dietrich's Op. 9 in 1856 from a music journal:

The work has a most pleasant appearance, and deserves the attention of all friends of noble chamber music, although it is apparently under the influence of Robert Schumann [...] but the touches are not unpleasant, as they are expressed more as spiritual kinship, rather than a deliberate imitation on the surface.<sup>8</sup>

It does not seem to be a coincidence that Dietrich, like Brahms, also chose to explore the piano trio genre around the same time – a genre that perhaps symbolised the friendships fostered in the Schumann household.

Given other evidence discussed in Chapter 1 that Brahms had studied Schumann's music intensively from late 1853 to 1854, Brahms could conceivably have chosen a work by Schumann from the same genre as a model for his Op. 8. In fact, when Brahms reached his middle period in the 1870s, he acknowledged in a letter to an acquaintance that Schumann had 'endured as my ideal'.<sup>9</sup> By the same token, however, this might also have prompted a sensitive attitude to the subject on Brahms's part. For example, according to recollections from a colleague of Clara's, when she suggested that Brahms's First Symphony (1877) bore traces of Schumann's *Manfred* Overture, Brahms allegedly responded, 'Yes, I know, of course, that I have no individuality'.<sup>10</sup>

Scholars including Sams, Floros, Daverio, and Kapp have all drawn upon another much-quoted phrase by Brahms to refer to a similarly brusque attitude on this subject, which I argue is a broad misinterpretation. According to Kalbeck, when Brahms was asked what he had learned from

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*, p. 449.

<sup>10</sup> David Brodbeck, *Brahms: Symphony No. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), p. 44.

Schumann, he was recorded to have answered: 'Nothing, apart from how to play chess'.<sup>11</sup> Rather than merely being a terse answer, I believe there is more truth to Brahms's comment than has hitherto been recognised. His response surely reflects a specific reference to an aphorism in Schumann's *Collected Writings*: 'Music resembles chess. The queen (melody) has the most power, but the king (harmony) turns the scale.'<sup>12</sup> This statement reveals Schumann's broad aesthetic idea that governs his compositional techniques, and one that can be observed in Brahms's approach to his compositions as well.

The fact that the present comparison of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a is genre-specific is important; it allows for the most relevant parallels to be drawn. Schumann's 'new manner of composing', along with the hypothesis of a *Davidsbündler* ideology set out in Chapter 1, provides a context for comparing the distinctive features and compositional techniques shared by Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a. Of the Schumann piano trios – Op. 63, Op. 80, Op. 110, and the *Fantasiestücke* in A minor for Piano Trio, Op. 88 – it is Op. 63 that bears the closest resemblance to Brahms's Op. 8a in terms of formal structure, proportions, thematic material and broader aesthetic content. Schumann's Op. 80 was written at around the same as his Op. 63, which explains the occasional references to it in the course of the analysis. However, although they undoubtedly share some stylistic similarities, their contrasting emotional content has previously been noted. The first movement of Op. 110 (1851) features a fugato in the first movement, like Op. 63, but this is a later work that falls outside the period on which the present study focuses. Similarly, Schumann's Op. 88 (1842) was written during an earlier period, and it does not conform to the sonata form structures that are central to my comparison.

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<sup>11</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, p. 157.

<sup>12</sup> Fanny Raymond Ritter, ed., trans. and annotated, *Music and Musicians: Essays and Criticisms by Robert Schumann* (London: W. Reeves, 1880), pp. 66–67.

### Schumann's 'new manner of composing' and his Op. 63

In 1845, Schumann discovered his new composing style, evidenced by his reported change of practice to working out the thematic structures in his mind before writing them down. Described in Schumann's own words:

I wrote most, almost all, of my smallest pieces while inspired, many in unbelievable haste, my First Symphony in B flat major in four days, likewise my twenty-piece [sic] Liederkreis and my *Peri* in a relatively similar short period. Not until the year 1845 and following, when I began to invent and work out everything in my head, did an entirely different manner of composition begin to develop.<sup>13</sup>

Of the post-Beethoven generation of composers that included Mendelssohn and Chopin, Schumann was by far the most vehemently criticised for his approach to large-scale works,<sup>14</sup> and his handling of sonata form has been dismissed by some twentieth-century scholars. Unfortunately, this criticism seems to have been intensified by the popular image of him as a manic-depressive personality. As stated by Michael Musgrave, 'Many clinical descriptions of the "manic" phase of the bi-polar condition imply a diminished sense of creative reality, of self-delusion – not exemplary capacity'.<sup>15</sup> Revisionist texts by Schumann scholars such as Linda Correll Roesner and Joel Lester have appeared in the past twenty years to re-evaluate some of Schumann's works, and have contrarily argued that Schumann's approach in handling large-scale forms may be considered innovative.<sup>16</sup> Daverio further considered how Schumann's sonata form in his late period inspired Brahms's works.<sup>17</sup> Schumann's 'new manner of composing' in 1845 has yet to be widely acknowledged as a significant watershed in his stylistic evolution. In light of the well-known commentary on Schumann's early period and

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<sup>13</sup> Jon Finson, 'The Sketches for the Fourth Movement of Schumann's Second Symphony, Op. 61', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 39/1 (1986), p. 149.

<sup>14</sup> Joel Lester, 'Robert Schumann and Sonata Forms', *19th-Century Music* 18/3 (1995), p. 190.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Musgrave, *The Life of Schumann* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Roesner, 'Schumann's "Parallel" Forms', pp. 265–278.

<sup>17</sup> John Daverio, 'Songs of dawn and dusk: the late music', *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perry (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), p. 279.

recent zealous efforts to revive works from the late period,<sup>18</sup> the middle period deserves sustained commentary that will put these other periods into perspective.

Schumann's description of how he worked can be seen reflected in his autograph draft of the Op. 63. It relates remarkably closely to the final version except that the slow movement is missing, which Schumann did not seem to have included in the autograph in the first place. This autograph appeared in a Sotheby's auction in 2009,<sup>19</sup> and according to the sales catalogue as well as the latest Henle edition (2012), this continuity draft has not been available to modern scholars;<sup>20</sup> other known autograph sources are either sketches or inaccessible. My own examination of the autograph manuscript, by kind permission of Simon Maguire at Sotheby's, has confirmed Maguire's view that structural proportion appears to have been an overriding concern for the composer. Contrary to the popular image to which I have already alluded – that of Schumann setting down notes on paper frantically on the spur of the moment – this manuscript shows a pre-meditated plan. The manuscript shows that he designed 'the whole layout of the music bar-by-bar, including the complete harmonic progressions and main themes, from the outset'.<sup>21</sup> This echoes Schumann's claim that he worked in a methodical way, firstly in his head, and then set it down on paper in a structured manner. A similar process of composition is also evident in the original continuity draft of Schumann's Second Symphony, Op. 61 in C major, which was written two years before his Trio Op. 63. This manuscript appeared in an earlier Sotheby's auction, and the catalogue entry, also written by Maguire, states that it demonstrates 'an exact sequence of events for a major work, bar by bar, establishing the proportions of each movement'. Again, as in the Trio Op. 63, the scheme of the

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<sup>18</sup> Laura Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), pp. 2–3.

<sup>19</sup> Simon Maguire, 'Robert Schumann. Autograph composing manuscript of the Piano Trio Op. 63 in D minor', Sotheby's, Lot 125, *Music and Continental Books and Manuscripts* (London, 8 December 2009), pp. 52–55.

<sup>20</sup> This autograph has since been acquired, and made available to the public, by the Saxon State and University Library Dresden in 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Maguire, 'Robert Schumann. Autograph composing manuscript of the Piano Trio Op. 63 in D minor', pp. 52–55.

working draft hardly changes in the final score.<sup>22</sup> Laura Tunbridge points out other compositional features that result from crucial changes in his method of composing, namely smoother transitions and a shift of focus from thematic elaboration to the development of motivic cells.<sup>23</sup>

The evidence for Schumann's new composing style, in addition to his reputation for the improvisatory quality of his early piano music, allows us to re-evaluate Schumann's middle period and his command of the large-scale work. It is this masterly integration of preconceived unity of large-scale structure with spontaneous inspiration in Schumann's Trio Op. 63 that makes the piece stand out as a model for young composers such as Brahms and Dietrich.

It is reasonable to expect that the manuscripts of Op. 8a and Op. 8b might provide important clues as to the revision process. The German literature, including that by Norbert Meurs (1983)<sup>24</sup> and Franz Zaunschirm (1988),<sup>25</sup> is particularly rich in examining such sources. While it has not been possible to retrace the ground covered by these studies directly, it is nevertheless useful to give some background based on the scholarly literature, drawing on information and descriptions provided by Michael Struck.<sup>26</sup> The autograph exists in a private collection (a microfilm is available at the *Johannes Brahms Gesamtausgabe* at the University of Kiel), while Brahms's personal copy ('*Handexemplar*') is owned by the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna. The autograph of Op. 8b is lost and only the earlier of the two copyists' manuscripts of this version exists. While the autograph of Op. 8a does not contain major revisions, the *Handexemplar* contains many pencil entries, particularly in the beginning of the first movement, which show the first traces of Op. 8b. One major conclusion to be gleaned from these observations, as Struck pointed out, is that the

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<sup>22</sup> Simon Maguire, 'Robert Schumann. Autograph manuscript of the Second Symphony Op. 61 in C major', Sotheby's, Lot 166, *Music and Continental Books and Manuscripts* (London, 1 December 2005), pp. 120–125.

<sup>23</sup> Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style*, p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> Norbert Meurs, 'Das verstellte Frühwerk. Zum H-dur Trio op. 8 von Johannes Brahms', *Musica* 37/1 (1983), pp. 34–39.

<sup>25</sup> Franz Zaunschirm, *Der frühe und der späte Brahms: Eine Fallstudie anhand der autographen Korrekturen und gedruckten Fassungen zum Trio Nr. 1 für Klavier, Violine und Violoncello opus 8* (Hamburg: Verlag der Musikalienhandlung K.D. Wagner, 1988).

<sup>26</sup> I wish to thank Dr. Struck for providing me with information on the sources of Brahms's Op. 8.

copyist's manuscript of Op. 8b was very different from the autograph or the *Handexemplar* of Op. 8a, which suggests that Brahms must have written out Op. 8b in its entirety.

### **Movement plans of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a**

Table 4 provides an overview of the two works including information such as tempo instructions, keys and metronome markings. The metronome markings of Schumann's Op. 63 are in parentheses as they are not present in the previously mentioned autograph, although the markings do appear in the latest Henle edition without parentheses or comments, presumably based on the first edition. An earlier Peters edition, on the other hand, included the metronome markings in parentheses. Both Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a employ a four-movement plan: sonata forms in the outer movements, with a Scherzo as the second movement followed by the slow movement as the third movement.

**Table 4.** Tempo instructions, metronome markings, keys, and total number of bars in Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a

| <b>Works</b>     | <b>Schumann, Op. 63 (1847)</b>                                                                               | <b>Brahms, Op. 8a (1854)</b>                                                             |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Movements</b> |                                                                                                              |                                                                                          |
| <b>I.</b>        | Mit Energie und Leidenschaft<br>(Crotchet = 104)<br>D minor<br>241 (+ 52 in repeat) = 293 bars               | Allegro con moto<br>Minim=72<br>B major<br>494 (+ 162 in repeat) = 656 bars              |
| <b>II.</b>       | Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch<br>(Dotted minim = 68)<br>F major<br>229 bars (+ 23 + 51 in repeats) = 303 bars | Scherzo – Allegro molto<br>Dotted minim = 100<br>B minor<br>541 bars (including repeats) |
| <b>III.</b>      | Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung<br>(Quaver = 88)<br>A minor<br>57 bars                                       | Adagio non troppo<br>Crotchet = 63<br>B major<br>157 bars                                |
| <b>IV.</b>       | Mit Feuer<br>(Minim = 104)<br>D major<br>437 bars                                                            | Finale – Allegro molto agitato<br>Dotted minim = 66<br>B minor<br>518 bars               |

As shown in Table 4, Schumann gives more substance to the Finale than the first movement in terms of length, which is also the case in Brahms's Op. 8a when no repeat of the exposition in the first movement is made. While Schumann's Trio journeys through the keys of D minor, F major and A minor, ending in D major, Brahms reverses the tonal macrostructure by alternating from B major to B minor, back to B major, and ending in B minor. The melodic contours and structural proportions of the outer sonata-form movements show greater similarities between Schumann's first movement and Brahms's fourth, and conversely, between Schumann's fourth movement and Brahms's first, thus it is compelling to pair the analytical comparisons as such. Both slow movements begin and end *pp una corda*, each preceded by a lively Scherzo movement; therefore, they will be compared with their direct counterparts. The plans below for each movement of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a (Figs. 1 to 8) trace the geography of the two works, outlining the main thematic materials and tonal centres, while a series of music examples illustrates excerpts from the main themes to support the descriptive commentary (Examples 1 to 8). While this commentary can be followed without the scores, they should be cross-referenced as much as possible in order to maximise the usefulness of my plans, as well as to set the specific junctures of the works within the wider context of an overall movement.

This movement-by-movement commentary of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a is followed by a comparative analysis, which aims to offer snapshots of each work in the following distinctly comparable areas: formal structures and proportions; thematic materials, including opening themes and coda themes; compositional techniques, including contrapuntal techniques (fugue, canon, imitation), and handling of transitions; and instrumental textures. Although comparing individual musical elements in isolation helps to create clarity for the purposes of this analysis, it is important to bear in mind that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts: each point of comparison should be set against the context of the entire work. As all of these compositional components are interconnected, cross-references do occur. For instance, the analysis of imitative passages is considered under both contrapuntal techniques and instrumental textures.

The notation of thematic units in Figs. 1 to 8 is represented by the combination of a number, indicating the thematic group, and a letter of the alphabet, indicating either a motif or theme within the group. The numbering of these thematic units is restarted at theme 1 with each separate movement. Fig. 1 shows that Schumann's sonata-form first movement features three thematic groups in exposition (themes 1 and 2) and development (theme 3).

**Fig. 1.** Movement plan of Schumann's Op. 63/i, *Mit Energie und Leidenschaft*

| Op. 63 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt |                  |                   |                                                                          |                                                    |                                 |                                 |                                                   |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Exposition                 |                  |                   |                                                                          | Development                                        |                                 |                                 |                                                   |
| Bar                        | 1                | 14                | 26                                                                       | 42                                                 | 47- 53 (1 <sup>st</sup> ending) | 47- 53 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ending) | 56                                                |
| Theme                      | 1a (vn)+ 1b (pf) | 1c<br>-Transition | 2 (pf)<br>-Chromatic motif ascends from E to G<br>-Canon between vn + vc | Closing theme<br>*-Thematic Combination<br>1a+1b+2 |                                 | fragments of 1b+1c              | 2(vn)<br>-Chromatic motif<br>-Canon between vn+pf |
| Key                        | D min            |                   | F maj                                                                    | F maj                                              |                                 | V of G min                      | V of B-flat maj                                   |

| Op. 63 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt (Development) |                                |                                                |            |            |                                                                 |                                                            |                                                               |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bar                                      | 66                             | 83                                             | 91         | 126        | 151                                                             | 156                                                        | 161-163                                                       |
| Theme                                    | fragments of 1c + 1a developed | 3 (vc)<br>-New theme<br>*-Thematic Combination |            | 3(vc)      | 2<br>-Canon between treble pf+ bass pf/strings<br>-Retransition | 1a (pf+vc)<br>1b (pf+vc)<br>1a retrograde (vn) b. 157, 159 | 1a<br>- Augmentation and Retrograde (vn) over <i>poco rit</i> |
| Key                                      |                                | F maj                                          | modulatory | D-flat maj |                                                                 | V of D min                                                 |                                                               |

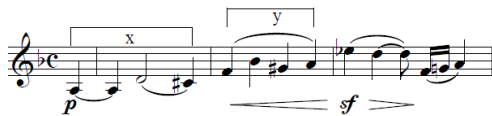
| Op. 63 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt |                      |                     |          |                         |                                                    |            |                          |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Recapitulation             |                      |                     |          | Coda                    |                                                    |            |                          |
| Bar                        | 163                  | 177                 | 190      | 194                     | 206                                                | 212        | 230-234                  |
| Theme                      | 1a (vn) + 1b (pf+vc) | 1c<br>-Retransition | 2(pf+vc) | Canon between vn+ vc/pf | Closing theme<br>*-Thematic Combination<br>1a+1b+2 |            | 3                        |
| Key                        | D min                |                     | D maj    |                         | D maj                                              | modulatory | D maj - B-flat maj D min |

The first thematic group (bars 1–25) comprises themes 1a, 1b and 1c, which are in the tonic key of D minor. It should be noted that themes 1a and 1b present the opening theme both horizontally (melodically) and vertically (contrapuntally), generating a duplex theme that Daverio termed a

‘motivic complex’.<sup>27</sup> Themes 1a and 1b are two halves of this duplex theme: while theme 1a (marked as ‘x’) occurs in the violin part in the first opening bar, followed immediately by theme 1b (marked as ‘y’) in bar 2 (Ex. 1a), the piano bass of the first two bars present themes 1b<sup>1</sup> (a variant of 1b with G natural) and 1a in reverse order (Ex. 1b).

**Ex. 1.** Thematic material in Schumann’s Op. 63/i: 1a, 1b, 1c, 2, 3

(a) Themes 1a and 1b (violin), bb. 1–3



(b) Themes 1b<sup>1</sup> and 1a (piano bass), bb. 1–3



(c) Theme 1c (piano), bb. 15–16



(d) Theme 2 (piano), bb. 27–28



(e) Theme 3 (cello), bb. 84–87 (development)



<sup>27</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, pp. 172.

This horizontal and vertical organisation of motivic materials features prominently in this movement. The second thematic group in the dominant key of F major (Ex. 1d) goes through the different voices (piano, violin and cello), and the closing theme (bar 42) combines themes 1a, 1b, and a variation of theme 2. In the development section there are frequent glimpses of fragments of themes 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2 (bars 47–76), which are interspersed among new ‘sighing’ motifs of falling thirds (bars 53–54) and falling fifths (bars 68–69) in the violin part. The third thematic group (Ex. 1e) starts a new episode within the development – drastically different from the rest of the movement in character and in tone – which is achieved by the strings playing on the bridge while the piano part is marked *ppp* with soft pedal. The development (bars 47–163) incorporates motivic material from the first and second thematic groups (e.g. the semiquaver sextuplet of Ex. 1c and transposed themes of Ex. 1d). The whole section passes through a sequence of descending chromatic harmonies until the dominant pedal is established (bar 152), and a process of disintegration begins. The recapitulation is overlapped with the development (a technique to be discussed later in relation to Schumann’s handling of transitions), as traces of the opening theme 1a in the violin appear alongside its own augmentation and retrograde (C#-D-A) in bars 162–163. In the music that follows, the first thematic group is recapitulated in D minor, the second thematic group in D major, and the closing theme combines themes 1a, 1b and 2 as in the exposition. Schumann’s choice here of tonic major over tonic minor in the secondary group reflects a Schubertian treatment, favouring a minor-major trajectory in the recapitulation. The coda presents material from the first thematic group and motifs from the development section. The second thematic group does not appear again. The third thematic group, however, appears in a quotation-like manner in D major, marked *Etwas langsamer*. The movement ends with an abrupt ‘Schneller’ section of two bars, *forte*, before the final chords in the last four bars, *a tempo* and *piano*, in D minor.

The second movement of Schumann’s Op. 63 is in Scherzo and Trio form (Fig. 2). It essentially contains one main theme grouped under 1a, 1b and 1c, while theme 1d is a direct variant of theme 1a. The Scherzo section begins with theme 1a (Ex. 2a) in an ascending chromatic melody

using a dotted rhythm that alternates between the strings and piano. Both themes 1b and 1c feature the hemiola to provide a contrast to this dotted rhythm (Ex. 2b and 2c). The Trio replaces the dotted rhythm with sustained lines comprising quavers and crotchets over 63 bars (Ex. 2d), which are arranged canonically between the three instruments. The Scherzo section returns as a written-out repeat up to the coda (bar 214), in which themes 1a and 1b are juxtaposed in the strings and piano, and theme 1b returns with its hemiola rhythm just before the end.

**Fig. 2.** Movement plan of Schumann's Op. 63/ii, *Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch*

| Op. 63 2 <sup>nd</sup> mvt<br>Scherzo |                  |   |                                     |          |                   |    |                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|----|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Bar                                   | 1                | 3 | 15                                  | 25-26:II | 25                | 38 | 54                    | 66 75:II 75-76 II |
| Theme                                 | 1a (vn+vc) →(pf) |   | 1b (pf) →(vn+vc)<br>Hemiola         |          | 1a (vn+vc) → (pf) |    | 1c (vn+vn)<br>Hemiola |                   |
| Key                                   | (V of) F maj     |   | G/C maj — V of F maj: II V of G min |          | modulatory        |    | F maj                 |                   |
|                                       |                  |   |                                     |          |                   |    | C maj - F maj         |                   |

| Op. 63 2 <sup>nd</sup> mvt<br>Trio |                                    |    | Scherzo (repeat of first section) |                  |       | Coda       |                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------|------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bar                                | 77                                 | 95 | 113                               | 122              | 141   | 214        | 226                                | 229 II                         |
| Theme                              | 2 (pf →vc→vn)<br>Non-dotted rhythm |    |                                   | 1a (vn+vc) →(pf) |       |            | 1a (vn+vc)<br>Variation of 1b (pf) | 1b (ascending)<br>Hemiola (pf) |
| Key                                | F maj                              |    |                                   | A-flat maj       | F maj | A-flat maj | F maj                              | F maj                          |

**Ex. 2.** Thematic material in Schumann's Op. 63/ii: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d

(a) Theme 1a (violin), bb. 3–5



(b) Theme 1b (piano), bb. 15–19



(c) Theme 1c (violin), bb. 38–42



(d) Theme 1d (piano), bb. 77–82



The third movement is in ternary (ABA) form, whose sections are evenly balanced in terms of their respective lengths (Fig. 3). This movement features two long thematic groups that seem to be constructed from fragmented motifs, rather than the short motifs that function as motivic cells in the first and second movements.

**Fig. 3.** Movement plan of Schumann's Op. 63/iii, *Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung*

| Op. 63 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt |                                     |         |                                      |                   |                                      |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                            | A                                   |         | B                                    |                   |                                      |
| Bar                        | 1                                   | 10      | 11 20<br>Bewegter (Quaver = 94)      | 27                | 34<br>42                             |
| Theme                      | 1a (vn)<br><i>Una corda</i><br>(pf) | 1b (vc) | 2 (vn)<br><i>Tutte corde</i><br>(pf) | 2 (vc)            | 1a (pf)<br>fragmented and transposed |
| Key                        | A min                               | C maj   | F maj                                | C maj/ V of F maj | A min—modulatory                     |

| Op. 63 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt |                                     |                                   |                       |         |                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | A                                   |                                   |                       |         |                                                                                  |
| Bar                        | 43                                  | 45                                | 51                    | 57      | <br>fermata on the last chord<br><i>attacca</i> to 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt (D major) |
| Theme                      | 1a (vn)<br><i>Una corda</i><br>(pf) | vc + pf<br>new counterpoint to 1a | 1a (pf)<br>transposed |         |                                                                                  |
| Key                        | (V of) A min                        | D min                             |                       | A major |                                                                                  |

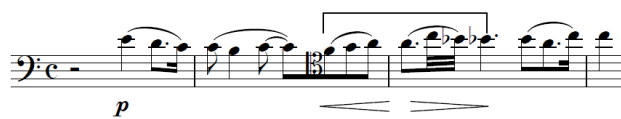
Section A begins with theme 1a in the violin (Ex. 3a), continuing in the cello as theme 1b (Ex. 3b), while a motif within theme 1b anticipates theme 2 (as shown in brackets in Ex. 3b and 3c). Section B is marked *Bewegter*, thus taking a faster tempo; it has a new song-like character in theme 2 (Ex. 3c), with its accompanying triplet chords in the piano. A variant of theme 1a (bar 34) recurs in section B as a syncopated and altered version of the opening theme. The rhapsodic nature that pervades the middle section is kept in equilibrium by the outer melancholic and contemplative sections. The return of section A brings subtle harmonic differences from the beginning: theme 1a in the piano part is in D minor (bar 51), hinting at a plagal cadence. Instead, the cadence arrives at the dominant of D minor (bar 54), and the low A (which alternates chromatically with a low B flat) sustains the bass over three bars, prior to the final chord in A major – a dominant cadential preparation for the opening D major chord in the final movement.

**Ex. 3.** Thematic material in Schumann's Op. 63/iii: 1a, 1b, 2

(a) Theme 1a (violin), bb. 1–2



(b) Theme 1b (cello), bb. 10–13



(c) Theme 2 (violin), bb. 20–23



The fourth movement is in sonata form (Fig. 4). The exposition, development and recapitulation share much of the two thematic groups, providing a strong sense of unity throughout the movement. Similarly to the first movement, Schumann initially presents the main themes in

their entirety, after which he fragments or combines them using his technique of thematic combination. For instance, the thematic materials of the second group (Ex. 4c, 4d and 4e) are combined to form a fully integrated section between the three instruments (bars 187–208). Unlike the previous movements, here the opening theme is smooth and symmetrical over eight bars (Ex. 4a); the effect of its fragmentation for the purpose of thematic combination is therefore even more pronounced. A case in point is the two quasi-fugue sections (bars 133–150, bars 229–253) within the development section. In both instances, a portion of theme 1a is presented, in F major and G major, respectively; this is followed by a one-bar fragment of theme 1a, which is used, in each case, as the basis of the quasi-fugue (see Ex. 15 and the discussion of compositional techniques). The recapitulation is almost the same length as the exposition, in contrast to the much shorter recapitulation in the first movement. The long coda section of 75 bars provides a conclusion not only for the fourth movement, but also the entire work.

**Fig. 4.** Movement plan of Schumann's Op. 63/iv, *Mit feuer*

| Op. 63 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt<br>Exposition |                 |        |                        |            |                 |               |                             |       |                                   |                   |         |                                |                   | Development |  |  |  |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--|--|--|
| Bar                                      | 1               | 17     | 29                     | 37         | 43              | II 59         | 80                          | 103   | 121                               | II 133            | 151     | 159                            | II 171            |             |  |  |  |
| Theme                                    | 1a(pf)<br>→(vn) | 1b(pf) | 1a<br>Canon<br>(pf+vn) | 1b(pf)     | 1a(pf)<br>→(vn) | 2a<br>(vc+pf) | 2b(vn)<br>→(vc)<br>→(pf+vn) | 2a    | 2c (pf)<br>→(vn)<br>Closing theme | 1a<br>Quasi-fugue | 2a (pf) | 1a<br>Fragmented<br>(vn+vc+pf) | 2a(pf)+<br>2b(vn) |             |  |  |  |
| Key                                      | D maj           | D maj  | V of F maj             | B-flat maj | D maj           | Bmin          | (F# min)-                   | A maj | modulatory                        | F maj             | A min   | C maj-B maj                    | modulatory        |             |  |  |  |

| Op. 63 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt<br>(Development) |                    |        |                           |                   | Recapitulation |                        |        |                        |        |                   |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| Bar                                         | 187                | 209    | II 225                    | 229               | 254            | II 257                 | II 273 | 285                    | 293    | II 301            |
| Theme                                       | 2b(vc) +2c (pf→vn) | 2a(pf) | 1a (vn+pf)<br>False recap | 1a<br>Quasi-fugue |                | 1a(vn+pf)<br>→(vn +vc) | 1b(pf) | 1a<br>Canon<br>(pf+vn) | 1b(pf) | 2a<br>(vc+pf)     |
| Key                                         | V of E min         | E min  | G maj                     | modulatory        | V pedal        | D maj                  | A maj  | V of C maj             | C maj  | E min--modulatory |

| Op. 63 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt<br>(Recapitulation) |                              |     | Coda<br><i>Nach und nach schneller</i>  |                          |                    |           |       |                          |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-------|--------------------------|
| Bar                                            | 323                          | 345 | II 363                                  | 371                      | 379                | 395       | 411   | 437 II                   |
| Theme                                          | 2b (vn)<br>→(vc)<br>→(vn+pf) |     | 1a fragmented<br>Canon<br>(vn+pf) +(vc) | 1a<br>fragment developed |                    | 2c(pf→vn) |       | 1a<br>fragment augmented |
| Key                                            | (B min)-D maj modulatory     |     | V/G maj –V/E min                        | V pedal                  | D maj - modulatory |           | D maj |                          |

Despite its length, a sense of urgency is achieved by the *nach und nach schneller*, and by the new ways in which themes are altered and fragmented within a short space. For example, the chain of thirds (bars 411–414) is derived from the third bar of theme 1a (see Ex. 14a), and the accentuated ascending fourth motif, A-D, in the piano bass (bar 423) parallels the opening interval of the first movement, thus giving the work a cyclical unity. These provide further evidence of the tightly-knit construction of the thematic materials, which serve as building blocks throughout the work.

**Ex. 4.** Thematic material in Schumann's Op. 63/iv: 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c

(a) Theme 1a (piano), bb. 1–8



(b) Theme 1b (piano), bb. 17–19



(c) Theme 2a (cello and piano), bb. 59–62



(d) Theme 2b (violin), bb. 81–87



(e) Theme 2c (piano), bb. 121–123



The movement plans for Brahms's Op. 8a employ the same procedure for providing commentary as used in Schumann's Op. 63 above, offering a consistent methodology for the analytical comparison that follows. The first movement of Brahms's Op. 8a is the most substantial in the work in terms of length and thematic materials (Fig. 5). It has a sprawling structure, with a fugato built into the recapitulation. The exposition with repeat occupies almost half of the movement, while the coda itself comprises 60 bars. There are three thematic groups, comprising themes 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, and 3 (Ex. 5). Theme 1a (Ex. 5a) is stated three times at the opening. The first part of theme 1a is four bars long, while the second part varies in its length. The second thematic group consists of four themes that are combined in various ways (bars 84–162) and are strongly characterised: theme 2a is recitative-like (Ex. 5c), 2b is the subject for the fugato, (Ex. 5d), 2c is a rustic *scherzando* (Ex. 5e), and 2d is dream-like and improvisatory (Ex. 5f). In the development section, theme 3 (Ex. 5g) at bar 222 combines thematically with theme 2c. Further

thematic combinations continue in a canonic manner until bar 275. The recitative-like theme 2a returns at bar 284 in B minor just before the recapitulation.

**Fig. 5.** Movement plan of Brahms's Op. 8a/i, *Allegro con moto*

| Op. 8a 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt<br>Exposition |                  |            |         |                                   |                        |        |                        |                           |                                 |                                         |
|------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|---------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Bar                                      | 1                | 63         | 84      | 98                                | 103                    | 118    | 126                    | 137                       | 148                             | 161-162 :  <br>(1 <sup>st</sup> ending) |
| Theme                                    | 1a(pf)<br>→ (vc) | 1b         | 2a (pf) | 2b (pf)<br>Recap fugue<br>subject | 2a<br>Canon<br>(vn+vc) | 2b(vc) | 2c<br>Canon<br>(pf+vn) | 2c<br>Canon<br>(vc+pf+vn) | 2d (vn) → (vc)<br>Closing theme |                                         |
| Key                                      | B maj            | modulatory | G# min  |                                   |                        |        | E maj                  |                           | G# min-----V/B maj              |                                         |

| Op. 8a 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt<br>Development |                                     |                    |                                         |                                  |                                    |                                                         |                   |                        |     |     |     |  |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--|
| Bar                                       | 161-162<br>(2 <sup>nd</sup> ending) | 163 168    169     | 181                                     | 188                              | 195                                | 201                                                     | 211               | 222                    | 233 | 242 | 262 |  |
| Theme                                     |                                     | 2a<br>Fragment     | 1a developed(pf)<br>2a canon<br>(vn+vc) | 1a fragment<br>(vn+vc) +<br>(pf) | 1a developed (pf)<br>Dotted rhythm | 3(vn)+2c(pf)<br>→ 2c (pf+vn+vc)<br>Thematic combination | 3(pf)+<br>2c (vc) | Canon<br>2c (pf+vn) +3 |     |     |     |  |
| Key                                       | G# min---modulatory                 | V of E min-- E min | B min                                   |                                  | B min -- C maj                     | E maj                                                   | G maj             | B maj--modulatory      |     |     |     |  |

| Op. 8a 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt<br>(Development) |                                      |                    |                    |                  |         |                       |                                                               |                        |     |     |  |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----|-----|--|
| Recapitulation                              |                                      |                    |                    |                  |         |                       |                                                               |                        |     |     |  |
| Bar                                         | 269                                  | 278                | 284                | 292              | 354     | 385                   | 396                                                           | 410                    | 419 | 427 |  |
| Theme                                       | 3(pf)<br>2c(vc)<br>Diminution 2c(vn) | 2a<br>(pf)+(vn+vc) | 1a(pf)<br>→ (vc)   | 2b(vc)<br>Fugato | Stretto | Canon<br>(vn+vc)+(pf) | 1a(pf+vn)<br>+1b(pf)+ 2a(vc) fragment<br>Thematic Combination | 2a (vc+pf)<br>Fragment |     |     |  |
| Key                                         | V/B maj -- V pedal                   | B min              | B maj----- V/E min |                  |         |                       | B maj -----modulatory-----V/B maj                             |                        |     |     |  |

| Op. 8a 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt<br>Coda<br><i>Schneller</i> |                            |                                           |                    |                  |     |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----|--|--|--|--|--|
| Bar                                                    | 435                        | 443                                       | 473                | 487              | 494 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Theme                                                  | 1a augmentation<br>(pf+vc) | 2a fragment (vn+vc)<br>2b diminution (pf) |                    |                  |     |  |  |  |  |  |
| Key                                                    | B maj                      | B maj                                     | B maj --modulatory | V/B maj -- B maj |     |  |  |  |  |  |

Only fragments of themes 1b and 2a are found in the recapitulation, as they are replaced by a fully-fledged fugato section (bars 354–395). The cello introduces the six-bar fugue subject at bar 354, and the *stretto* starts at bar 385. Following the fugato, a canonic section of triplets (bars 396–409) acts as a transition into a fragmented statement of theme 1a, in which fragments of theme 1b (piano) and theme 2a (cello) reappear. The theme 2a fragment is reiterated alternately by cello and piano, while modulating between bars 419 and 426. In the coda, marked *Schneller*, theme 1a is restated in augmentation and is accompanied by syncopated chords (bars 443–464).

**Ex. 5.** Thematic material in Brahms's Op. 8a/i: 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 3

(a) Theme 1a (piano), bb. 1–4



(b) Theme 1b (piano), bb. 63–65



(c) Theme 2a (piano), bb. 84–88



(d) Theme 2b (piano), bb. 98–103



(e) Theme 2c (violin, cello, and piano), bb. 126–129



(f) Theme 2d (violin and cello), bb. 148–149



(g) Theme 3 (violin), bb. 222–223



The second movement of Op. 8a is in Scherzo and Trio form (Fig. 6). The first thematic group consists of themes 1a and 1b, which are strongly rhythmic, befitting a Scherzo character (Ex. 6a and 6b). In the outer sections, the two themes are altered or fragmented in melodic or rhythmic shapes in subsequent imitative repetitions. Theme 1c is introduced in the violin (Ex. 6c) as a precursor to theme 2 (Ex. 6d), while it is combined with theme 1a (bars 125–132). The Trio section consists of theme 2 in B major, a lyrical theme over 16 bars, initially in the piano and then answered by the strings. Throughout the Trio section, the two quavers plus one crotchet (short-short-long) motif of theme 1a is present in the background as an ostinato.

**Fig. 6.** Movement plan of Brahms's Op. 8a/ii, Scherzo – *Allegro molto*

| Op. 8a 2 <sup>nd</sup> mvt<br>Scherzo |                          |        |                                                                   |       |         |       |            |         |        |                                           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|------------|---------|--------|-------------------------------------------|
| Bar                                   | 1                        | 13     | 29-32 :   29<br>(1 <sup>st</sup> ending) (2 <sup>nd</sup> ending) |       | 45      | 52    | 69         | 77      | 101    | 121 125                                   |
| Theme                                 | 1a (vc)→(pf)<br>→(vn+vc) |        |                                                                   |       | 1b (pf) |       | 1b (vn+pf) |         | 1a(vc) | 1c (vn)+1a(pf+vc)<br>Thematic combination |
| Key                                   | B min                    | F# min | V/B min                                                           | G maj | E min   | C maj | B maj      | V/B min | B min  |                                           |

| Op. 8a 2 <sup>nd</sup> mvt<br>Trio<br><i>Piu lento</i> |                                        |       |                   |       |       |                                             |              |            |        | Scherzo (repeat of first section)<br><i>Tempo primo</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Bar                                                    | 165                                    | : 197 |                   | 215   | 233   | 247-248 :   247<br>(1 <sup>st</sup> ending) |              | 260    261 | 273    | 289                                                     |
| Theme                                                  | 2 (developed from 1c)<br>(pf) →(vn+vc) |       | 2 (vn+pf)→(pf+vc) |       | 2(pf) |                                             | 1a (vc)→(pf) |            |        |                                                         |
| Key                                                    | B maj                                  |       | E maj             | B maj | B maj |                                             | B min        |            | F# min | G maj                                                   |

| Op. 8a 2 <sup>nd</sup> mvt |        |       |            |       |         |                                          |       |                                  |                        |                                 |     |     |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|------------|-------|---------|------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|-----|
|                            |        |       |            |       |         |                                          |       | Coda<br><i>Un poco piu lento</i> |                        |                                 |     |     |
| Measure                    | 304    | 312   |            | 329   | 341     | 361                                      | 380   |                                  | 422                    | 431                             | 451 | 459 |
| Theme                      | 1b(pf) |       | 1b (pf+vn) |       |         | 1c(vn)+1a(pf+vc)<br>Thematic combination |       |                                  | 1a fragment<br>(vc→vn) | 1a fragment<br><i>una corda</i> |     |     |
| Key                        | E min  | C maj |            | B maj | V/B min |                                          | B min |                                  | B maj                  |                                 |     |     |

The repeat of the Scherzo section is preceded by a 14-bar retransition from B major to B minor (bars 247–260); thereafter, it is identical to the original until two bars before the end, at which point a series of dotted minim chords in the piano leads to the coda at bar 431, marked *Un poco più lento*. The coda is 29 bars long with a sparse texture; the indication *una corda* leads to *pianissimo possibile* and *una corda* on the final chord, thus linking seamlessly to the third movement in both dynamic and character.

**Ex. 6.** Thematic material of Brahms's Op. 8a/ii: 1a, 1b, 1c, 2

(a) Theme 1a (cello), bb. 1–4



(b) Theme 1b (piano), bb. 53–56



(c) Theme 1c (violin), bb. 125–132



(d) Theme 2 (piano), bb. 165–171



The third movement is in ABA form plus an Allegro section and coda (hence, ABA Allegro form)<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 7). The Adagio section (bars 1–32) introduces a dialogue between theme 1a in the piano (Ex. 7a) and theme 1b in the strings (Ex. 7b), followed by a synthesis of the dialogue (bars 25–32). A song-like theme 2 is nine bars long and appears only in the piano part, while the strings accompany with a recurring three-note *pizzicato* motif. A variation of themes 1a and 1b introduces the return of the opening, and triplet figurations appear in the piano part where it was previously silent (bars 58–81). The theme in the Allegro (*doppio movimento*) section is essentially a diminution of theme 1b owing to the doubled pace. This section develops extensively material based on fragments of themes 1b and 2, along with the latter theme's three-note accompanying motif. While

<sup>28</sup> Elaine Sisman, 'Brahms's slow movements: reinventing the "closed" forms', *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George Bozarth (New York: Oxford UP, 1990), p.82.

the Allegro section is longer than the others at 66 bars, it is still proportionately balanced with the rest of the movement, particularly since it is played at a doubled pace. The short coda repeats the final bars of the opening Adagio.

**Fig. 7.** Movement plan of Brahms's Op. 8a/iii, *Adagio non troppo*

| Op. 8a 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt |                                       |       |                   |        |             |            |              |                             |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|--------|-------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
|                            | A                                     | B     | A                 |        |             |            |              |                             |
| Bar                        | 1                                     | ll 33 | ll 58             | 70     | 73          | 80         | ll 82        | 95                          |
| Theme                      | 1a(pf)→1b (vn+vc)<br><i>Una corda</i> | 2     | 1a(pf)→1b (vn+vc) |        |             |            |              | 1b fragmented and developed |
| Key                        | B maj                                 | E maj | B maj             | Bb min | B maj/E maj | V of B maj | B maj– C maj | —modulatory                 |

| Op. 8a 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt |         |                        |     |                  |       |
|----------------------------|---------|------------------------|-----|------------------|-------|
|                            |         |                        |     | Coda             |       |
| Bar                        | 124     | 133                    | 139 | ll 149           | 157ll |
| Theme                      |         | 2 fragment<br>(pf +vn) |     | 1a<br>(pf+vn+vc) |       |
| Key                        | V pedal | Bmaj                   |     |                  |       |

**Ex. 7.** Thematic material of Brahms's Op. 8a/iii: 1a, 1b, 2

(a) Theme 1a (piano), bb. 1–4



(b) Theme 1b (violin and cello), bb. 4–7



(c) Theme 2 (piano), bb. 33–36



The fourth movement of Brahms's Op. 8a is in sonata form (Fig. 8). Like the first movement, it comprises a relatively large number of themes that can be divided into three groups: themes 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, and 3b. The opening group comprises themes 1a and 1b (bars 1–17). While theme 1a (Ex. 8a) features a pulsating rhythmic motif with a dotted rhythm that recurs throughout the movement, a contrast is provided by theme 1b (Ex. 8b), a sustained, lyrical motif. The transitional material of theme 1c (Ex. 8c) evidences a cyclical connection with the second theme in the first movement (see Ex. 5c); they both contain a stepwise descending motif that is reinforced through repetition. Theme 1c also serves as the link and accompanying figuration to Theme 2a in F sharp major (Ex. 8d).

**Fig. 8.** Movement plan of Brahms's Op. 8a/iv, Finale – *Allegro molto agitato*

| Op. 8a 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt<br>Exposition |         |        |                   |    |                                 |                        |          |                                  |         |                     |                    |        |                         |  |
|------------------------------------------|---------|--------|-------------------|----|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|---------|---------------------|--------------------|--------|-------------------------|--|
| Bar                                      | 1       | 9      | 38                | 46 | 56                              | 72                     | 101      | 104                              | 106     | 130                 | 146                | 152    | 176                     |  |
| Theme                                    | 1a(vc)  | 1b(vc) |                   |    | 1b motif<br>(vn+vc) →<br>1a(pf) | 1c motif<br>(pf+vc+vn) |          | 2a(vc)+<br>1c motif<br>developed |         | 1a (vn)<br>fragment | 2a(vc)<br>fragment | 2a(vn) | 2b(vn)<br>Closing theme |  |
| Key                                      | B min — |        | G# min—modulatory |    |                                 | C# maj                 | V/F# maj | F# maj                           | V pedal | V/E maj             | V/F# maj—F#maj     |        |                         |  |

| Op. 8a 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt<br>Development<br><i>Un poco più lento</i> |           |                        |  |         |        |         |        |                                                      |                        |         |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|--|---------|--------|---------|--------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|--|
| Bar                                                                   | 195       | 207                    |  | 235     | 247    | 262     | 286    | 301                                                  | 322                    | 347     |  |
| Theme                                                                 | 1a(vn+vc) | 1a develop             |  | 3a (vn) | 3b(pf) | 3a(vn)  | 3b(vc) | 1a(vn)+3b(vc)<br>False recap<br>Thematic combination | 2a<br>Canon<br>(vn+vc) |         |  |
| Key                                                                   | B min     | B maj/min---modulatory |  | V/D maj | Eb maj | V/D maj | D min  | D min                                                | Eb maj                 | V pedal |  |

| Op. 8a 4 <sup>th</sup> mvt<br>Recapitulation |           |           |                            |                                 |                        |            |                         |               |       | Coda<br><i>Schneller</i> |  |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------|--------------------------|--|
| Bar                                          | 356       | 364       | 381                        | 400                             | 416                    | 424    426 | 448                     | 465           | 491   | 518                      |  |
| Theme                                        | 1a(vc+vn) | 1b(vn+vc) |                            | 1b motif<br>(vn+vc) →<br>1a(pf) | 1c motif<br>(pf+vc+vn) | 2a(pf)     | 2b(vn)<br>Closing theme | 1a (pf+vn+vc) |       |                          |  |
| Key                                          | B min     |           | G# min-----modulatory----- | C# maj                          |                        | B maj      | B maj                   | B min         | B min |                          |  |

Despite the sheer number of new thematic ideas, it is the same motif of theme 1a that marks the beginning of the exposition, development and recapitulation, thus emphasising the central character of *molto agitato* throughout the movement. The development section begins in a slower tempo (*un poco più lento*), where themes 3a and 3b (Ex. 8f and 8g) are introduced. The false recapitulation (bar 301) presents themes 1a and 1b in D minor, followed closely by theme 2a as a duet between violin and cello in E flat major. Over the next 22 bars, fragments of themes 1a, 1b, 2a, and 3b are alternately juxtaposed in a process of build up, culminating in a climactic recapitulation (bar 356). It is worth noting that theme 2a is not prepared by a smooth linkage here, and the expressive marking *f espress. e sempre agitato* is different from the other instances of theme 2a where it is played mostly *piano* or *pianissimo* and *dolce* or *espressivo*. After an extensive coda section (bar 465–490), the movement finishes with a *Schneller* section characterised by strongly accented syncopations.

**Ex. 8.** Thematic material of Brahms's Op. 8a/iv: 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b

(a) Theme 1a (cello), bb. 1–4



(b) Theme 1b (cello), bb. 9–16



(c) Theme 1c (piano, cello and violin), bb. 72–76



(d) Theme 2a (cello), bb. 104–116



(e) Theme 2b (violin), bb. 177–180



(f) Theme 3a (violin), bb. 235–238



(g) Theme 3b (piano), bb. 247–252



## Comparative analysis of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a

### Formal structure and proportions

My comparison of the sonata-form movements is informed by James Webster's systematic analysis of Brahms's later sonata forms,<sup>29</sup> as well as the work of Joel Lester<sup>30</sup> and Linda Correll Roesner<sup>31</sup> on Schumann's sonata forms. According to Charles Rosen, there is no example of sonata form after Beethoven that is representative of a developing musical language, but only that of the 'laziness or despair' of the individual composer.<sup>32</sup> Although this comment might tell us more about Rosen than about sonata form, such polemical views expressed by an influential musician are indicative of a wider slowness in accepting or understanding innovation in sonata form. Sonata forms indeed evolved into a highly individual language in the nineteenth century. Schumann's work was shaped by a clearly-defined formal structure that set a new standard for the genre. Therefore, a comparison of the proportions of the sections of the sonata-form movements of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a is revealing in terms of the extent to which Brahms modelled his Op. 8a on Schumann's Op. 63.

Table 5 shows the number of bars, proportions, and percentages within each section of the outer movements of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a. The percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number and as such, the calculations do not always add up to 100 percent. The only sonata-form movement in Brahms's Op. 8b is the first movement, whose proportions are analysed for further comparison with Op. 8a.

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<sup>29</sup> James Webster, 'The general and the particular in Brahms's later sonata forms', *Brahms Studies: Analytical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. George Bozarth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 49–78.

<sup>30</sup> Lester, 'Robert Schumann and Sonata Forms', pp. 189–210.

<sup>31</sup> Roesner, 'Schumann's "Parallel" Forms', pp. 265–278.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), p. 366.

**Table 5.** Proportions in the sonata-form movements of Schumann's Op. 63, Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b

|                             | <b>Schumann's Op. 63/i</b>       | <b>With repeat</b> | <b>Without repeat</b> | <b>Brahms's Op. 8a/iv</b> |     |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| <b>Exposition</b>           | bb. 1 – 46 (98 bars with repeat) | 33%                | 19%                   | bb. 1 – 194 (194 bars)    | 37% |
| <b>Development</b>          | bb. 47 – 163 (117 bars)          | 40%                | 49%                   | bb. 195 -355 (161 bars)   | 31% |
| <b>Recapitulation</b>       | bb. 164 – 211 (48 bars)          | 16%                | 20%                   | bb. 356 – 490 (135 bars)  | 26% |
| <b>Coda</b>                 | bb. 212 – 241 (30 bars)          | 10%                | 12%                   | bb. 491 – 518 (28 bars)   | 5%  |
| <b>Total number of bars</b> | 241 bars (293 bars with repeat)  |                    |                       | 518 bars                  |     |

|                             | <b>Brahms's Op. 8a/i</b>            | <b>With repeat</b> | <b>Without repeat</b> | <b>Schumann's Op. 63/iv</b> |     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| <b>Exposition</b>           | bb. 1 – 162 ( 324 bars with repeat) | 49%                | 33%                   | bb. 1 – 132 (132 bars)      | 30% |
| <b>Development</b>          | bb. 163 – 291 (129 bars)            | 20%                | 26%                   | bb. 133 – 256 (124 bars)    | 28% |
| <b>Recapitulation</b>       | bb. 292 -434 (143 bars)             | 22%                | 29%                   | bb.257 – 362 (106 bars)     | 24% |
| <b>Coda</b>                 | bb. 435 – 494 (60 bars)             | 9%                 | 12%                   | bb. 363 – 437 (75 bars)     | 17% |
| <b>Total number of bars</b> | 494 bars (656 bars with repeat)     |                    |                       | 437 bars                    |     |

|                             | <b>Brahms's Op. 8b/i</b>           | <b>With repeat</b> | <b>Without repeat</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Exposition</b>           | bb. 1 – 114 (231 bars with repeat) | 57%                | 39%                   |
| <b>Development</b>          | bb. 115 – 189 (75 bars)            | 18%                | 26%                   |
| <b>Recapitulation</b>       | bb. 190 – 289 (100 bars)           | 25%                | 35%                   |
| <b>Total number of bars</b> | 289 bars (406 bars with repeat)    |                    |                       |

A comparison of Schumann's Op. 63/i (without repeat) and Brahms's Op. 8a/iv shows that the combined exposition and development comprises 68% of the movement in each case. Even taking into account the repeat of the exposition of Schumann's Op. 63/i, which increases this figure to 73% of the overall movement, the proportions are still comparable. Schumann's recapitulation

and coda comprise 26% (with repeat) of the movement, with the recapitulation 50 bars shorter than the exposition; Brahms's recapitulation and coda add up to 31%, and the recapitulation is 59 bars shorter than the exposition. Similarly, in both Schumann's Op. 63/iv and Brahms's Op. 8a/i (without repeat), the ratio of exposition and development to recapitulation and coda is close to 3 to 2; in Schumann's Op. 63/iv the exposition and development make up 58% of the movement, while in Brahms's Op. 8a/i, the corresponding sections make up 59%.

The repeats in the first movements of Op. 63 and Op. 8a have a significant impact on the proportions of the sections and movements. Repetition of the exposition remains the convention of sonata form in both cases, yet modern performers generally take more liberties in their observation of these repeats in works from the nineteenth century than in those of the eighteenth. It is an aesthetic (and sometimes practical) decision. Analysis of the proportions of the movements should help the performer to decide for themselves whether to play these repeats or not. In Schumann's Op. 63/i, the exposition seems short (just 19% of the movement) without repeat. More importantly, the difference between the first and second time bars in the exposition makes it musically convincing to play the repeat. In the case of Brahms's Op. 8a, conversely, it is debatable whether Brahms intended the repeats to be played, as the exposition with repeat would occupy 49% of the movement. Without repeat, this percentage drops to a more reasonable 33%. This issue is further illuminated through a comparison with Brahms's Op. 8b/i: the exposition would comprise 39% of the movement without repeat, or 57% with repeat. Although Op. 8b/i is cut by 250 bars, the exposition is proportionally greater with repeat than in Op. 8a/i. Without repeat, however, the recapitulation is almost equal in length to the exposition. The advantage of the first movement of Op. 8b over Op. 8a is that the movement does not give the impression of lengthiness with or without repeat. In my opinion, the first movement of Op. 8a would seem proportionally better balanced between the sections were it played without repeat, and more closely aligns itself with the model of Schumann. Brahms's fourth movement, meanwhile, is reworked into an altogether different form in Op. 8b, which uses a rondo instead of sonata form.

## Thematic materials: Opening themes

The opening themes in each movement of both Schumann's and Brahms's Trios provide the basis for this comparative analysis. While Schumann opens with an unsettling theme in D minor in Op. 63/i and turns to an optimistic and lyrical theme in D major in the finale, Brahms's Op. 8 (both versions) reverses the process, beginning with a lyrical theme in B major and ending with agitation in B minor. The thematic parallels between the outer movements of Op. 63 and Op. 8 can be identified as follows: short, chromatic motifs in the opening bars of Op. 63/i and Op. 8a/iv contrast with long, melodic phrases in Op. 63/iv and Op. 8a/i. In Schumann's work, the first two bars of Op. 63/i comprise two groups of chromatic motifs (see Ex. 1a and 1b) arranged as a 'motivic complex', as mentioned, in which the two components are juxtaposed horizontally and vertically.<sup>33</sup> In Brahms's Op. 8a/iv, the opening motifs are also chromatic: G-F# and E#-F#. Both examples are accompanied by a succession of broken chord triplets in the middle-low register of the piano that outline the motifs (Ex. 9a and 9b), contributing to an underlying agitation.

### Ex. 9. Opening themes of Schumann's Op. 63/i and Brahms's Op. 8a/iv

#### (a) Schumann's Op. 63/i, bb. 1–3

Mit Energie und Leidenschaft

Mit Energie und Leidenschaft

<sup>33</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, p. 172.



(b) Brahms's Op. 8a/iv, bb. 1–4

Allegro molto agitato

*p mezzo voce*  
Allegro molto agitato

*pp molto leggero*  
col Ped.

The main themes in the two Scherzos feature strong rhythmic elements in triple time and imitative dialogues between strings and piano. It is important to note that this compositional procedure itself has precedents in the imitative Scherzo movements of Schubert's Piano Trios D. 898 and D. 929. In Op. 63/ii, the mainly chromatic motif (marked as 'x') at the beginning of the Scherzo is imbued with an energetic dotted rhythm (Ex. 10a). A variation of this chromatic motif is then used in the Trio section, where the rhythmic energy gives way to smooth, even crotchets, and lively dialogues become canonic imitations, creating a placid effect that contrasts with the Scherzo section (see Ex. 2d, p.69). The character of Brahms's Scherzo, on the other hand, is achieved by light staccato notes over a rhythmically distinctive theme (Ex. 10b). In the Trio section, Brahms, unlike Schumann, introduces a theme in the piano part that has only been hinted at within the Scherzo (bars 125–132; Ex. 6c, p. 78). In this case, the unifying elements that connect the Scherzo and Trio in Brahms's work are less pronounced than those in Schumann's.

**Ex. 10.** Opening themes of Schumann's Op. 63/ii and Brahms's Op. 8a/ii

(a) Schumann's Op. 63/ii, bb. 3–7



(b) Brahms's Op. 8a/ii, bb. 1–7



The parallel in character between Op. 63 and Op. 8a continues in the slow movements, both of which begin and end *pp* with *una corda* pedal in common time. Both movements open with sustained bass and treble lines in the piano part that move in scalar contrary motion (Ex. 11).

**Ex. 11.** Opening bars in the piano parts of Schumann's Op. 63/iii and Brahms's Op. 8a/iii

(a) Schumann's Op. 63/iii, bb. 1–2



(b) Brahms's Op. 8a/iii, bb. 1–4



The first subjects of Op. 63/iv and Op. 8a/i both feature a long, lyrical melody over an oscillating quaver accompaniment in the piano (Ex. 12). As mentioned, the melodic and rhythmic contours in Schumann's D major theme and Brahms's B major theme are comparable in construction and character. The first part of Schumann's melodic theme is presented by the piano over eight bars (bars 1–8), which is answered by the violin and cello in the next eight bars (bars 9–16). Brahms's Op. 8a also begins with the main theme in the piano part. The similarities between the two themes are rendered more significant given the minim pulse and comparable quaver movement. Brahms's opening theme is treated in a more flexible and extensive way and the opening bars have a different harmonic trajectory: Schumann ends on the dominant at bar 8, while Brahms maintains a tonic pedal. Nevertheless, Brahms's main melodic elements are essentially structured as eight bars plus eight bars (bars 1–8 and 21–28), as with Schumann's.

**Ex. 12.** Opening themes in the piano parts of Schumann's Op. 63/iv and Brahms's Op. 8a/i

(a) Schumann's Op. 63/iv, bb. 1–8

Mit Feuer  
mf  
sf

(b) Brahms's Op. 8a/i, bb. 1–12

Allegro con moto ♩ = 72  
p  
espressivo, legato  
marc.

## Coda Themes

A distinctive feature is shared by all of the codas in the outer sonata-form movements of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a, namely, the instruction 'Schneller' coupled with the use of syncopation. As shown in the movement plans, 'Schneller' appears in the codas of Brahms's Op. 8a/i (bar 435 to the end) and Op. 8a/iv (bar 491 to the end); in Schumann's Trio, the corresponding sections are marked 'Schneller' in Op. 63/i (bar 243 to the end), and 'nach und nach Schneller' in Op. 63/iv (bar 364 to the end). The 'Schneller' parallel is rendered more pronounced because of the syncopations. This suggests that Brahms's Op. 8a shared Schumann's aesthetic of finishing his sonata-form movements in a fast-paced and rhythmic manner, whereas this is not the case in Brahms's Op. 8b. The contrasts between the two versions of Op. 8 are considerable in this respect, not least because Brahms eliminated both the 'Schneller' and syncopations in the later version. Brahms's Op. 8b/i also includes the markings *tranquillo*, *sempre sostenuto* and *in tempo* – all of which suggest a slower rather than faster tempo – while no tempo change is indicated in the coda of Op. 8b/iv.

In keeping with my previous discussions of structural proportions and opening themes, the comparison of coda themes continues to pair the first movement of one work with the last of the other. The syncopations in Schumann's Op. 63/i and Brahms's Op. 8a/iv (Ex. 13) are characterised by a quick succession of accented strings on the offbeats against chords on the downbeats in the piano. In both cases, the syncopations begin immediately at the instruction 'Schneller'.

**Ex. 13.** Coda themes with syncopations in Schumann's Op. 63/i and Brahms's Op. 8a/iv

(a) Schumann's Op. 63/i, bb. 236–237

The musical score for Schumann's Op. 63/i, measures 236–237, is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is the treble clef, and the bottom staff is the bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo marking 'Schneller' is written above the first measure of the top staff. The bottom staff features a series of chords, with the first measure marked 'Schneller' and the last measure marked 'ritard.'. The melody in the top staff consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with accents on the offbeats. The piano accompaniment in the bottom staff consists of chords, with the first measure marked 'Schneller' and the last measure marked 'ritard.'.

(b) Brahms's Op. 8a/iv, bb. 491–495



Conversely, in Op. 63/iv and Op. 8a/i (Ex. 14), the syncopated chords between the strings and the piano begin at *fortissimo* after a period of build-up within the coda, and both 'Schneller' sections feature fragments of the opening themes in augmentation. The piano chords are on the beat against the strings in syncopation in Schumann's work (Ex. 14a), and the chain of thirds is derived from bar 3 of the opening theme with the notes F#-D-B-G (see Ex. 4a). Similarly in Brahms's work, the piano chords are syncopated while the bass (cello and piano) incorporates the opening theme. In these two major-key sonata-form movements, each composer also aimed to maximise the sonorities through full chords and low octaves in the piano, the use of high register in the violin, and *fortissimo* dynamics with many accent markings.

**Ex. 14.** Coda themes with syncopations in Schumann's Op. 63/iv and Brahms's Op. 8a/i

(a) Schumann's Op. 63/iv, bb. 411–414



(b) Brahms's Op. 8a/i, bb. 443–448



**Compositional techniques: fugue, canon, imitation**

A period of intensive study of the art of contrapuntal composition coincided with Schumann's 'new manner of composing' of 1845, resulting in works such as *Studien für den Pedal-Flugel*, Op. 56; *Sechs Fugen über den namen BACH*, Op. 60; and *Vier Fugen*, Op. 72. Schumann's new style and his contrapuntal thinking during this middle period clearly had an influence on early Brahms. In 1856, Brahms similarly initiated a period of study of counterpoint, with Joachim. Daverio described some of Brahms's contrapuntal works from the mid-1850s as gestures of homage to Schumann, among them his Fugue in A flat minor for organ, WoO 8, whose subject is generally agreed by scholars to be reminiscent of Schumann's *Manfred* Overture (1848) and Fugue no. 4 on "B-A-C-H" (1845).<sup>34</sup> Clearly, J. S. Bach was a common source of inspiration for both composers. What seems so far to have escaped the attention of Schumann and Brahms scholars is that the fugue subject (from the second subject) in the first movement of Op. 8a may also have been derived from Schumann's *Manfred* Overture, and the significance of this allusion is considered in Chapter 3.<sup>35</sup> In this context, one is compelled to view Brahms's often-criticised fugue in Op.8a from an entirely different perspective. Susan Wollenberg has observed that its subject suggests a kinship with Bach's E minor and B minor fugues from his 48 Preludes and Fugues, Book I, and that Bach's organ fugue

<sup>34</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, pp. 118–119.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 119–120.

tradition is also pertinent.<sup>36</sup> The fugue was harshly criticised by the critic Adolf Schubring in his review of Op. 8a, in which he called the subject 'darkly brooding', and dismissed it as comprising 'bizarre eccentricities'.<sup>37</sup> Possibly because of this negative review on the part of an influential critic, this fugal section, along with Op. 8a itself, has generally been trivialised in terms of its reception history.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the development of the genre of the piano trio saw the emancipation of the cello part by the mid-nineteenth century, and Schumann took advantage of the distinct voice of each instrument to write contrapuntally throughout his Op. 63. The 'motivic complex' in the first two bars of Op. 63/i has been described as representative of a 'homophonic-melodic form' that Schumann developed in the later 1840s. In his in-depth analysis of this 'motivic complex', Daverio explained Schumann's innovative way of 'joining ideas with ideas in vertical combination', and proposed that Brahms was likely to have used Op. 63/i as a model for the third movement of his String Quartet in C minor, Op. 51, No. 1.<sup>38</sup> While Schumann expanded the idea of thematic combination in Op. 63/iv in two quasi-fugal sections in the development section (Ex. 15a) and false recapitulation (Ex. 15b), Brahms's six-bar fugue subject in his Op. 8a/i is derived from the second subject which develops into an extensive fugal section in the recapitulation (bars 354–395) (Ex. 16). In both Op. 63/iv and Op. 8a/i, the use of the 'motivic complex' provides fertile ground for both composers to develop the sonata-form movements using contrapuntal techniques. The similarity here between Op. 63/iv and Op. 8a/i is even more pronounced considering that Brahms eventually discarded this entire fugal section in his Op. 8b.

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<sup>36</sup> I wish to thank Prof. Susan Wollenberg for drawing these points to my attention.

<sup>37</sup> Adolf Schubring, 'Five Early Works by Brahms', *Brahms and His World*, ed. and trans. Walter Frisch (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), pp. 116–117.

<sup>38</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, pp. 168–174.

**Ex. 15.**

(a) Quasi-fugue in the development section of Schumann's Op. 63/iv, bb. 133–139

(b) Quasi-fugue in the false recapitulation of Schumann's Op. 63/iv, bb. 225–232

**Ex. 16.** Fugal section in the recapitulation of Brahms's Op. 8a/i, bb. 354ff.

As evidenced in the Scherzo movements, Schumann and Brahms both used canons and imitative dialogues between the strings and piano to convey a playful, scherzando quality. In both instances, the Scherzo sections bring the timbres of strings and piano into sharp contrast through imitation, while this contrast is softened in the Trio sections. In Op. 63/ii, the Scherzo challenges the pianist to imitate the strings in its brisk, rapid succession of dotted rhythms; Brahms uses the same technique in the context of a series of light staccato crotchets with a double-quaver anacrusis (see Ex. 10). By contrast, the Trio sections emphasise the capacity of each instrument to produce a smooth cantabile.

### Handling of transitions

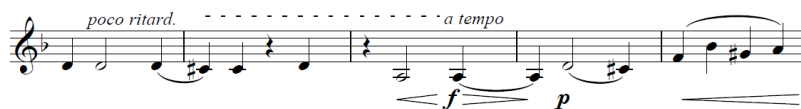
Brahms's practice of overlapping the development and recapitulation in sonata form, along with his technique of fragmenting thematic material, augmenting note values and delaying tonal return, have been noted by scholars including Peter Smith, John Daverio and Walter Frisch.<sup>39</sup> In comparing this practice with Schumann's, Daverio cited examples of 'recapitulatory overlaps' in Schumann's works, such as the opening movement of the Violin Sonata in A minor, Op. 105, to

<sup>39</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, pp. 162–165.

suggest that it served as a template for the recapitulation in the first movement of Brahms's C minor String Quartet Op. 51, No. 1.<sup>40</sup> My examinations of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a confirm the use of the abovementioned retransitional techniques through thematic fragmentation and augmentation in these two works as well. However, it also reveals that these techniques are not limited to the onset of the recapitulation, but more broadly coincide with transitional material in general. In the case of Schumann's Op. 63/i, the development and recapitulation do overlap: the opening theme's A-D-C# motif is augmented and arranged as a palindrome as C#-D-A/A-D-C# (bars 162–164) (Ex. 17a). In this example, the augmentation is further emphasised by the *poco ritardando* stretched out over three bars (as with the corresponding point in his Violin Sonata Op. 105, marked *etwas zurückhaltend*), where the effect of a delayed recapitulation is reinforced by the lengthened note A. A similar example of an augmented motif, F-E-F-A (bars 51–52), occurs in the transition between the first time bar and the repeat of the exposition in Op. 63/i (Ex. 17b).

**Ex. 17.** Schumann's handling of transitions

a) Op. 63/i, bb. 161–165 (violin)



b) Op. 63/i, bb. 49–53 (violin)

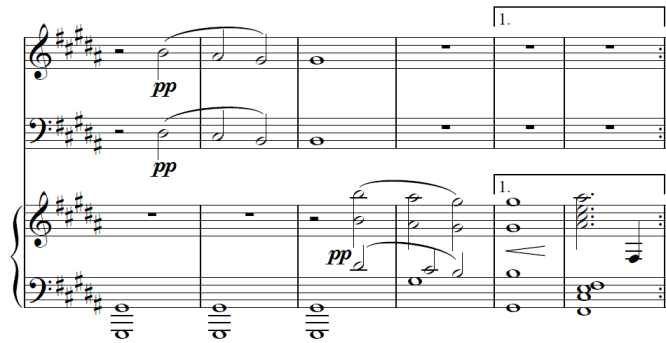


In Brahms's Op. 8a/i, the first part of the motif of the second subject B-A#-G# is augmented at the transition just before the first time bar of the exposition (bars 157–162) (Ex. 18a). Brahms employs a similar technique to Schumann (although not as sophisticated as a tonal transition), which is almost a palindrome: B-A#-G#-G#-A#-(F#)-B. Another example in Brahms's work occurs in a transitional passage in the Scherzo, where part of the opening theme (D-C#-B-A#-B) is augmented and lengthened with rests in between each note (bars 113–121) (Ex. 18b).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

**Ex. 18.** Brahms's handling of transitions

(a) Op. 8a/i, bb. 157–162



(b) Op. 8a/ii, bb. 113–121



The evolution of instrumental balance in the piano trio genre, discussed in Chapter 1, provides a context for explaining the use of complex contrapuntal techniques in Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a. Since equality among the instruments became the norm by the mid-nineteenth century, instrumental textures in both works stress the individual voice of each instrument while providing a clear contrast between foreground and background. Where the 'motivic complex' is concerned, the textures are mosaic-like as the motifs shift from one instrument to another, becoming altered in terms of instrumental colour and timbre in the process. Both composers utilised four distinct voices: violin, cello, and upper register and lower register of the piano. The two voices of the piano convey timbral and dynamic differences that would be immediately apparent on a historical instrument, such as a Graf piano which Schumann owned in the 1840s.

The piano has a more dominant role in Brahms's Op. 8a in the sense that there are solo piano passages in the first and third movements, whereas Schumann's Op. 63 features hardly any solo passages for any of the instruments. Furthermore, the combination of violin and cello seems to occur more frequently in Brahms's Op. 8a as a means of entering into dialogue with the piano.

Schumann, on the other hand, treats the violin and cello more independently, except in the Scherzo movement where imitation between strings and piano is a principal feature. In Chapter 3, I address performing issues associated with instrumental textures, such as dynamics, alongside a discussion of allusions, in order to explore commonalities between the performing practices of Schumann's and Brahms's works. The role of the pianist within the piano trio, in particular, is discussed in greater depth from the performer's perspective.

Sharing comparable technical, aesthetic and autobiographical significance, Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a mark a turning point in the development of both composers. It is noteworthy that they each actively incorporated these new elements of the piano trio genre, further consolidating its characteristics at a time when works in the genre were increasingly being written for the concert stage. Both of their works are structurally innovative, although Schumann managed greater coherence within each movement by not overloading them with thematic materials. The successful incorporation of contrapuntal techniques within the sonata-form movements in Schumann's Op. 63 may be attributed to his rigorous studies of counterpoint prior to writing the Trio. On the other hand, Brahms's often-criticised fugato was likely to have resulted in his resolve to study counterpoint intensively, which he undertook in the following year. While a comparison of the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8 provides fertile ground for study in terms of Brahms's own compositional techniques and aesthetics, the comparison of Brahms's Op. 8a with Schumann's Op. 63 illuminates specific aspects of Op. 8a that impact upon its interpretation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PERFORMER'S PERSPECTIVE: ESTABLISHING A MODERN PERFORMING TRADITION

#### FOR BRAHMS'S OP. 8a

One of the most important piano pedagogues of the twentieth century, Heinrich Neuhaus, has stated that 'performers do not analyse music, or dismember it; they re-create it in its organic unity'.<sup>1</sup> Neuhaus also criticised musicologists whose works are 'permeated with "scholarliness", "analysis" and an accurate description of the object of that analysis which in most cases envelop the reader in unrelieved boredom', adding that one 'cannot talk about art in a language that is too inartistic'.<sup>2</sup> Such resistance towards 'scholarliness' is still evident among certain types of performers today, and, in my experience, even among audiences. Perhaps in reaction to such views on the traditional separation between musicologists and performers, scholars such as Nicholas Cook propose a 'cross-disciplinary exercise – the attempt to forge a relationship between two fundamentally different activities'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Joel Lester recommends 'more vibrant interaction between analysis and performance – an interaction stressing the ways in which analysis can be enhanced by explicitly taking notes of performances, indeed by accounting for them as part of the analytical premise'.<sup>4</sup> A practice-based research methodology such as that adopted in my thesis offers an opportunity for the performer to take the initiative to 'forge a relationship', as Cook proposes. The clear advantage of performer-led (and performer-focused) research is that performers are more likely to engage in research enquiries that are raised by their peers, while their ultimate findings should have implications for both performers and musicologists.

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1993), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Cook, 'Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis', *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (New York: Oxford UP, 2001), p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> Joel Lester, 'Performance and analysis: interaction and interpretation', *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), p. 199.

Taking a broader perspective, Robin Nelson, in his seminal *Practice as Research in the Arts*, articulates the unique challenges faced by the ‘practitioner-researcher’ common across the artistic disciplines due to what he describes as the ‘historical divide between theory and practice in the Western intellectual tradition’.<sup>5</sup> Nelson helpfully unravels the misunderstandings about practice-based research (or what he calls ‘Practice as Research’) in the arts that are prevalent among both academic researchers and practitioners, while proposing methodologies and activities that set the practitioner-researcher apart from either group.<sup>6</sup> In particular, his chapter ‘From Practitioner to Practitioner-Researcher’<sup>7</sup> outlines a summary of new approaches to be adopted both institutionally and by the prospective practitioner-researcher, including outputs that are artistic products with durable records (DVD, CD, video), and documentation of the whole creative process to capture moments of insight. I have yet to encounter the implementation of such practical suggestions within parallel literature in musicological research.

I have adopted a multi-faceted approach to my own practice as research. In conjunction with the findings of the previous two chapters obtained via musicological means, I further incorporate insights from my own practice as a performer, and formulate performance guidelines with the practical aim of introducing a new performing tradition for Brahms’s Op. 8a. Scholarship on performing practices for the music of Schumann and Brahms is briefly considered through the lens of historical performances within the Schumann-Brahms circle and modern recordings.

While the subject of performing practices forms part of the discussion in relation to modern performances, the present study does not seek to recreate a ‘period performance’, involving the use of instruments of the period. Neither does it adopt any position on authenticity and historically informed performance (also known as HIP). As Lewis Lockwood eloquently put the point in his article ‘Performance and “authenticity”’, ‘instruments and procedures themselves can never be

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<sup>5</sup> Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-47.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

sufficient, but must also be accompanied by deep insight into the aesthetic aims and purposes that gave rise to the compositions they endeavour to communicate'.<sup>8</sup> By drawing on historical musical aesthetics, as defined at the outset, and applying them to performances more generally, performers will acquire a broad range of knowledge on which their interpretations can be based. As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, Schumannn advocated 'spiritual beauty', an abstract quality that informed his more specific aesthetic ideas, and which, I argue, the modern performer should endeavour to incorporate when interpreting his works. The aim of the modern performance, then, is to create an interpretation that embodies the spirit of the work, combined with a flexibility that allows it to speak to our own time. It is the interpretative possibilities informed by multiple historical and contemporary perspectives that this chapter aims to explore.

My goals in Chapter 3 are threefold: to explore a parallel performing tradition between Schumann's Op. 63 and the young Brahms's Op. 8a; to establish a modern performing tradition for Brahms's Op. 8a; and to contrast Op. 8a with the established performing tradition of Brahms's later revision, Op. 8b, as documented in recordings. By addressing performance issues relevant to the three piano trios (Schumann's Op. 63, and Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b) through a combination of historical performing perspectives, contemporary recordings, and performances, I intend to substantiate my musical-aesthetic analyses from the performer's perspective.

My opening discussion on the historical performing traditions of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a crystallises around perspectives garnered from documentary evidence left by the pianists Clara Schumann, Florence May, and Fanny Davies. This section is followed by a study of specific performance issues connected with the use of musical allusions and fugatos in Brahms's Op. 8a and Schumann's Op. 63 (with supplementary reference to Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17), which are explored in the context of broader concerns such as the notions of the

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<sup>8</sup> Lewis Lockwood, 'Performance and "Authenticity"', *Early Music* 19/4 (1991), p. 502.

‘Schumannesque’ and ‘Brahmsian’. A critical comparison of the handful of existing recordings of Brahms’s Op. 8a directly addresses the relative dearth of an established performing tradition for the work. Practice-based research methods are interwoven primarily in the sections on performance informed by aesthetic insights, and on the comparison of contemporary recordings. Processes integral to my research include personal insights and evidence gained over regular rehearsal sessions and performances, as well as public masterclasses, lecture-recitals and studio recordings. The findings based on these methods therefore constitute informed interpretative guidelines for the performance of Brahms’s Op. 8a.

### **The performing traditions of Schumann’s Op. 63, Brahms’s Op. 8a and Op. 8b**

As Reinhard Kapp stated in his comprehensive article on Schumann reception, Schumann had a slow start in establishing a performing tradition for his own works, partly because he did not give performances himself.<sup>9</sup> He was clearly reliant on Clara Schumann and his circle of associates when it came to making his piano and chamber music works known to the world. The following discussion of performers is focused primarily on the pianist, for the reasons provided in the Introduction to this thesis: the privileged role of the piano in the piano trio, the fact that the piano was the instrument of the composers in question, and my own role as practitioner-researcher and pianist of a piano trio. However, string players who were closely associated with Schumann and Brahms are also properly considered.

One excellent scholarly anthology of essays that covers some of these issues is *Performing Brahms: early evidence of performance style*.<sup>10</sup> In one of these essays, Michael Musgrave, writing on

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<sup>9</sup> Reinhard Kapp, ‘Schumann in his time and since’, *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perry (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), p. 224.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman, eds. *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003).

the performance of Brahms's piano music, pointed out that Clara Schumann provided foundations for the performing traditions of works by both Schumann and Brahms:

Since Clara was so intimate with the compositions of Brahms and with his artistic values, to which she often (though not always) felt as close as to those of her husband: Brahms in his turn was truly a part of the Schumann artistic tradition.<sup>11</sup>

Musgrave referred to a summary of Clara Schumann's artistic credo on piano playing as given and quoted by one of her pupils, Adelina de Lara. He added that these remarks on playing Schumann's music have equal relevance to Brahms:

[Clara's exhortation] 'to be truthful to the composer's meaning, to emphasize every beauty in the composition, which implies the thorough study of and knowledge of the score'. She required constant attention to tone, rhythm, and phrasing – each phrase as though it were given to a musical instrument. She required tempos proper to the music. She was extremely averse to speed and thought it the curse of modern performance: 'keine Passagen' (no passagework) was her expression, referring to the routine rushing through of figurations for brilliance of effect without bringing out musical sense.<sup>12</sup>

Clara Schumann brought authority to her interpretation of Robert Schumann's music quite apart from the fact that he praised, and clearly approved of, her playing. Her interpretations were considered by the public of her time to be definitive, and she undoubtedly had felt the same as she wrote in her diary concerning first performances of Schumann's works that she was 'certainly the one who has the right to do this before anyone else.'<sup>13</sup> Clara would later demonstrate a similarly strong sense of ownership towards Brahms's works. She wrote in her diary in 1887 about working

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Musgrave, 'Early trends in the performance of Brahms's piano music', *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, eds. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), p. 316.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>13</sup> Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, revised edition (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001), p. 257.

on Brahms's Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 101 (1886) that 'I know that nobody else plays it as I do.'<sup>14</sup> These remarks reflect Clara's strong affinity for the music of both composers, and their piano trios undoubtedly had special meaning for her, particularly considering that she was the first among them to have composed a work in this genre, her Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17 (1846).<sup>15</sup>

Schumann's Op. 63 was presented to Clara on her birthday in 1847, which coincided with the arrival of her own trio in published form. She played her husband's trio straight away with the Dresden court violinist Franz Schubert and cellist Friedrich Kummer.<sup>16</sup> Later, Clara would be present for the first private performance of Brahms's Op. 8a. Brahms initially dedicated his Op. 8 to Clara (as stated in his letter to Schumann of 30 January 1855, 'there is considerable progress from Op. 8 to Op. 9. Both are dedicated to your wife'<sup>17</sup>), though for reasons unknown the dedication was subsequently withdrawn in both versions of Op. 8, while being retained in Op. 9. If anyone could have seen an affinity between the piano trios by Schumann and the young Brahms, it would certainly have been Clara. Would she have performed Schumann's and Brahms's works similarly or differently? More importantly, would Brahms's Op. 8a have been played more in the style of Schumann as in his Op. 63, which reflected his 'new manner of composing'? These are questions to be borne in mind in establishing a modern performing tradition for Brahms's Op. 8a.

The premiere of Schumann's Op. 63 took place at the Leipzig Tonkünstlerverein on 13 November 1848 with Heinrich Enke (piano), Wasielewski (violin), who subsequently became Schumann's first biographer, and Andreas Grabau (cello).<sup>18</sup> Clara Schumann's first public performance of the work would follow shortly afterwards in the same city, on 20 January 1849.<sup>19</sup> Although Schumann's Op. 63 and Clara's Op. 17 were frequently programmed alongside one another

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Struck, liner note (p. 19) to *Johannes Brahms Späte Klaviertrios and Iwan Knorr Variationen über ein Thema von Robert Schumann op. 1*, Hyperion Trio, 2011, Thorofon, CTH 2582.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 40 for discussion on Robert Schumann's earlier work *Phantasiestücke*, Op. 88 for piano, violin, and cello (1842).

<sup>16</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, p. 311.

<sup>17</sup> Styra Avins, *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters*, trans. Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Musgrave, *The Life of Schumann* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, p. 259.

in performance,<sup>20</sup> Clara did not play her own trio publicly until 1860, saying to Joachim ‘my Trio!!! what do you say to such courage? I am playing it in public for the first time and truly, only because of urgent persuasion from all sides’.<sup>21</sup> In contrast to her bold championing of her husband’s works, this instance reveals Clara’s self-effacing attitude toward performing her own works. It was undoubtedly shaped by society’s outlook on women at the time, as evident from critical responses to her Trio: one review stated that ‘women rarely attempt the more mature forms because such works assume a certain abstract strength that is overwhelmingly given to men... Clara Schumann, however, is truly one of the few women who has mastered this strength’.<sup>22</sup> The finale of her Trio, in particular, demonstrates a masterly integration of a fugato that thoroughly impressed her male colleagues including Mendelssohn and Joachim.<sup>23</sup> More importantly, the fugato in Clara’s Trio was a predecessor to those that subsequently appeared in Schumann’s Op. 63 and Brahms’s Op. 8a, which will be discussed in due course.

As much as she was a champion of Schumann’s works, Clara was also one of the most important pioneers of Brahms’s music. She had premiered Brahms’s piano works as early as October 1854,<sup>24</sup> including many of his early opuses, as well as the G minor piano quartet Op. 25. Brahms, in return, played her Trio in December 1854, soon after his own Op. 8a was published, and included other works by Clara in his programmes in the 1850s.<sup>25</sup> As noted in Chapter 1, Clara’s Trio was likely to have been a catalyst for Schumann’s Op. 63. In turn, Brahms had heard, and possibly played, Schumann’s three piano trios in the Schumann household in March 1854 prior to sending his own Op. 8a to the publisher.<sup>26</sup> These instances of performances undertaken by a tightly-knit circle of composer-performers offer a glimpse into a web of influences, all of which undoubtedly affected the genesis as well as the historical performing tradition of Brahms’s Op. 8a.

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<sup>20</sup> John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a “New Poetic Age”* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), p. 323.

<sup>21</sup> Reich, *Clara Schumann*, p. 311.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 231, 312.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 48.

According to Florence May, the pianist and first English biographer of Brahms, Op. 8a remained a little known work for many years. However, the main justification for her claim seems to be that it took some years before it reached England. At the same time, she wrote affectionately about the work's youthful and beautiful qualities, remarking that it had 'long since become dear to those who have yielded their hearts to the spell of Brahms's music'. Most importantly, her biography stated her preference for Op. 8a over Op. 8b:

We must confess our preference for the original version, which is consistently representative of the composer as he was when he wrote it. The later one does not appear to us to have solved the difficulty of successfully applying to a work of art the process of grafting, upon the fresh, lovable immaturity of twenty-one, the practised but less mobile experience of fifty-seven.<sup>27</sup>

Florence May's expertise as a pianist and her close association with Clara Schumann and Brahms renders significance to her predilection for Op. 8a. Not only had she studied with both musicians, but she had also premiered a number of Brahms's piano works in England in the 1870s including the 'Hungarian' Variations, Op. 21 and the 'Handel' Variations, Op. 24. Perhaps her stated preference was prompted by reasons of sentimentality, although she did give an even-handed assessment concerning some of the weaknesses of the piece:

The composer's fertile fancy has betrayed him, in the first allegro, into some episodical writing which somewhat clouds the distinctness of outline, and impedes the listener in his appreciation of the distinguished beauties of the movement, and there are places in the finale where a certain disappointment succeeds to the conviction inspired by the impetuous opening subject.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Florence May, *The Life of Johannes Brahms* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), p. 162.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

She then continued with praise that supported her preference and confirmed the merits of the original version:

But in wealth of material, in the rare beauty of its principal themes, and in noble sincerity of expression, the trio occupies a distinguished place even amongst the examples of Brahms's maturity.<sup>29</sup>

It is known that Brahms had given public performances of Op. 8a on at least a couple of occasions, one on 20 January 1856 in Kiel, and another in Vienna on 14 December 1876.<sup>30</sup> Since 1890, Brahms set about promoting the new version by performing it himself in major European music centres. He performed Op. 8b with Jenő Hubay (violin) and David Popper (cello) in Budapest, and then with Arnold Rosé (violin) and Reinhard Hummer (cello) in Vienna.<sup>31</sup> Other performances in major cities followed immediately after its publication in 1891, featuring Brahms's circle of performers: the London premiere on 9 March was given by Joachim, Alfredo Piatti (cello) and Agnes Zimmermann (piano), and it was performed again two days later in Edinburgh by the same string players with Fanny Davies as pianist.<sup>32</sup>

Like Florence May, Fanny Davies had studied with Clara Schumann and Brahms, and championed Brahms's music in England as well as on the Continent.<sup>33</sup> It is not known whether she had performed Op. 8a. However, she did not seem to have the score of this version in her possession, as it does not appear among her vast collection of Brahms's works now owned by the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>30</sup> Renate and Kurt Hofmann, *Johannes Brahms als Pianist und Dirigent. Chronologie seines Wirkens als Interpret* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2006), pp. 39, 166.

<sup>31</sup> George Bozarth, 'Brahms's B major Trio: An American Première', *The American Brahms Society Newsletter* 8/1 (1990), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> George Bozarth, 'Fanny Davies and Brahms's late chamber music', *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, eds. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), p. 184.

<sup>33</sup> Dorothy de Val, 'Fanny Davies: "A messenger for Schumann and Brahms?"', *The Piano in Nineteenth-Century British Culture: Instruments, Performers and Repertoire*, eds. Therese Ellsworth and Susan Wollenberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 217–237.

Royal College of Music in London.<sup>34</sup> Her accounts of interpreting Brahms, notably her annotated copy of Brahms's Op. 8b, have been widely discussed by scholars including George Bozarth, in his chapter 'Fanny Davies and Brahms's late chamber music' in the anthology *Performing Brahms*.<sup>35</sup> Bozarth, who has meticulously transcribed Davies's annotations, stated in his chapter that her scores 'preserve handwritten directions that very likely reflect performance practices of the Brahms circle.'<sup>36</sup> The right-hand column in Table 6 shows the metronome markings entered by Davies in her annotated copy of Op. 8b.<sup>37</sup>

As Brahms did not indicate any metronome markings in Op. 8b, Bozarth has suggested that the changes in metronome markings in Op. 8b designated by Davies 'are not specifically indicated by Brahms but represent a performance practice common in the late nineteenth century (and on into the early years of the twentieth century)'.<sup>38</sup> While Bozarth cited several writings on the topic of performing practice from the late nineteenth century onwards to support his view, in my opinion, the specific case of Davies's metronome marks in Brahms's Op. 8b lends itself to a different interpretation. My observation is that Davies's proposed tempi for the opening of each movement in Op. 8b show strong parallels to those originally indicated by Brahms in Op. 8a. Table 6 shows the close resemblance between the opening metronome markings of each movement, plus the Trio section of the Scherzo movement in each of the two versions. The small but important differences seem to reflect the slightly altered tempo instructions in each version.

Davies's metronome markings in Op. 8b are all different from those indicated by Brahms for Op. 8a. The most noticeable difference in the metronome markings is between those indicated by Brahms for *Allegro con moto* (minim = 72) and by Davies for *Allegro con brio* (minim=60). The qualifying meanings of the two *Allegro* instructions (i.e. *con moto* or *con brio*) do not help determine

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<sup>34</sup> Fanny Davies, 'Brahms & Schumann scores in the Royal College of Music Library', <<http://www.legacyweb.rcm.ac.uk/cache/fl0024587.pdf>> (Last accessed 5th August 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Bozarth, 'Fanny Davies and Brahms's late chamber music', pp. 170–219.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 212–215.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

whether one should be faster or slower than, or the same as, the other. It would seem as though, with minim = 60, Davies decided that *Allegro con brio* meant a tempo slower than *Allegro con moto*, assuming that she knew of the metronome marking of the original version. However, Davies could also have arrived at this tempo through other means, such as by taking into consideration the overall movement, especially the melodic and rhythmic character of the different second theme in Op. 8b/i, which seems to require a slower tempo than the equivalent section in Op. 8a/i.<sup>39</sup> It is important to bear in mind that ‘*con brio*’ (lively and spirited) also hints at the character of the movement, beyond mere tempo instruction. In general, the differences between the two metronome markings are comparatively insignificant, which suggests that Davies might indeed have had knowledge of the metronome markings in the original version, but nevertheless made small changes as she saw fit. For example, the minute differences in metronome markings between the two Scherzo movements are likely to reflect the almost identical musical material and the same tempo instruction, *Allegro molto*, in both versions. In the Trio section, Brahms changed the instruction from *Più lento* to *Meno allegro* between the two versions while the musical material remains the same; Davies takes the *Meno allegro* slightly slower than Brahms specified for *Più lento* in Op. 8a.

**Table 6.** Tempo instructions and metronome markings in each movement of Op. 8a and Op. 8b

| Tempo instructions and metronome markings<br><br>Op. 8 Movements | Op. 8a<br>Printed metronome markings                                                                     | Op. 8b<br>Fanny Davies's metronome markings at equivalent points                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I.                                                               | <i>Allegro con moto</i><br>Minim = 72                                                                    | <i>Allegro con brio</i><br>Minim = 60                                                                        |
| II.                                                              | Scherzo:<br><i>Allegro molto</i><br>Dotted minim = 100<br>Trio:<br><i>Più lento</i><br>Dotted minim = 72 | Scherzo:<br><i>Allegro molto</i><br>Dotted minim = 104<br>Trio :<br><i>Meno allegro</i><br>Dotted minim = 69 |
| III.                                                             | <i>Adagio non troppo</i><br>Crotchet = 63                                                                | <i>Adagio</i><br>Crotchet = 69                                                                               |
| IV.                                                              | <i>Allegro molto agitato</i><br>Dotted minim = 66                                                        | <i>Allegro</i><br>Dotted crotchet = 192                                                                      |

<sup>39</sup> See further my discussion in Chapter 4, p. 150.

Undoubtedly, these opening tempo markings are only starting points, and do not indicate how the tempo fluctuates throughout each movement. In the first movement of Op. 8a, for example, there are plenty of changes of tempo ranging from *Tempo un poco più Moderato* to *Schneller*, which occur more frequently and abruptly than in Op. 8b. Since the changes in tempo within movements in Op. 8a were no less frequent than in Op. 8b, it seems to me strong evidence that specific performing traditions, rather than a general performing practice, were passed from the first to the revised version of Brahms's Op. 8 by Fanny Davies and her colleagues in the Brahms circle.

It is plausible that Brahms altered the opening tempo instructions in each version due to the very different nature of the recomposed materials. My view is that the opening tempi should be chosen with consideration for the musical substance in the rest of the movement. I would argue that even though each version features the same opening themes, they should not necessarily be played the same way, as discussed later in the comparison of recordings. Furthermore, the different thematic materials in Op. 8a and Op. 8b have different meanings within the context of each movement, and consequently within the context of the whole work, which therefore constitute important interpretative considerations for performers of Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b.

### **Performance informed by aesthetic insights**

As the performing tradition of Brahms's Op. 8a has been largely lost, my study seeks to understand Op. 8a from a performer's viewpoint by drawing upon the aesthetic insights set out in the preceding chapters. To the experienced performer, simply applying terms such as 'Mozartian' or 'Haydnesque' to an early Beethoven work would be sufficient to evoke certain features, such as a lighter touch, a more 'classical' manner of expression, and a less extreme dynamic range. Similarly, I propose a Schumannesque approach to performing Brahms's Op. 8a in order to realise fully

Schumann's powerful influence on the young Brahms. Constantin Floros outlines prevailing views in the chapter 'The Relation to Schumann':

Among musicologists who have given some thought to Brahms's artistic relation to Schumann, August Sturke serves to be cited for his view that Brahms's music and style should be understood as the synthesis of the "Classical and Romantic schools of thought," as the unification of "Beethovenian and Schumannesque elements."<sup>40</sup>

Floros considered it paramount to ask questions such as 'What does Brahms owe to Schumann', in contrast to the tendencies of other recent writers to highlight the supposed difference between the two composers.<sup>41</sup>

In a similar way to that of Floros, my research seeks to contribute to a greater understanding of Brahms in relation to Schumann, but also to reconsider our understanding of the 'Schumannesque'. For the performer, interpreting Brahms's Op. 8a in the context of Schumann's Op. 63 is akin to a revisionist understanding of both composers. Following my analogy of identifying Mozartian and Haydnesque features in Beethoven's early music, the questions present themselves as to what constitutes a 'Schumannesque' style or a 'Brahmsian' one. These are particularly important questions for the performer, since preconceptions play a powerful role in helping to shape our aesthetic and interpretative judgements. Chapter 4 explores the implications of the term 'Schumannesque' in the context of his Op. 63, including Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ideology and how it overlaps with the 'Brahmsian' in Op. 8a.

I have been able to synthesise my musicological arguments with insights as a performer by studying and performing these works with the Minerva Piano Trio, formed in 2012 for this research project. In the course of rehearsals and performances, performing issues that have been discussed

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<sup>40</sup> Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms 'Free but Alone': A Life for a Poetic Music* [Translation from German edition, 1997], trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 95.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

in conjunction with historical and musical-aesthetic background include musical allusions, fugal elements, and instrumental textures. In addition to these issues, tempo is among the first element to be addressed in rehearsals.

### **Musical allusions**

Our understanding of Schumann's allusions tends to be shaped by Schumann reception history that connects largely with two autobiographical aspects: firstly to Clara Schumann, and secondly to literary sources from German Romanticism. He frequently quoted his own works and Clara's, and alluded to his own songs. When performing Schumann, musicians are often reminded of the passion behind the 'Clara themes' or works 'written with Clara in mind'. By contrast, the subject of allusions in Brahms has been approached rather differently by scholars, ranging from superficial identification to defensive resistance to the matter. According to Kenneth Hull, there is at least one quotation or allusion uncovered among each opus by Brahms.<sup>42</sup>

A comparison of Schumann's own use of allusions, particularly to songs, with Brahms's musical allusions could afford insights into Brahms's Op. 8a, although comprehensive examination is beyond the scope of this study. For the present purposes, space permits me only to offer a few examples in which Schumann referred to songs in his instrumental works. He incorporated the song 'Dein Bildnis wunderselig' from the Eichendorff *Liederkreis*, Op. 39 into the first movement of his Piano Trio Op. 80. Daverio described the text of this song as 'a reverie on the poet's contemplation of the portrait of a lost love'.<sup>43</sup> Another example is the second movement of Schumann's Piano Sonata in G minor, Op. 22, which was based on his own posthumously published song 'Im Herbste'. Perhaps the best-known instance is Schumann's reference to Beethoven's song, 'Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder' from the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98, in the first movement of Schumann's *Fantasie*, Op. 17 (and arguably in his Second Symphony, Op. 61). Based on evidence from

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<sup>42</sup> Kenneth Ross Hull, 'Brahms the Allusive: Extra-Compositional Reference in the Instrumental Music of Johannes Brahms', PhD diss., Princeton University, 1989, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"*, p. 326.

Schumann's letters, it is widely held that this song, through its allusion in the *Fantasie*, served as both a portrayal of Clara Schumann as the 'distant beloved' (in accordance with the title and text of the song cycle), and a homage to Beethoven.

No discussion of Brahms's Op. 8a can overlook the following allusions: Beethoven's 'Nimm Sie hin denn, diese Lieder' from *An die ferne Geliebte*, Schubert's 'Am Meer' from the song cycle *Schwanengesang*, and arguably, Schumann's opera *Genoveva*, as has been brought to light most prominently by Eric Sams.<sup>44</sup> In addition, I have observed another allusion hitherto unexplored: Schumann's *Manfred*.

My hypothesis is that a strong literary theme runs through Brahms's Op. 8a. In referencing *An die Ferne Geliebte* in his Op. 8a, Brahms would undoubtedly have been aware of another poetic connection in Schumann's *Fantasie*, Op. 17, namely, the poetic motto by the pioneering Romantic poet, Friedrich von Schlegel. Table 7 summarises the musical and literary origin of each allusion in Op. 8a. The poems by Heine (*Am Meer*), Lord Byron (*Manfred*), Tieck and F. Hebbel (*Genoveva*), and A. Jeitteles (*An die ferne Geliebte*) share a literary theme of lost or unfulfilled love common in the nineteenth century. Seen from this perspective, the allusions in Brahms's Op. 8a could be unified by their common literary theme that reflects the cultural milieu of German Romanticism as well as Schumann's influence.

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<sup>44</sup> Eric Sams, 'Brahms and His Clara Themes', *The Musical Times* 112/1539 (1971), pp. 432–434.

**Table 7.** Allusions in Brahms's Op. 8a

| Movements of Op. 8a | Structural position of the allusion                                                | Composer                | Work (date of composition)                                                                                                   | Genre                 | Poets                                                                |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I.                  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> subject of Sonata form                                             | Schumann                | <i>Genoveva</i> , Op. 81 (1847-48)                                                                                           | Opera                 | Schumann with librettist R. Reinick (after L. Tieck and C.F. Hebbel) |
| I.                  | Part of 2 <sup>nd</sup> subject of Sonata form/<br>Fugue subject in Recapitulation | Schumann                | <i>Manfred</i> , Op. 115 (1848-49)                                                                                           | Dramatic poem         | Lord Byron                                                           |
| II                  | Opening theme of Scherzo and Trio                                                  | Schumann                | <i>Genoveva</i> , Op. 81 (1847-48)                                                                                           | Opera                 | Schumann with librettist R. Reinick (after L. Tieck and C.F. Hebbel) |
| III.                | Subsidiary theme of ABA form                                                       | Schubert                | <i>Am Meer</i> (from <i>Schwanengesang</i> ) (1828)                                                                          | Song Cycle            | Heinrich Heine                                                       |
| IV.                 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> subject of Sonata form                                             | Beethoven<br>[Schumann] | <i>Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder</i> (from <i>An die ferne Geliebte</i> ) (1816)<br>[ <i>Fantasie</i> in C, Op. 17 (1836)] | Song Cycle<br>[Piano] | Alois Jeitteles                                                      |

Other attempts to suggest a literary connection in the genesis of Brahms's Op. 8a have been made, most recently by Roger Moseley, who put forth a hypothesis to align the character of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler in E.T.A. Hoffmann's novels with young Brahms's alter ego in Op. 8a. In supporting this argument, Moseley pointed out the parallel between Schumann's practice in signing off the movements in *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6 with Florestan and Eusebius – characters invented by Schumann, and Brahms signing his Op. 8a with 'Kreisler jun' [Kreisler junior], and his Op. 9 variations with 'Kr./B' [Kreisler/Brahms].<sup>45</sup> In explaining the inspiration of Johannes Kreisler in his *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, Schumann wrote in 1839, 'Only Germans will be able to understand the title.

<sup>45</sup> Roger Moseley, 'Reforming Johannes: Brahms, Kreisler Junior and the Piano Trio in B, Op. 8', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132/2 (2007), pp. 258–259.

Kreisler is ... an eccentric, untamed, ingenious Kapellmeister. There are many things about him that you will like.<sup>46</sup> Considering that Brahms already started signing his compositions with Kreisler from 1852,<sup>47</sup> before he met Schumann, this specific literary affinity between the two composers is remarkable.

Just as Schumann and Brahms shared a penchant for the fantastical character Johannes Kreisler through the literature of E.T.A. Hoffmann, they certainly identified closely with other nineteenth-century authors who embraced the Romantic theme of *sehnsucht* (longing) and unfulfilled love. This subject was explored by Schumann in his setting of the poetry of Goethe's *Faust* and Byron's *Manfred* in the 1840s. The fact that Schumann was still occupied by such literary subjects in the 1840s, when longing induced by Clara Schumann in the 1830s was no longer the case, indicates that the use of Romantic literary themes is not by any means limited to autobiographical matters. Like many others, Brahms would later be preoccupied with *The Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe (1774), a novel widely acknowledged as having exerted a profound influence upon the Romantic literary movement in Germany. The tragedy of unrequited love in this novel had arguably served as inspiration for Brahms's 'Werther' Quartet, Op. 60. The question of whether these allusions are autobiographical is not the main point. What is important is that these recognised musical allusions add an extra dimension to the interpretation of Schumann's works and Brahms's Op. 8a.

The performer encounters a major challenge in interpreting some of these allusions in Brahms's Op. 8a. A case in point is the opening of the second subject of Op. 8a/i, in piano unison octaves (Ex. 19). This was described by Adolf Schubring as a 'brooding' theme. Indeed, the melodic idea and emotional content behind the theme seems initially opaque (without expressive markings), while the writing might strike the performer as barren, given the use of octaves in a low register, the detailed articulations with dotted slurs, and frequent rests to break up the phrase.

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<sup>46</sup> Ernst Herttrich, ed., preface to *Robert Schumann: Kreisleriana, Opus 16*, G. Henle Verlag, 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Moseley, 'Reforming Johannes: Brahms, Kreisler Junior and the Piano Trio in B, Op. 8', p. 258.

**Ex. 19.** First part of the second subject of Brahms's Op. 8a/i, bb. 84ff.



The observation of the recitative-like nature of this passage by the critic who reviewed the 1855 Boston première of Op. 8a was, significantly, in line with Eric Sams's hypothesis over a century later, who described it as 'pensive and oddly recitative-like'.<sup>48</sup> Sams further argued that this second subject is derived from Schumann's opera *Genoveva*. In his article 'Brahms and his Clara Themes',<sup>49</sup> Sams quoted two examples from the first act of *Genoveva* and went to great lengths to suggest that they were linked to the first and third movements of Brahms's Op. 8a. For the performer, it is instructive to be aware of the possible reference in the first movement to a couple of the recitatives of the main protagonists, Siegfried and Golo, who are like father and son, their relationship being complicated by Golo's passion for Siegfried's wife, Genoveva, while Siegfried leaves for war and entrusts care of Genoveva to Golo.

This passage can easily sound unconvincing if it is not interpreted as a recitative. There are no overt performance instructions as to how to play this passage, and the articulations and frequent rests are the only indications of its declamatory nature. To interpret this passage as a recitative means emphasising the articulation in a 'parlando' or speech-like manner, with dramatic pauses, and not executing it in strict time. The goal is to express the pathos in the passage with the freedom that is associated with speech.

Following Sams's argument, the opening theme of Brahms's Op. 8/ii is a reference to Clara's name in transposition (D-C#-B-A#-B) as well as Schumann's *Genoveva*. Sams, in his article

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.434.

<sup>49</sup> Sams, 'Brahms and His Clara Themes', pp. 432–434.

uncovering the relationship between Schumann's *Genoveva* and Brahms's Op. 8,<sup>50</sup> limited himself to themes that were completely removed in Op. 8b. When comparing the five notes that are augmented in the Scherzo [Ex. 20b(ii)] to the 'take care of my wife' motif in *Genoveva* (labelled 'y' in Ex. 20a), one notices how the augmented motif is strikingly similar to the *Genoveva* segment. As shown in Ex. 20a, prior to this B minor utterance, which is in the same key as Brahms's Scherzo theme, the words (from Siegfried to Golo) attached to the phrase labelled 'x' are: 'My closest friend is worthy of caring for my dearest creature'. This moving libretto alongside the juxtaposition of B major and B minor show how Brahms could have taken part of phrase 'x' and the 'take care of my wife' motif (labelled as 'y') to form the complete opening theme of Brahms's Op. 8 Scherzo movement [Ex. 20b(i)].

**Ex. 20.** Schumann's *Genoveva* in Brahms's Op. 8a/ii

(a) Schumann's *Genoveva*, Act 1, No. 4 Recitativ, bb. 39–56

Siegfried

Bes - ser dienst du hier mir... Sieh', nur dem Besten möcht' ich meiner

Gil-ter Bestes an - ver trau'n... der bist du!

Siegfried (zu Golo herzlich)

Meines Wei - bes nimm dich an

(b) Allusion to 'take care of my wife' from *Genoveva* and/or Clara cipher in Brahms's Op. 8a/ii

(i) Brahms's Op. 8a/ii, bb. 1–4

*p sempre stacc. e leggiero*

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 432–434.

(ii) Brahms's Op. 8a/ii, bb. 113–121



The notion of a Clara cipher in Brahms's Op. 8a is controversial: it is supported by scholars such as Michael Musgrave<sup>51</sup> and David Brodbeck<sup>52</sup>, but has been refuted by others such as John Daverio.<sup>53</sup> However, none have ruled out the possibility of other forms of allusion to Clara in the works of Schumann and Brahms. Sams's argument for the allusion to Schumann's *Genoveva* is debatable mainly because he based it solely on autobiographical grounds; a story of a love triangle was unlikely at the time when Brahms wrote his Op. 8a. Sams also proposed a hypothesis of whether Schumann used ciphers to portray Clara by converting the letters of Clara's name to musical notes. This suggestion has been vehemently dismissed by Daverio in two chapters of his *Crossing Paths*, arguing and concluding that hypothesising a Clara cipher was 'a naive, musically unconvincing, and ultimately pointless enterprise'.<sup>54</sup> The original idea behind Sams's hypothesis, however, is not as arbitrary as Daverio's argument has suggested. Among many examples of using musical notes as alphabets (as in his *Carnaval*, Op. 9), Schumann incorporated the name of the violinist Ferdinand David, dedicatee of his Sonata for Violin and Piano in D minor, Op. 121, in the main theme of the work as D-A-F-D (the note F represents the letter V).<sup>55</sup> The main cause for debate on this cipher is the complex 'cipher system' that Sams created to explain his hypothesis. By using his knowledge as a cryptographer, Sams took it upon himself to invent a system that was very far from his original suggestion for a straightforward, if not note-perfect, conversion of Clara's name as C-B-A-G#-A, and in the process, offered a far-fetched suggestion that Schumann had used such a system.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Musgrave, 'Brahms's First Symphony: Thematic Coherence and Its Secret Origin', *Music Analysis* 2/2 (1983), pp. 128, 133. I wish to thank Prof. Musgrave for pointing out the Clara cipher as he observed in Brahms's Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 9.

<sup>52</sup> David Brodbeck, 'Medium and meaning, new aspect of the chamber music', *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), pp. 122–123.

<sup>53</sup> John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), pp. 112–113.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>55</sup> Ute Bär, ed., preface to *Robert Schumann: Sonatas for Violin and Piano*, Vol. 1, Wiener Urtext, 2003.

<sup>56</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, p. 68.

Otherwise, I find it believable that Schumann could have spelled out Clara's name musically. What concerns the present analysis, then, is Brahms's alleged use of Schumann's Clara cipher in the Scherzo movement of Brahms's Op. 8 (both versions).

Unlike the 'recitative-like' second subject in Brahms's Op. 8a/i, the suggestion of either an allusion or Clara cipher here does not have overt implications for how one might approach the Scherzo opening because of the overriding scherzando character. That being said, this is the only allusion retained fully by Brahms in his Op. 8b. If the hypothesis for this allusion is true, it follows that the possible reasons for its retention includes: it is a Clara cipher; it relates to a passage in Schumann's *Genoveva* where the meaning of 'take care of my wife' is still relevant to Brahms; and it is an opening theme rather than a subsidiary theme. From this perspective, one can perhaps extract one autobiographical element in his revision: by retaining the Clara cipher alongside the symbolic command to 'take care of my wife' through Schumann's *Genoveva*, Brahms sought to honour the youthful memories of a relationship joint in spirit with Robert and Clara Schumann. Similarly, if the allusions in his Op. 8a are connected with literary themes by German Romantic writers, then in Op. 8b, he revised these connections through self-allusion, without making overt references.<sup>57</sup>

Scholars including Daverio and Brodbeck have identified two works in which Brahms alluded to *Manfred*: the Fugue in A Flat Minor for Organ, WoO 8 and the First Symphony (as noted in Clara's comment quoted earlier).<sup>58</sup> The reverence Brahms held towards *Manfred* cannot be overestimated. Brahms wrote Clara in 1855,

If only I could hear the *Manfred* music with you! That, with the Faust, is the most magnificent thing your husband created. But I'd like to hear it as a whole and in combination with the text. What a deeply moving impression it must make. Melodramatic passages are often incomprehensible to me, as it is with Astarte's appearance and speaking.

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<sup>57</sup> See further my discussion in Chapter 4, p. 157.

<sup>58</sup> Laura Tunbridge, 'Schumann's Manfred in the mental theatre', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 15/2 (2003), p. 175.

That is the very highest form of musical language; that penetrates right into the depths of the heart.<sup>59</sup>

Not only does this statement show that Brahms already had a thorough knowledge of Schumann's works by 1855, but it also reveals the high value he placed on the combination of music and literature by Schumann. I have observed that it is the recurring 'Astarte theme' in *Manfred* to which Brahms alluded (Ex. 21a). Astarte is the lost love of the eponymous protagonist, Manfred. Near the end of the work, Astarte speaks to Manfred and disappears, as illustrated by the 'Astarte theme' in the violin part (Ex. 21b). My observation is that the allusion to the 'Astarte theme' is not an exact quotation, but a paraphrase by way of inversion, which is embedded in the second subject of Op. 8a/i in bars 100–102 (Ex. 21c).

**Ex. 21.** Allusion to Schumann's *Manfred* in Brahms's Op. 8a

a) 'Astarte theme' (violin) in Schumann's *Manfred* Overture



b) 'Astarte theme' (flute) in Schumann's *Manfred*, Scene No. 11

Flute

*Langsam* *sehr ausdrucksvoll* *pp*

liebst mich noch? Astarte. Manfred! (Astarte's Geist verschwindet)

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 174.

c) Brahms's Op.8a/i, second part of the second subject (piano), bb. 98-103



d) Brahms's Op. 8a/i, fugue subject (cello), bb. 354-359



The alteration to the 'Astarte theme' could be explained by the fact that it needs to suit the requirements of a fugue subject later in the recapitulation (Ex. 21d). By partially inverting the 'Astarte theme', Brahms utilised a counterpoint device so important to the fugue, and foreshadowed the fully-fledged fugal treatment of the theme. The implication for the performer is discussed in the section on fugal elements.

The allusions to songs incorporated in Brahms's Op. 8a include Schubert's 'Am Meer' from *Schwanengesang* (Ex. 22). The subject of the poem by Heinrich Heine in Schubert's 'Am Meer' is unrequited love – a theme that aligns with other allusions in Op. 8a mentioned previously. Again, there is no definitive proof that this is an intended allusion, but it is worth noting that Brahms also referred to 'Am Meer' in his later song 'Sapphic Ode' from *Fünf Lieder*, Op. 94 (1884). In his notes on Schubert's 'Am Meer', Graham Johnson wrote, 'The embellishment of the final 'Tränen' (unlike the first verse) adds a new expressive detail. (We are reminded that Brahms, at the end of *Sapphische Ode*, sets the closing 'Tränen' with exactly the same turn of phrase, as if in loving homage to Schubert)'.<sup>60</sup> Although the 'turn of phrase' to which Johnson astutely referred was not the part of

<sup>60</sup> Graham Johnson, liner note to *Franz Schubert: The Complete Songs*, Graham Johnson, 2005, Hyperion, CDS44201/40.

'Am Meer' that was alluded to in Brahms's Op. 8a, this connection is likely to be more than a coincidence.

**Ex. 22.**

a) Schubert's 'Am Meer' from *Schwanengesang*

b) Brahms's Op. 8a/iii, bb. 33-36

The most conspicuous of the allusions in Brahms's Op. 8a is the one to Beethoven's *An die Ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98 (Ex. 23), to which, as noted, Schumann had also made reference in his own music. This important parallel between Schumann's and Brahms's use of the same allusion had not been explicitly noted by critics in nineteenth-century writings, but that does not necessarily mean that it went unrecognised by their inner circle. Although many Brahms scholars in the twentieth century have acknowledged the comparison, I have made some further observations that, to my knowledge, have not thus far been explored in the literature on Brahms or Schumann. For instance, in the fourth movement of Op. 8a, Brahms reiterated the *An die ferne Geliebte* theme four times throughout the movement between the different instruments (Ex. 24). This is reminiscent of the way Schumann repeated the theme, which appears three times in the closing section of his *Fantasie*, Op. 17/i, each instance being separated by a brief improvisatory interlude (Ex. 25). While Schumann incorporated the stepwise outline of a fifth (in the third and fourth bars of Beethoven's song)

throughout his first movement, he altered the contour of *An die ferne Geliebte* at the end of the movement by inserting a rising fifth to the melody (Ex. 25, b. 298). Similarly, Brahms incorporated a rising arpeggio that outlines a fifth [Ex. 24a(ii)] found in the second part of *An die ferne Geliebte*, thereby referencing Schumann's technique for quoting Beethoven, in this case. Brahms continued to elaborate the *An die ferne Geliebte* allusion in the same manner, as in [Ex. 24a(ii)], in subsequent appearances of the theme (Ex. 24b–d).

**Ex. 23.** Beethoven's 'Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder' from *An die ferne Geliebte*

*Andante con moto, cantabile*

Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder, die ich dir, Ge-lieb-te, sang,

**Ex. 24.** Brahms's Op. 8a/iv, *An die ferne Geliebte* theme in cello, violin, and piano

(a)(i) Cello, bb. 104–110

*p* *espressivo*

(ii) Cello, bb. 117–122

(b) Violin, bb. 152–158

*pp* *sosten. espressivo.* *poco a poco in tempo*

(c) Violin and cello, bb. 322–327

*p dolce*

(d) Piano, bb. 424–430



**Ex. 25.** Schumann's *Fantasie*, Op. 17 (reduction), allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte*, bb. 295ff.



As shown in Ex. 24a the song allusion is introduced in the cello, softly and expressively; the second time it appears in the violin part, marked *pp* (Ex. 24b); the third time is a canonic duet marked *p dolce* between violin and cello (Ex. 24c); the fourth and final time is in the piano, which is marked *f espress. e sempre agitato* (Ex. 24d). As the theme goes through its different iterations, the tenderness at the beginning gradually intensifies, culminating in an agitated state of desperate passion.

These insights help the performer to demonstrate with greater freedom the impassioned idiosyncrasies that are not usually apparent in modern performances of Brahms, but more in those of Schumann. When performing Schumann, musicians are often more ready to take into account the significance of allusions, particularly to the hypothesised 'Clara themes'. By contrast, Brahms's allusions generally receive much less attention.<sup>61</sup> In my opinion, the parallel in terms of the allusions used by Brahms and Schumann is a crucial aspect in establishing a modern performing tradition for Brahms's Op. 8a; it serves as a means of enabling the interpretation of their piano trios from a common standpoint.

<sup>61</sup> Hull, 'Brahms the Allusive: Extra-Compositional Reference in the Instrumental Music of Johannes Brahms', p.10.

## Fugal elements

The various elements that constitute Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ideology, which are central to the discussion in Chapter 1, include Schumann's use of fugal elements that look back to Bach. A comparison of the fugatos in the piano trios of Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann and Brahms provides new insights into their shared methods for adapting Bachian idioms within this genre. It also provides guidance as to how we might perform the fugato in Brahms's Op. 8a. There are very few comprehensive scholarly writings on Clara's Trio. The one doctoral dissertation on the subject offers only insubstantial treatment. A nine-page chapter 'Correlations between Clara's Op. 17 and Robert's Op. 63 Trios' barely touches on the fugal elements, despite identifying at the outset the fertile nature of comparison between the two works: 'Not coincidentally, Robert Schumann's piano trio op. 63 strongly resembles his wife's, written one year earlier'.<sup>62</sup>

The fugato in the fourth movement of Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17, and the fugato in the fourth movement of Schumann's Op. 63 demonstrate unique instances of fugato embedded within a sonata-form movement in the piano trio genre. Considered alongside the fugato in Brahms's Op. 8a, the first point of comparison is the position within the movement where each fugal section is situated. Clara Schumann's fugato coincides with the beginning of the development section, and is introduced by the piano in A minor, while the fugue subject itself is derived from the first two bars of the opening theme (Ex. 26a). The fugato continues for 14 bars (Ex. 26b), followed by 28 bars of non-fugal development of secondary themes, and the piano re-introduces the fugato (Ex. 26c) with renewed intensity for a further 20 bars. At bar 158 the fugato culminates in a stretto (also shown in Ex. 26c) with increasingly chromatic harmonies, and the piano bass is doubled in octaves, conveying a sense of Baroque grandeur.

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<sup>62</sup> Deborah Gail Nemko, 'Clara Schumann as innovator and collaborator: The Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17', DMA diss., University of Arizona, 1997.

Robert Schumann's fugato begins four bars into the opening theme in G major at the false recapitulation. Rather than transforming the opening theme into a fully-fledged fugue subject as in Clara's work, Schumann used only a one-bar long fragmented portion of his four-bar opening phrase (Ex. 27a), and then juxtaposed the first two bars of the same phrase. The result is a 16-bar fugato (Ex. 27b) that showcases such techniques as inversion, imitation, and, as part of his 'new manner of composing', thematic combination (see discussion in Chapter 2). Schumann's fugato is more compact than Clara's extensive one. He imbued existing motifs with a Bachian treatment reminiscent of a fugue, but focused on employing his new composing technique — thematic combination — which permeates the entire Trio from the very beginning of the first movement.

**Ex. 26.** Clara Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17/iv

(a) Opening theme (violin), bb. 1–4



(b) Excerpt from fugato, bb. 111–119

(c) Stretto section of the fugato, b. 158ff.

**Ex. 27.** Schumann's Op. 63/iv

(a) Opening theme in G major in the false recapitulation, bb. 225–228

(b) Excerpt from the quasi-fugue, bb. 229–235

Brahms's fugato appears in the recapitulation of the first movement, forming an integral part of the structure. It is particularly significant since it replaces the recitative-like theme that is the

second subject of the exposition (Ex. 28a). As discussed, the fugue subject is based partly on the ‘Astarte theme’ from *Manfred*. Although a target of criticism, the fugato in Brahms’s Op. 8a demonstrates a structural device and a Baroque aesthetic similar to that of Clara and Robert Schumann. Meanwhile, the combination of allusions and fugal elements reflects musical aesthetics that Brahms inherited from Schumann. It is also worth noting that the stretto in Brahms’s fugato (Ex. 28b) at bar 385 is highly reminiscent of Clara’s at bar 158 (Ex. 26c). According to Daverio, Schumann’s Op. 63 shows signs of one-upmanship in relation to Clara’s Op. 17.<sup>63</sup> Along similar lines, the 40-bar long fugato in Brahms’s Op. 8a shows an unbridled inspiration and influence at work, and even an aspiration to go one step further.

**Ex. 28.** Brahms’s Op. 8a/i

(a) Excerpt from the fugato, bb. 354–363

Tempo un poco più Moderato

*f marcato e pesante*

Tempo un poco più Moderato

*marc. e pesante*

*f*

*tr*

<sup>63</sup> Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a “New Poetic Age”*, p. 323.

(b) Stretto section of the fugato, b. 385ff.



This fugato is one of the most challenging passages in Op. 8a to interpret convincingly. As examined in the next section, performers play this fugue very differently, with varying degrees of success. Performing it with the Minerva Piano Trio has led me to conclude that although it is marked *marcato e pesante* accompanied by the dynamic marking *f*, it is by no means straightforward to execute according to these performance instructions. A balance needs to be struck between the meaning of ‘marked and heavy’ as a dynamic and expressive marking, and the clarity of instrumental texture and the audibility of the instruments themselves. Performing the fugato sections from the parallel works by Clara and Robert Schumann sheds new insights on the interpretation of Brahms’s fugato. For example, the *fp* and *sf* that mark the beginning of the fugal subject entries in the works of the Schumanns can be applied to Brahms’s Op. 8a, such that while each entry has a clearly accentuated start, the dynamic levels drop to below *f* between entries. This way, the fugal section avoids sounding overly vertical and static, and the instruction *f marcato e pesante* could be taken as a character indication of a kind of resoluteness and austerity that evokes the Baroque style. I also recommend retaining the lyrical character both in the exposition (as a second theme) and in the recapitulation (as a fugue subject), in order to integrate the fugue as part of a coherent whole.

Another related performance issue is that of instrumental texture. With the immense range of tonal and dynamic varieties on the modern grand piano, the foremost task for the pianist is to balance the texture of the trio as a whole. The modern pianist playing Schumann’s Op. 63 and Brahms’s Op. 8a faces the challenge of negotiating complex contrapuntal elements which require a

clear voicing, while maintaining a hierarchy for each individual voice. For example, in the opening theme of Op. 63/i, the motivic complex in treble and bass requires a constant balancing against the middle voice in semiquavers in the background. In both Schumann and Brahms, the bass lines are often doubled in octaves, which should not be played in a manner that dominates the texture. Likewise, the pianist should ensure that the cello part is not overpowered when its line is being doubled as well. My observation is that, especially when playing Brahms, performers often over-emphasise the bass with the intention of producing a rich sonority that is frequently associated with the interpretation of his music in general. Unfortunately, this heavy-handed approach invariably results in murky instrumental textures, which obscures the contrapuntal writing.

By aligning Brahms's Op. 8a more closely with Schumann's Op. 63, it is apparent that Op. 8a calls for a more subtle and moving bass, with clear contrapuntal lines to create a transparent texture, and greater differentiation between foreground and background elements. By and large, interpreters of Brahms's Op. 8a should look to Schumann's Op. 63 for inspiration on how to perform this work, and should adopt a more 'Schumannesque' approach, to be further explored in Chapter 4.

### **A comparison of contemporary recordings**

Unlike recordings of Schumann's Op. 63 or Brahms's Op. 8b, many of which date back to the early twentieth century, Brahms's Op. 8a was not recorded until 1982, by the Odeon Trio on LP (no longer available), and subsequently released in CD format in 1993. More significantly, several major record labels, including Decca, Hyperion, Brilliant Classics, and Phillips (Decca Music Group Ltd), have in the last decade issued box sets of 'Brahms's Complete Chamber Music', or in the case of Deutsche Grammophon, 'Brahms Complete Works'. Yet none of these labels included Brahms's Op.8a.

There are no more than a handful of existing commercial recordings of Brahms's Op. 8a, and it is my intention as part of this project to contribute to the recorded repertoire of this work with the Minerva Piano Trio. Performing Brahms's Op. 8a and Schumann's Op. 63, and thereby integrating musicology with performance, is a crucial part of my practice-based research. For this reason, my Trio made a point of not listening to the existing recordings of Brahms's Op. 8a until we had reached our own interpretative conclusions in conjunction with my findings. As I came to experience in the course of my research, the immediacy of interpretation during a performance is very different from reflective contemplation away from the instrument. Both intuitive and analytical perspectives of a musical interpretation come together in the process of recording. Except for recordings of live performances, the goal of a recording should be to present one idealised interpretation of the work. Different recordings of the same work ultimately serve as historical documents, and may reveal much information about the performing traditions of their time and place of origin. At the same time, they can potentially shape performing trends for the future.

Table 8 below shows the nine piano trio ensembles who, as far as my research has been able to determine, have recorded Brahms's Op. 8a.<sup>64</sup> All the groups have recorded both Op. 8a and Op. 8b except Trio Jean Paul, while six of the nine who recorded Op. 8a also recorded Schumann's Op. 63. For the purposes of this investigation, the comparisons are focused on recordings of Brahms's Op. 8a, while those of Brahms's Op. 8b and Schumann's Op. 63 provide a context for the comparisons.

It is instructive to note the various ways in which the recordings parenthetically differentiate between the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8: for instance, the Odeon Trio uses 'Urfassung 1854' (CD), '1854 Version' and '1889 Revision'(LP); Trio Opus 8, 'original version from 1854' and 'revised

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<sup>64</sup> A notable live performance was given at Verbier Festival 2014 where Marc-Andre Hamelin, Joshua Bell, and Steven Isserlis performed Op. 8a. A video is available on Medici TV (<http://www.medici.tv/#!/exclusive-encounters-4-verbier-festival>). In addition, an arrangement of Op. 8a for orchestra has been made by Joseph Swensen with the Malmö Opera Orchestra, for which the work was renamed Sinfonia in B.

version from 1889'; Altenberg Trio Wien, 'Version 1854' and 'Version 1889'; Trio Jean Paul, '1. Version 1854'; Hyperion Trio, '1. Fassung' (2006) and 'Zweite Fassung, 1889 (2011)'; and Gould Piano Trio, 'original version' and 'revised version'. My own use of the labels Op. 8a and Op. 8b is prompted by the recognition that they are essentially two different works, and should be named as such.

**Table 8.** Commercial recordings of Brahms's Op. 8a, Op. 8b and Schumann's Op. 63

| Recordings<br>Works | Odeon<br>Trio<br>1993<br>Capriccio<br>1982 (LP<br>for both<br>versions) | Trio Opus 8<br>1996<br>Arte Nova<br>Musikpro-<br>duktions | Trio Parnassus<br>1996<br>MD&G Records | Abegg<br>Trio<br>1999<br>Tacet | Altenberg Trio<br>Wien<br>2001<br>Challenge<br>Classics | Trio Jean Paul<br>2005<br>Ars Musici | Hyperion Trio<br>2006 (Op. 8a)<br>2011 (Op. 8b)<br>Thorofon | Gould Piano<br>Trio<br>2009<br>Quartz Music | Trio Testore<br>2013<br>Audite |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Brahms,<br>Op. 8a   | ✓                                                                       | ✓                                                         | ✓                                      | ✓                              | ✓                                                       | ✓                                    | ✓                                                           | ✓                                           | ✓                              |
| Brahms,<br>Op. 8b   | ✓                                                                       | ✓                                                         | ✓                                      | ✓                              | ✓                                                       |                                      | ✓                                                           | ✓                                           | ✓                              |
| Schumann,<br>Op. 63 |                                                                         | ✓                                                         | ✓                                      | ✓                              | ✓                                                       | ✓                                    | ✓                                                           |                                             |                                |

The recordings of six of these groups are compared against the performance guidelines given under various categories of musical and aesthetic elements that have figured prominently in my discussion thus far: tempo, musical allusions, fugal elements and instrumental texture. Apart from tempo, the other comparisons focus on aspects of Brahms's Op. 8a that are challenging in their interpretation, while demonstrating a relationship between Schumann and Brahms, as investigated in Chapter 2. These are the same passages on which my trio ensemble spent the most time discussing, and experimenting with, different interpretations. The wide discrepancies in interpretation between different performances at these junctures highlight the myriad challenges and reveal the varying degrees of interpretative vigour of each group. However, it is still necessary to listen to the recordings in their entirety to give a fair assessment concerning their overall

coherence. This last point is particularly relevant when considering how each group handles the changes in tempo within each movement, which is another element to be comparatively examined.

In general, the groups differ considerably in their interpretations of Brahms's Op. 8a. The comparison of tempo is relatively straightforward, though the metronome markings that I have documented by no means suggest an unchanging beat; the figures supplied are based on an average pulse over a number of bars. What is less straightforward is the comparison of how each group interprets the themes of Op. 8a that bear significance as musical allusions and were subsequently removed in the revised version. The criteria are set in accordance with my central hypothesis, namely, that the most successful interpretations of Brahms's Op. 8a should in some way suggest a relationship with Schumann's Op. 63.

Table 9 shows the four musical allusions whose interpretations are to be compared, with the allusion to *Manfred* doubling as a fugue subject in the recapitulation. The fugue subject itself provides a point of comparison, since it presents the challenge of conveying its Bachian character as well as the additional layer of allusive meaning to Schumann's 'Astarte theme'. Other detailed comments are provided in Table 9 to highlight aspects of the performers' interpretations of these passages that are particularly deserving of comment.

Odeon Trio, Altenberg Trio Wien, and Trio Jean Paul best capture the recitative-like element that is inherent in the allusion to *Genoveva*. These groups play at a freer tempo to express the pathos of recitative in a soliloquy-like manner. They each take a slightly faster tempo during this passage, and subtly regain the original tempo at the *Manfred* fugue subject. The precise written articulations for the *Genoveva* recitative are ultimately approximate indications, as any group that plays 'as written' invariably sounds stiff and angular, amounting merely to an effort to perform with basic precision.

**Table 9.** Performers' interpretations of allusions to recitatives, fugue and songs in recordings of Brahms's Op. 8a

| Allusions<br>Recordings               | Schumann,<br><i>Genoveva</i>                                | Schumann,<br><i>Manfred</i>                                                                                                                                                              | Schubert,<br><i>Am Meer</i>                                                                              | Beethoven,<br><i>An die ferne Geliebte</i>                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                       | Recitative<br>1 <sup>st</sup> movement                      | Fugue subject<br>(Exposition/Recap.)<br>1 <sup>st</sup> movement                                                                                                                         | Song<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> movement                                                                         | Song<br>4 <sup>th</sup> movement                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Odeon Trio<br/>(1993)</b>          | 2'28"<br>- With forward momentum, recitative-like           | 2'54" (in Exposition)<br>- Steady and played <i>pp</i><br>9'26" (in Recap.)<br>- Keeps lyricism in the fugue subject and clear contrapuntal texture<br>- Slows down through the triplets | 2'21"<br>- Steady, a slightly moving tempo than the beginning (Crotchet = 60)<br>- Lyrical and song-like | 1'46" (cello)<br>- Very expressive<br>2'37" (violin)<br>- Very expressive<br>7'38" (piano)<br>- Very expressive in <i>f</i> but not <i>sempre agitato</i>                      |
| <b>Trio Opus 8<br/>(1996)</b>         | 2'39"<br>2'33" *wrong bass note in piano (F# instead of E#) | 3'06" (in Exposition)<br>15'47" (in Recap.)                                                                                                                                              | 2'29"<br>- Static but not very slow (Crotchet = 63)                                                      | 1'58" (cello)<br>2'52" (violin)<br>7'56" (piano)                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Altenberg Trio Wien<br/>(2001)</b> | 2'27"<br>- Beautifully shaped, with motion                  | 2'55" (in Exposition)<br>- Delicately played<br>14'55" (in Recap.)<br>- Heavily and slowly played (Minim = 63; marked <i>un poco piu Moderato</i> )                                      | 2'25"<br>- Very slow and deliberate (Crotchet = 54)                                                      | 1'59" (cello)<br>3'01" (violin)<br>8'30" (piano)<br>- Not played <i>f</i> and <i>sempre agitato</i>                                                                            |
| <b>Trio Jean Paul<br/>(2005)</b>      | 2'22"<br>- Recitative-like                                  | 2'52" (in Exposition)<br>- Recitative-like<br>14'46" (in Recap.)<br>- Played without <i>marcato</i> or staccato and fast (Minim = 80)                                                    | 2'23"<br>- A little faster than beginning<br>- Played with a lilt (Crotchet = 63)                        | 1'44" (cello)<br>2'37" (violin)<br>7'54" (piano)<br>- Not played <i>f</i> and <i>agitato</i>                                                                                   |
| <b>Hyperion Trio<br/>(2006)</b>       | 2'30"<br>- Articulation played as written                   | 2'58" (in Exposition)<br>- Steady and played <i>pp</i><br>15'04" (in Recap.)<br>- Deliberately articulated and static (Minim = 69)                                                       | 2'06"<br>- A little faster than beginning<br>- Steady (Crotchet = 69)                                    | 1'54" (cello)<br>- Not <i>espressivo</i><br>2'49" (violin)<br>- Well timed on <i>sostenuto poco a poco in tempo</i><br>7'49" (piano)<br>- Not <i>espress. e sempre agitato</i> |
| <b>Gould Piano Trio<br/>(2009)</b>    | 2'39"<br>- Minimal inflections<br>- Straightforward         | 3'06" (in Exposition)<br>- Straightforward<br>10'21" (in Recap.)<br>- Very static                                                                                                        | 2'47"<br>- Very slow and static (Crotchet = 52)                                                          | 1'54" (cello)<br>2'50" (violin)<br>- Not softer ( <i>pp</i> ) compared to the cello entry<br>8'34" (piano)<br>- Not integrated with cello                                      |

The allusions to the songs of Schubert and (via Schumann) Beethoven suggest a possible lyrical approach, which may be achieved through legato playing and flexibility in phrasing. Initial examination of Schumann's practice of incorporating song references in his instrumental works shows that the tempo of the original song is not necessarily transferred to the new context. Schumann's allusion to Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*, for instance, is marked *Adagio*, whereas Beethoven's original is marked *Andante con moto, cantabile*. Brahms's allusion to Schubert's song 'Am Meer', marked *Sehr langsam* (very slowly), appears after a long, quiet first section in the third movement of his Op. 8a, in which the tempo instruction at the beginning of the movement is *Adagio non troppo* (crotchet = 63). In Schumann's Op. 63/iii, the song-like theme that emerges from a similarly slow first section, marked *Bewegter* (quicker), may be used as the basis for determining the tempo to be taken in Brahms's allusion to 'Am Meer'. Here the groups differ widely in their interpretations on the recordings. Trio Jean Paul, Hyperion Trio, and Gould Piano Trio play this song-like theme at almost the same tempo as the first section. While Trio Jean Paul moves from crotchet = 60 at the beginning to crotchet = 63, Gould Piano Trio uses somewhat slower speeds, moving from crotchet = 50 to crotchet 52. The song ceases to flow at such a slow tempo. This is a similar concern for Altenberg Trio Wien who take the allusion at crotchet = 54, deliberately slower than at the beginning. Odeon Trio, Trio Opus 8 and Hyperion Trio all take the passage at a noticeably faster tempo, but only Odeon Trio is truly successful in conveying an expressive, song-like quality.

The allusion to Beethoven's *An die Ferne Geliebte* in the fourth movement is the most widely known reference in Brahms's Op. 8a. Its usage by both Schumann and Brahms had become public knowledge by 1884,<sup>65</sup> and it is almost certain that Brahms referred to Beethoven's song by way of Schumann. Although all the groups play the theme in a song-like manner, none of them successfully convey its build-up. As mentioned previously, the *An die ferne Geliebte* theme undergoes a process of transformation from tenderness to agitation, which should be emphasised in its interpretation. It

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<sup>65</sup> Hull, 'Brahms the Allusive: Extra-Compositional Reference in the Instrumental Music of Johannes Brahms', pp. 237–238.

is marked *espressivo* every time it is played by a single instrument and *dolce* when it appears as a canonic duet between the violin and cello, while the final time is marked *f espress. e sempre agitato*. In my view, only Odeon Trio interprets the *espressivo* in the passionate manner needed for this theme. As if taken by surprise by this outburst on Brahms's part, none of the Trios convey the sense that this theme builds to an agitated and climactic state in the piano part, and none of them maintain *f espress. e sempre agitato* until indicated otherwise. One difficulty is that the cello seems to prevent a freer outburst by the piano. Although the short thematic motifs in the cello part are separated by rests and are marked *p leggiero ma marc.*, it should enable the sense of *agitato* by moving forward with the piano part.

Brahms's generally negative view of the metronome was probably the reason he removed all the metronome markings from his Op. 8b. Among his piano trios, Brahms only employed metronome markings once following his Op. 8a, in the first movement of his Piano Trio in C major, Op. 87. Nevertheless, metronome markings, in particular those that the composer indicated, can provide guidance on interpretation if used with discretion, as evidenced in Fanny Davies's annotated score of Op. 8b.

Comparison of the recordings of Op. 8a provides some evidence of how contemporary performers regard Brahms's metronome markings. Table 10 shows how each of the six groups either follows or deviates from the printed metronome markings in markedly different ways. Recordings of the first movement reveal a general consensus of around minim = 72. This tempo alone distinguishes Op. 8a from Op. 8b, which is generally played more broadly and slowly, even though it is marked *Allegro con brio*. Comparison of the Scherzo section of the second movement shows that all the groups are following the metronome marking in performing at approximately dotted minim = 100–104. However, in the slower Trio section, the marking of dotted minim = 72 is not observed to the same extent. While the Gould Piano Trio, Altenberg Trio Wien, and Trio Jean Paul take this section at around minim = 69–72, the other groups play at much slower speeds. In the

slow movement, Brahms indicated crotchet = 63. Only the Hyperion Trio and Trio Jean Paul recordings, at crotchet = 60–63, are close to this tempo. Clearly, the tempo chosen by Gould Piano Trio, crotchet = 50, seems too slow. The Finale is marked dotted minim = 66, a tempo that is technically difficult to maintain with clarity. Four out of six groups opted for a slower, and more technically manageable, speed of dotted minim = 54–58. However, the truly exciting interpretations are those executed at the indicated tempo, by Odeon Trio and Trio Jean Paul, who give a strong impression of *molto agitato* from the very beginning. In general, when the groups employed tempi that were very different from Brahms's suggestions, their interpretations became wanting, especially where the discrepancies are conspicuous.

**Table 10.** Comparison of metronome markings in Brahms's Op. 8a between score and recordings in the opening of each movement (plus the Trio section of the second movement)

| <div> <div>Trios</div> <div> <div>Brahms's<br/>Op. 8a<br/>Metronome<br/>markings</div> </div> </div>            | Odeon Trio<br>1993 | Trio<br>Opus 8<br>1996 | Altenberg<br>Trio Wien<br>2001 | Trio Jean Paul<br>2005 | Hyperion Trio<br>2006 | Gould Piano<br>Trio<br>2009 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| I.<br><i>Allegro con moto</i><br>Minim = 72                                                                     | 72                 | 72                     | 69                             | 76                     | 72                    | 72                          |
| II.<br>Scherzo:<br><i>Allegro molto</i><br>Dotted minim = 100<br>Trio:<br><i>Più lento</i><br>Dotted minim = 72 | 104<br>58          | 100<br>60              | 104<br>72                      | 100<br>69              | 104<br>66             | 104<br>69                   |
| III.<br><i>Adagio non troppo</i><br>Crotchet = 63                                                               | 54                 | 58                     | 58                             | 60                     | 63                    | 50                          |
| IV.<br><i>Allegro molto agitato</i><br>Dotted minim = 66                                                        | 66                 | 58                     | 54                             | 66                     | 60                    | 56                          |

In the course of examining the changes in tempo in different recordings of Brahms's Op. 8a, it became clear that the musicians often respond to the change in instructions within each movement with an abruptness that is disruptive to the momentum and coherence of the music. For instance, in Op. 8a/i, the *Schneller* at bar 435 should be arrived at gradually (it is marked *accel. poco a poco* six bars before), and the new *Schneller* section should nonetheless be related to the previous tempo. When the group abruptly changes to a much faster tempo here, as did the Hyperion Trio, the music loses its sense of accretive momentum. Even though there is no indication of metronome marking, it is important to decide upon a precise tempo when at this point during rehearsal. Many parallels concerning changes in tempo can be found in Schumann's Op. 63. In the last twelve bars of Op. 63/i alone, six different tempo markings appear: *retard.*, *Etwas langsamer*, *a tempo*, *Schneller*, *retard.*, *a tempo*. This succession of instructions poses similar challenges for the interpreter of the score. One interpretation is that these tempo changes represent extremism, where musicians perhaps mistake incoherence for passion. I initially shared this misconception, which is partly due to the current trend of performing Schumann in a somewhat extreme manner. However, one needs only to listen to early twentieth-century recordings of Schumann's piano works by pupils of Clara Schumann, such as Adelina de Lara, to see that extremism in feeling does not equate to an exaggerated manner of execution. These findings have led me to the view that a compelling and coherent interpretation of Brahms's Op. 8a, as well as Schumann's Op. 63, requires a skilful handling of these tempo changes befitting of a large-scale structure with a complex technical and emotional scope.

### **Establishing a performing tradition for Op. 8a that is distinct from Op. 8b**

In order to start to establish a performing tradition for Brahms's Op. 8a and to restore the work to its rightful place in the piano trio repertoire, it is necessary to remove the prejudices against the early version. One of the ways to achieve this is through recordings that demonstrate model

interpretations with a virtuosic flair, such as those by the Odeon Trio and Trio Jean Paul. It is significant that the two groups deliver very different sound worlds for Brahms's Op. 8a: Odeon Trio's powerful sonorities are orchestral in nature, and are reminiscent of the sound world one typically associates with the 'Brahmsian'; Trio Jean Paul creates distinctive instrumental colours that are more intimate and embody elements that may be considered as reflecting the 'Schumannesque'. Interestingly, both groups have been associated specifically with Op. 8a, as the Odeon Trio recording of Op. 8b was not re-issued in the 1993 CD release, while Trio Jean Paul did not record Op. 8b in the first place.

It is fruitful to compare interpretative approaches to the two different versions of Op. 8. A single hearing of the recordings is sufficient to reveal that some of these groups, such as Trio Opus 8 and Gould Piano Trio, did not interpret the two versions noticeably differently; the unchanged materials such as the opening themes are executed almost identically in each. However, the differences between Op. 8a and Op. 8b are such that each version needs to be regarded and interpreted as a distinct, albeit related, work. On the other hand, comparison of the recordings of Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a by the same groups yields different findings. A case in point is that Trio Jean Paul's recording of Schumann's Op. 63 shows originality in their stylistic approach to the Schumannesque, with sonorities and instrumental textures similar to those they created in Brahms's Op. 8a, thereby suggesting a close relationship between the interpretations of these two works. While I have demonstrated how Schumann's Op. 63 influenced Brahms's Op. 8a, its further impact on the recomposition of Op. 8 is less obvious and is discussed in Chapter 4.

Perhaps more than recordings, live performance serves as an indispensable way to regain a performing tradition for Brahms's Op. 8a. In a public masterclass with Susan Tomes, pianist of the former Florestan Trio, she remarked while coaching the Minerva Piano Trio on Brahms's Op. 8a that she was unfamiliar with this version. She later wrote, 'my interest in it [Brahms's Op. 8a] was driven out by a very poor performance I heard some years ago, which led me to conclude (wrongly) that it

was not worth further investigation.’<sup>66</sup> This comment sums up the problem that Brahms’s Op. 8a faces today: for an almost unknown work that lacks an established performing tradition due to decades of neglect (and no recordings prior to 1982), good performances and recordings are of paramount importance. Tones continued, ‘However, yesterday a good performance revealed many lovely things in the score, and even the weaknesses seemed rather touching.’

In conclusion, the interpretation of Op. 8a in performance should be different from Op. 8b not only because of their very different content, but because Op. 8a was written during an earlier period that is strongly connected with the musical aesthetics and performing traditions of the Schumann circle. Bearing in mind that the second movement remains largely unaltered in the recomposed version, how should Op. 8a differentiate itself from Op. 8b in performance? Perhaps the answer lies in distinguishing between the different conceptions of the two works. They are like buildings that belong to different stylistic periods: the new building still has the façade of the old one, while its interior is a blend of remnants from the past and newer stylistic features; the old building, by contrast, was borne of a single mould. The two tell different stories from different times, and in each case, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

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<sup>66</sup> Susan Tones, <<http://www.susantones.com/brahms-trio-opus-8-revision>>, 11 March 2013.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SCHUMANN'S *DAVIDSBÜNDLER* REIMAGINED IN THE RECOMPOSITION OF

#### BRAHMS'S OP. 8

In the previous chapters, I proposed to use Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ideology as a framework to identify parallel musical features between Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a. To the performer of Brahms's Op. 8a, it means looking to Schumann's Op. 63 and the 'Schumannesque' rather than to Brahms's Op. 8b for interpretative inspiration. This chapter reimagines Schumann's *Davidsbündler* and considers in what ways the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8 relate to it. Not only does Schumann's *Davidsbündler* symbolise the social milieu — or the 'secret society' of which, as I suggested, Brahms became a member and within which Brahms immersed himself as a young composer — but it also represents Schumannesque musical aesthetics which Brahms embraced as he wrote his Op. 8a. The critic Richard Pohl, having antagonised Schumann in 1854 through his disingenuous response in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* to Schumann's article 'Neue Bahnen',<sup>1</sup> reviewed Brahms's Opp. 1–9 in 1855 and stated, 'The more he [Brahms] succeeds in freeing himself from the characteristic Schumann nature, the more may be looked to from his future.... Brahms is not free from Schumann's danger....'<sup>2</sup> Rather than freeing himself from the 'Schumann nature' and 'Schumann's danger' in a paranoid manner as Pohl would have liked, Brahms incorporated what he learned from Schumann while letting his own nature shine through as he matured as a composer, which, I argue, is evident in his Op. 8b. From this standpoint, the new material in Op. 8b should indicate fundamental aesthetic changes that can be reflected as such in the interpretation of the work in performance.

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<sup>1</sup> Larry Todd, ed., *Schumann and his World* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994), pp. 233–234, 259, 261.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000), pp. 215–216.

It is necessary to consider this perspective alongside a critical comparison of Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b. Some ten scholarly studies addressing this issue have already been undertaken,<sup>3</sup> which represents a considerable amount of work on such a focused subject, and I incorporate these where relevant to my lines of enquiry. I do not intend to give a comprehensive comparison, or duplicate existing analyses. Instead, I examine how the new material replaces the musical features of *Davidsbündler* as analysed in previous chapters, including allusions, fugal and other structural elements. The performer's perspective is crucial to my analysis and has been integrated into the discussion, as derived from the comparisons of recordings in Chapter 3 and my own position as a pianist.

The comparison of the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8 naturally raises the question of what might have motivated its recomposition. The many scholarly attempts to address this musicological point of intrigue span a wide spectrum of approaches, from the purely musical to the autobiographical, hermeneutical, and psychological, all of which are examined in the course of this chapter. However interesting, or at times far-reaching, these attempts have been, it is clear that one-dimensional approaches have not done justice to explaining the motivation, which is inherently multifaceted. Therefore, I have taken the longer route of unravelling all the strands of the question via different approaches instead of seeking to impose one single hypothesis. In this way, I propose a more in-depth and complete alternative to the existing historical and current scholarship on the subject.

A couple of research questions of broader significance emerged in the course of the study. One is to align the 'Schumannesque' with the early 'Brahmsian' musical language, and to refine the meaning of these terms according to the artistic stages discussed in the present study and the

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<sup>3</sup> Heather Platt, *Johannes Brahms: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 221–223.

implications for the performer. In recent years, scholars such as Constantin Floros<sup>4</sup> and John Daverio<sup>5</sup> have begun to investigate the relationship between the musical languages of Schumann and Brahms. While Floros focused specifically on the piano works,<sup>6</sup> Daverio explored the terrain more broadly and drew comparisons across genres.<sup>7</sup> Scholarship that follows or parallels the footsteps of Floros and Daverio seems to be on the rise. As a result, current musicological research jointly on Schumann and Brahms is continuing to shape our understanding of their respective stylistic developments.

One area that is receiving particular attention is Schumann's late style. His late works have been so tainted by the stigma of his mental illness that they were categorically dismissed by musicologists and performers until recently, a phenomenon that may be traced back to Schumann's own contemporaries (those who suppressed Schumann's late works include Clara Schumann as well as friends like Joseph Joachim).<sup>8</sup> In this regard Brahms's attitude was clearly an exception. Brahms appears to have identified with Schumann — along with his evolving musical aesthetics — in a way that many others could not at the time or since. The extent to which Brahms endorsed and promoted Schumann's late music leads to important questions that warrant separate consideration. According to Laura Tunbridge, there is a case to make for trying to understand late Schumann through Brahms.<sup>9</sup> Although the periods that I am addressing are somewhat different — Schumann's Op. 63 falls slightly outside his late period — my approach pursues similar goals. Despite the vast scholarly literature on Schumann and Brahms, there is still a wide gap in performance studies on the two composers. Performing issues in Brahms's works have generally received more analytical and

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<sup>4</sup> Constantin Floros, *Johannes Brahms 'Free but Alone': A Life for a Poetic Music* [Translation from German edition, 1997], trans. Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> John Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Floros, *Johannes Brahms*, pp. 95–111.

<sup>7</sup> Daverio, *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms*, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Laura Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007), pp. 5–6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

scholarly attention than those of Schumann. As a result, the relationship between performing Schumann and performing Brahms has yet to be thoroughly explored.

As part of my conclusions, another goal of this chapter is to consider ways of incorporating musicological findings both within the performance of the work, and as part of the concert setting. During the course of my research, it has become clear that musicological studies and contemporary performances could reciprocally learn from one another. Unlike the performing traditions of the music of Schumann and Brahms which were handed down to a select few, as in the case of Clara Schumann and her pupils discussed in Chapter 3, the agglomeration of today's diverse performing traditions makes following a single tradition unlikely, if not impossible. As a result, it is essential for the performer to be aware of the origins of a performing tradition in order to make informed decisions regarding new interpretations.

### **Critical comparisons between Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b**

One of the earliest analytical comparisons of Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b is by Donald Francis Tovey in 1929.<sup>10</sup> Without delving into historical details, he emphasised the drastic differences between the two versions, speaking mainly of the outer sonata movements, and commenting that they are 'different in sentiment, in theme, in form, and above all, in sense of movement'.<sup>11</sup> He analysed the two versions by focusing on their themes and forms, and his overarching formal considerations generally rationalised all the new material in Op. 8b as improvements. Regarding Op. 8a, he dismissed the allusion to Schubert's 'Am Meer' with a cutting remark, 'the resemblance is of the kind which amateurs discover with infantile ease'. Yet, he surprisingly did not note the allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte*, which he referred to only as a 'pretty F

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<sup>10</sup> Donald Francis Tovey, 'Brahms's Chamber Music', *Essays and Lectures on Music* (London: Oxford UP, 1949), pp. 226–230.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

sharp-major melody'. It was only a few decades later that Eric Sams, citing Kalbeck who had confirmed the allusions to Schubert and Beethoven, identified other allusions that he had discovered in Op. 8a in his seminal article 'Brahms and his Clara Themes'.<sup>12</sup>

The first movement of Op. 8b, apart from the opening 62 bars which reflect only minor changes, is completely different from Op. 8a, both thematically and structurally. The new thematic material embodies a different character, and the rest of the movement in Op. 8b demonstrates compositional techniques characteristic of late Brahms that were not used in the early version. Walter Frisch discussed Brahms's frequent use of metrical displacements in Op. 8b as one example of late Brahmsian technique.<sup>13</sup> Examples 29 and 30 show two instances in Op. 8b where the metre is displaced through a combination of rhythmic, harmonic and chromatically melodic means in the piano part.

**Ex. 29.** Brahms's Op. 8b/i, bb. 81–84



**Ex. 30.** Brahms's Op. 8b/i, bb. 157–158



<sup>12</sup> Eric Sams, 'Brahms and His Clara Themes', *The Musical Times* 112/1539 (1971), pp. 432–434.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

The new G sharp minor second subject opens with a chain of descending thirds (Ex. 31). Frisch observed that the use of third chains is a late-Brahmsian feature, citing the example such as the opening theme of Brahms's Fourth Symphony;<sup>14</sup> however, as shown by examples in early Brahms, such as the Andante movement of his Op. 5, it is inaccurate to call the use of third chains solely late Brahmsian. My observation is that such chains of thirds in his late works often appear to be in minor key contexts, as in the Fourth Symphony in E minor, and these late uses seem to share emotional properties that one does not find in the more song-like theme in a major key in Op. 5. By combining the third chains with a minor tonality in his late works and by extending the theme with metrical displacements, Brahms put the stamp of his late style on the second subject in a sophisticated manner. Citing Arno Mitschka's analysis of Op. 8, Frisch mentioned that this chain of thirds was derived from a 'counter-theme' which is the same in both versions (Ex. 32).<sup>15</sup> This example shows how Brahms was able to create a synthesis between the two versions by using the same device, bearing in mind that this device in the revised version takes on a new meaning that, in my opinion, can only be properly understood in the context of Brahms's late music. The late Brahmsian character of grave melancholy and resignation reflected in this new G sharp minor second subject is further enhanced by a succession of crescendo and decrescendo markings ('hairpins') which has the effect of long sighs – another recurring feature of late Brahms that symbolises resignation. In many of his late piano works such as Op. 119, No. 1 (1893), he used such dynamic markings and explained to Clara Schumann: 'every measure and every note must sound retard[ando], as though one wished to suck melancholy out of each and everyone...'.<sup>16</sup> In Op. 8b, such 'hairpins' are assigned to each instrument playing the new G sharp minor theme at every occurrence; this effect is further intensified when the instruction is given to all three instruments at the same time (Ex. 33).

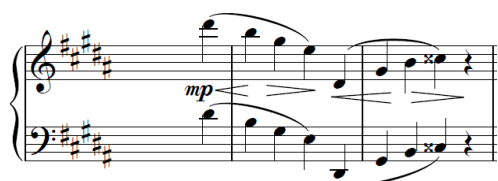
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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> Styra Avins, *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters*, trans. Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997), p. 706.

**Ex. 31.** New second subject (piano) in Op. 8b/i, bb. 76–77



**Ex. 32.** Third chain ‘counter-theme’ (piano reduction) in Op. 8a/i and Op. 8b/i, bb. 55–58



**Ex. 33.** Brahms’s Op. 8b/i, bb. 214–221



The G sharp minor sentiment carries forward to the second subject of the slow third movement. As in the first and fourth movements, the opening thematic material of the third movement — in this case, the first 32 bars — has remained largely unchanged in both versions. At bar 32, however, instead of moving to the E major theme which alludes to Schubert’s ‘Am Meer’ in the piano part, Brahms wrote a new theme in G sharp minor introduced by the cello (Ex. 34). The technique of metrical displacement is used when the piano takes over from the cello to continue the

second part of the theme at bar 43 (Ex. 35). The harmony and texture are rich in the piano part, using dotted rhythms in such a way as to convey a sense of longing and anticipation. The ambiguity of metre lasts eight bars until the violin repeats the cello subject at bar 52.

**Ex. 34.** Brahms's Op. 8b/iii, bb. 33–36 (cello)



**Ex. 35.** Brahms's Op. 8b/iii, bb. 43–45 (piano reduction)



The finales of Op. 8a and Op. 8b are identical up to bar 52, where new material in Op. 8b is introduced at bar 53 with a new sequence of syncopated chords (bars 55–56). As these syncopated chords return in the recapitulation, the sequence of chromatic minor seconds highly resembles those in Schumann's Op. 63/i at the *Schneller* section (Ex. 36). The new second subject starting at bar 64 is one that has been frequently mentioned by Brahms scholars because Clara Schumann dismissed it as 'horrible' in her diary (Ex. 37).<sup>17</sup> To replace the beautiful allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte* with this strident new theme is surprising, and yields further evidence that Op. 8b is significantly different in sentiment from its earlier version. This new theme is introduced by the piano in D major, characterised by a series of syncopated quavers in the piano bass throughout for 16 bars, and has none of the poignancy of the other two new themes.

<sup>17</sup>George Bozarth, 'Brahms's B major Trio: An American Première', *The American Brahms Society Newsletter* 8/1 (1990), p. 4.

**Ex. 36.** Syncopated and chromatic chords in Schumann's Op. 63/i and Brahms's op. 8b/iv

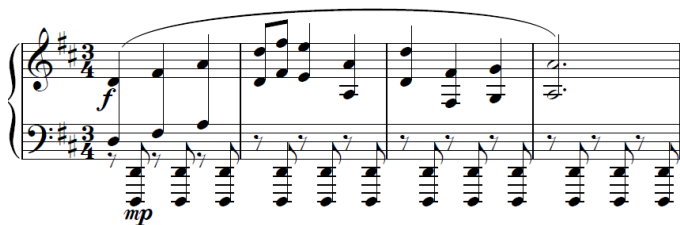
a) Brahms's Op. 8b/iv, bb. 196–197



b) Schumann's Op. 63/i, Schneller section, bb. 236–237



**Ex. 37.** New second subject in Brahms's Op. 8b/iv, bb. 64–67



One observation to be made about the three new second subjects is that they share a strong rhythmic profile with irregular phrasings and an emphasis on rich chromatic harmonies (except for the one in the finale). In terms of instrumental texture, instead of three instruments in dialogue, the focus has now switched in favour of interplay between strings and piano. The piano part in Op. 8b has an even more dominant role than in Op. 8a, where the piano writing makes it more susceptible to overpowering the string instruments, particularly when it is playing with a single string part. There is much less canonic writing between the strings than in Op. 8a.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Fanny Davies's annotated score of Op. 8b provides clues to the opening tempi. Although most of her metronome marks show close resemblance to those indicated by Brahms in his Op. 8a, the ones from which Davies deviated, such as in the first movement, appear logical. A closer analysis of Op. 8b shows that these tempi are largely considered alongside the second subjects. For instance, Davies wrote 'minim = 60' for the descending third passage in G sharp minor in the first movement. This is the same as her suggested minim = 60 at the beginning of the movement. At the transition between the first and second subjects at bar 62, she suggested a faster tempo of minim = 80, which reflects the forward-moving character of the vigorous triplets. Minim = 60 is noticeably slower than what Brahms indicated in Op. 8a as minim = 72. Interpretations today take the opening tempo of Op. 8b quite slowly and broadly, close to minim = 60, which at that speed sometimes sounds more like 4/4 time, rather than the revised cut time indication. However, if this slower tempo is applied to Op. 8a, the second theme would be much too slow, and would lose its recitative character. Therefore it is important for performers to consider the different context of both versions of Op. 8 when choosing appropriate tempi. Among the recordings compared in Chapter 3, those that played the beginning of both versions using only minim = 60 or minim = 72 present interpretations that do not recognise the significance of the difference between their second themes.

Unlike Op. 8a, the performing tradition of Op. 8b is well established. What is crucial for performers who approach Op. 8a from the standpoint of prior familiarity with Op. 8b, which is undoubtedly the majority of them, is to understand that much of what applies to Op. 8b, including tempi, instrumental balance, and emotional content, does not necessarily apply in Op. 8a. Furthermore, it is important to interpret Op. 8b as a late Brahmsian work, rather than an early work, as the opus number misleadingly suggests. Except for the Scherzo movement, which remains largely the same except the coda, the other movements in each version demand a separate interpretation derived from their own musical context.

Table 11 summarises the main points of comparison between Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b, using the categories suggested by Tovey as discussed earlier. The new thematic and rhythmic elements mentioned previously have a significant impact on the form and character of the entire work.

**Table 11.** Main points of comparison between Brahms's Op. 8a and Op. 8b<sup>18</sup>

|                              | Op. 8a                                                                               | Op. 8b                                                   |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Theme</b>                 | Allusions – strong melodic profiles; lengthy themes given to one instrument          | New themes are shorter – Strong rhythmic profiles        |
| <b>Form</b>                  | Loosely-structured sonata form (episodic); epic-proportioned for the outer movements | Compact sonata form; classically-proportioned throughout |
| <b>Sense of movement</b>     | Frequent static and improvisatory sections; less forward motion                      | Forward motion throughout                                |
| <b>Sentiment (character)</b> | Daring, grand, with 'Romantic' abandon                                               | Conservative, purposeful, resigned                       |

The epic scale and improvisatory elements in Op. 8a disappear in favour of a much more compact and concise structure. For example, the three-part second subject in the first movement of around twenty bars of distinct thematic material is replaced by a two-part theme that is only eight bars long. In many ways, Op. 8a is episodic not only because it contains more distinctive themes (or episodes), but also because of the seemingly spontaneous way Brahms incorporates these episodic materials. The fugato in the recapitulation of the first movement, for instance, is based solely on the middle part of the second subject, while the other parts of the subject are dismissed. The second subject incorporating the reference to *An die ferne Geliebte* – 24 bars long – is treated in a free

<sup>18</sup> The comparison sets general issues in the context of both versions of Op. 8, and excludes the Scherzo movements which remain largely identical.

manner, recurring four times throughout the finale: twice in the exposition (F# major), once in the development in the style of a duet (E flat major), and once in the recapitulation (B major). Unlike the second subjects in Op. 8b, none of those of the original are given strong rhythmic profiles to propel the movement forward; it is as if Brahms was content to linger over the melodic contours of the lengthy allusions. In other words, Op. 8a is strongly reliant on the melodic element of the allusions, which are the main pillars in bringing the otherwise loosely-structured sonata-form movements together.

### ***Davidsbündler* reimagined**

Just as Op. 8a relates closely to Schumann's Op. 63 in terms of musical aesthetics and compositional techniques, Op. 8b relates more distantly to Schumann's Op. 63 as shown in the conspicuous differences between Op. 8a and Op. 8b. However, this should not be taken to mean that Schumann's influence has been removed from Op. 8b altogether, which is an overly general and misleading view that has, nonetheless, been suggested in the past.<sup>19</sup> It undermines the fundamental affinities between the two composers, as when one presumes Schumann's influence on Brahms was largely derived from biographical circumstances. I argue that what disappears from Brahms's Op. 8b is not Schumann's influence *per se*, which is deeply ingrained; instead, Brahms seems to have eliminated certain aesthetic elements discussed in previous chapters with respect to Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ideology.

Reinhard Kapp summarised some principles and special features in Schumann's musical language that spanned his entire output, which he united under the term 'poeticization'.<sup>20</sup> Using Kapp's analysis, I have noted the following elements of Schumann's musical aesthetics — those

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<sup>19</sup> Sams, 'Brahms and His Clara Themes', p. 434.

<sup>20</sup> Reinhard Kapp, 'Schumann in his time and since', *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perry (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), p. 244.

reimagined as his *Davidsbündler* ideology of the middle-late period — that anticipated Brahms's Op. 8a: 'a song-like quality informing structural building blocks', 'greater integration in the relationship between words and music (taking the texts more seriously and seeking a specific music for the specific atmosphere of a Byron, an Eichendorff, a Heine and so on)', and 'the play with quotations, ciphers, inner voices, subtexts'. In technical terms, these characteristics include: 'motivic combination', 'introduction of new ideas after the exposition', 'broadening of range in tonal organization', "'synthetic" coda themes', and 'expansion of dissonance in the diatonic context'.<sup>21</sup> Many of these Schumannesque features are less evident in Brahms's Op. 8b, and, as shown in the comparison of the two versions of the work, are merged into a late Brahmsian language.

As Schumann wrote in his diary in late 1833, 'The idea of the *Davidsbündler* further developed', indicating that it was a well thought out process between the founding of the group and the founding of the journal. It supports the notion stated at the outset that the *Davidsbündler* is a fundamental part of Schumann's artistic identity: it grew out of his desire to create and transform people/characters in an attempt to write a novel. As it became a real-life group with members sharing a common purpose, Schumann published an announcement of the group with his article *Der Davidsbündler*. His idea found expression in his journal over ten years from 1834 to 1844, and evolved contemporaneously with his musical language of this period and beyond. While Daverio proposed that the *Davidsbündler* was a unifying agent between the stylistic features of Schumann's early and late chamber music and piano works, I argue that the *Davidsbündler* as Schumannesque continued to evolve alongside his musical language, and that it embraced a spectrum of aesthetic issues as varied as the 'members' of the *Davidsbünd*.

Some of the innovative Schumannesque elements, such as mosaic-like construction, imaginative titles and ciphers dominate modern commentary on Schumann. It is well known that these same techniques became a focus of criticism in much of the writing in the twentieth century

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 244–245.

on Schumann, most notably by Tovey and Rosen, who – along with the spread of formalism in musicology – were at least partly responsible for establishing the ground for these Schumannesque features to be considered either as evidence of Schumann’s inability to write in large-scale forms or as an early sign of his mental illness, or both. What is not taken into account is that these features are not a representation of Schumann’s entire output, as they stem from his early period. As discussed in Chapter 1, the view that Schumann had trouble writing large-scale works has been re-examined and revoked by Schumann revisionists. As is often the case with artists, distinctive styles can change dramatically during the course of their career, and this was the case with Schumann. Even mental illness contributes to a state of mind that is often representative of the style of an artist. The evolving style of Schumann’s middle-late period exemplified by his large-scale works (both instrumental and vocal), which, among other things, reflect a renewed interest in Bach’s fugues around the year 1845, is generally under-recognised. It is important to note that Bach’s legacy, particularly the 48 Preludes and Fugues, marks the various stages of Schumann’s stylistic development. Susan Wollenberg has pointed towards Georg von Dadelsen’s ‘classic formulation’ on the three stages of Bach’s influence on Schumann, the last of which was pinpointed as starting in 1845.<sup>22</sup> That Schumann’s ‘new manner of composing’ in 1845 coincides with the end of his editorship for his journal the previous year indicates a major turning point in his artistic direction. His output from this period certainly seems to have appealed to the young Brahms, judging by his reverential remarks to Clara Schumann about works such as *Genoveva* (1847–48) and *Manfred* (1848–49). He also agreed with Clara that the Second Symphony in C, Op. 61 (1845–46) was his ‘favourite of the five’ (referring to Schumann’s four symphonies plus the Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Susan Wollenberg, ‘Schumann’s Piano Quintet in E Flat: The Bach Legacy’, *The Music Review* 52/4 (1991), pp. 299–305.

<sup>23</sup> Anthony Newcomb, ‘Once More “Between Absolute and Program Music”: Schumann’s Second Symphony’, *19th-Century Music* 7/3 (1984), p. 236.

Schumann's Op. 63 belongs to this group of large-scale works as a masterly example that shows his unique 'new manner of composing', as distinct from his early period. He framed episodic elements with concise motivic material in his sonata-form movements, featuring both Baroque motifs and song-like themes. One could say that the early features that sprang from the *Davidsbündler* have evolved to embrace the structured and the disciplined, as shown by his new compositional technique of thematic combination and fugato within the sonata form. By incorporating episodic elements, such as the allusion to his own song in his Trio in F major Op. 80, into a highly contrapuntal texture, Schumann was able to continue to fulfil his ideal reflected in *Davidsbündler* as he originally set out in his journal in 1835, and to 'prepare for and facilitate the advent of a fresh, poetic future.'

*Davidbündler* continued to serve as a basic framework from which Schumann developed his changing poetic (literary) ideas. Regarding Schumann's middle-late period, Daverio remarked, 'For all its sophisticated motivicism and contrapuntal gamesmanship, Schumann's music of the mid-1840s still reveals a markedly poetic dimension.'<sup>24</sup> If anything, this poetic dimension is rendered more significant as he expressed it by using these techniques in his large-scale forms. When Schumann grasped the essence of combining the episodic within the epic, as in his Op. 63, he was actively anticipating the 'fresh, poetic future' that he later found embodied in Brahms. Just as scholars have referred to Schumann's Op. 63 as proto-Brahmsian,<sup>25</sup> Brahms's Op. 8a, conversely, reflects musical aesthetics from Schumann's *Davidsbündler* ideology of the late 1840s.

### ***Davidsbündler* and the extramusical: from external allusions to self-allusion**

Apart from such features as the 'episodic within the epic' and the Bachian contrapuntal textures, another defining feature of Schumann's *Davidsbündler* from this middle-late period is a

<sup>24</sup> John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a "New Poetic Age"* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), p. 326.

<sup>25</sup> Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style*, p. 152.

renewed association with extramusical meaning in his instrumental music. Quite unlike his early period where he made overt allusions, the extramusical meaning became more subtle and complex in the 1840s. Speaking of the reference to Bach (in which the notes B-A-C-H are presented in strict contrapuntal style) in the slow movement of Schumann's Second Symphony Op. 61, Anthony Newcomb suggested that this serves as an acknowledgement of 'gratitude to the role of craft, exemplified by Bach, as a source of strength and health through personal distancing'.<sup>26</sup> This shows Schumann's erudition and suggests that his extramusical references have a more stylistic and intellectual significance rather than one that is autobiographical. This perspective can also be applied to the allusions in Brahms's Op. 8a.

Kenneth Hull suggested an understanding of the extra-compositional meaning in Brahms's music to be similar to that of Schumann's, and that it can be summed up by the phrase 'between absolute and programme music' (the original German, 'zwischen absoluter und Programmusik', was cited by Newcomb in analysing Schumann's Second Symphony).<sup>27</sup> As mentioned, Schumann's Second Symphony was considered by nineteenth-century critics and musicians, including Brahms and Clara Schumann, to be a masterpiece. The fact that Schumann's Second Symphony incorporates an allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte* (or a self-allusion to his own *Fantasie*, Op. 17) in the finale, and a Bachian fugato in the slow movement — both elements being featured in Brahms's Op. 8a — strengthens the connection between Brahms's Op. 8a and Schumann's musical aesthetics of his middle-late period.

Apart from poetic and literary significance, the allusions in Brahms's Op. 8a could also indicate a general tribute to the large-scale works from Schumann's middle-late period. Following Schumann's 'Neue Bahnen' article, Brahms, as a young *Davidsbündler* adherent starting to understand his place through a historical lens, would likely be eager to align himself with the past

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<sup>26</sup> Newcomb, 'Once More "Between Absolute and Program Music"', p. 247.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Ross Hull, 'Brahms the Allusive: Extra-Compositional Reference in the Instrumental Music of Johannes Brahms', PhD diss., Princeton University, 1989, p. 11.

masters – including Schumann. Brahms had wished to pay tribute to the Schumanns and others with his first published works. As he contemplated the idea of dedicating works to Joachim and Clara Schumann in November 1853, Brahms wrote to Schumann to ask if he could set his wife's name at the head of his F sharp minor, Op. 2 (where the dedication still remains), adding that, 'I hardly dare, and yet I should like so much to give you a small token of my reverence and gratitude'.<sup>28</sup> Since Brahms would not dare being so bold as to make Schumann a dedicatee of his work, it was very likely that he did it more subtly through modelling his Op. 8a on Schumann's Op. 63, while alluding directly or indirectly to past masters in the manner of Schumann (including Bach, Beethoven, Schubert as well as Schumann), thereby joining Schumann in the prestigious lineage of the classical tradition. Therefore, instead of referring to Brahms's Op. 8a as 'an autobiographical fantasy', as coined by Eric Sams, it might be more apposite to acknowledge its status as programme (or narrative) music in the style of Schumann (as distinct from the New German School of Liszt and Wagner). Like the programmes in Schumann's music, the programme in Brahms's Op. 8a was implicit. Just as Schumann did, Brahms became self-referential (alluding to his own allusions) in his Op. 8b and treated some allusions in Op. 8a as thematic material to be reinvented and recycled into short motivic cells.

### **The self-allusive in Op. 8b**

Included among the large-scale works from Schumann's middle-late period wherein he referred to his own works are his Second Symphony, and his Piano Trio in F major, Op. 80. In the former, he reused material from his earlier solo piano works, including an allusion to his *Fantasie*, Op. 17 in which he referenced Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*; in the latter, he alluded to his own song *Dein Bildnis wunderselig*, which is about lost love, from the Eichendorff *Liederkreis*, Op. 39. I will call this phenomenon in Schumann 'the self-allusive', which Brahms appear to have emulated, as evidenced by his treatment of some of the allusions in Op. 8b. It has been argued by David Brodbeck

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<sup>28</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*, pp. 27–28.

that Brahms did not completely remove all of the allusions, but rather disguised them in Op. 8b.<sup>29</sup> I have since observed another instance where Brahms transformed the *Genoveva* allusion from Op. 8a, in which it appears as a motivic cell in Op. 8b.

The allusions that have been transformed include Schumann's *Genoveva* in the first movement, the Clara cipher/Schumann's *Genoveva* in the second movement, and Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* in the fourth movement. Brodbeck has already discussed in great detail his proposal as to how the *An die ferne Geliebte* allusion is not completely removed, only hidden. He identified remnants from the original theme, now fragmented into a short stepwise four-note motif that first appears in the violin in bars 63–64 in the fourth movement of Op. 8b (Ex. 38). As this motif gets repeated several times as a subsidiary motif to the new second subject, it takes on a new motivic shape that ends with a downward leap of a fourth (C-D-Eb-B) in the violin, immediately followed by an exact quotation of the opening four notes of the *An die ferne Geliebte* melody (B-C#-D-A) in the cello, but only for a brief moment, and in diminution. Although the allusion is disguised in such a way that it passes by in a flash and is hardly noticed, it can nonetheless be argued that Brahms intended to reconfigure the allusion rather than to abandon it completely.

**Ex. 38.** Allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte* in Brahms's Op. 8b/iv

(a) Violin, bb. 63–64



(b) Violin and cello, bb. 101–103



<sup>29</sup> David Brodbeck, "Medium and meaning", new aspects of the chamber music', *The Cambridge Companion to Brahms*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), p. 124.

The Clara cipher on the other hand, though it remains unchanged in the second movement, makes an additional appearance in the fourth movement of Op. 8b, as pointed out by Brodbeck (I argue that this also applies to the allusion to Schumann's *Genoveva*, as discussed in Chapter 3). The Clara cipher/allusion to *Genoveva* follows immediately after the allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte* in bars 103–111. Brodbeck argued that it is now in a 'misremembered form' due to the low sustained D that somewhat distorts the original cipher in the second movement (Ex. 39).<sup>30</sup> Except for the C natural, I find that it is in fact a repetition of the Clara cipher/allusion to *Genoveva* in the second movement, including all the notes (D-C-B-A#-B). In fact, with the alteration from C sharp to C natural, the pair of chromatic motifs C-B and A#-B now parallels the opening motifs of the finale, G-F# and E#-F#. By remodelling allusions into motivic units and incorporating them across movements, Brahms achieved a unity in the new version with great sophistication.

**Ex. 39.** Clara cipher/allusion to *Genoveva* in Brahms's Op. 8b/iv, bb. 103–111 (cello)



In the case of the *Genoveva* allusion in the first movement of Op. 8a, I have observed that the three notes that begin the theme B-A#-G# (Ex. 40a) form a recurring motif in its own right. It is featured prominently with emphasis and repetition, alternating between violin and piano in this format — B on the upbeat, A# as an appoggiatura on the first beat, G# on a weak beat — towards the end of the exposition (Ex. 40b). In Op. 8b this motif, along with the *Genoveva* allusion, seems to have been removed completely; yet on closer examination, it reappears in the newly written G sharp minor section in the third movement of Op. 8b (Ex. 41). It first appears in the transition into the new second subject, which is then emphasised through repetition, as in the case of the allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte* in Op. 8b. It is not a coincidence that the way this motif repeats between piano and

<sup>30</sup> Brodbeck, 'Medium and meaning', p. 127.

strings is analogous to the original appearance of the *Genoveva* theme in Op. 8a/i. This shows that Brahms again alluded to his own allusion, across movements, and in a disguised form.

**Ex. 40.** Fragment of allusion to *Genoveva* in Brahms's Op. 8a/i

(a) Piano, bb. 83–84



(b) Violin and piano treble, bb. 157–160



**Ex. 41.** Fragment of allusion to *Genoveva* in Brahms's Op. 8b/iii

(a) Piano bass, bb. 32–33



(b) Piano treble and violin, bb. 62–63



These three examples show that Brahms the self-allusive is to a large extent about reinvention. Instead of directly incorporating the Schumannesque elements, he now references them through Op. 8a in his late Brahmsian manner — more sophisticated and economical, yet one cannot accurately say that it has become ‘absolute music’, as claimed by a number of authors in line with Eric Sams. It would indeed be inaccurate to suggest that all the allusions have been removed in Brahms’s Op. 8b, since Brahms reused them, albeit in fragmented versions. By preserving fragments of Op. 8a and putting them in new contexts, Brahms offers a fleeting glimpse into what was once a very different edifice.

### A new explanation for the recomposition of Op. 8

The speculations as to what might have motivated Brahms to recompose his Op. 8 seldom help one get closer to the neglected version — Op. 8a. If anything, the endeavours seem to alienate Op. 8a further. One of my central aims in this study is to demonstrate why and how Brahms’s Op. 8a constitutes an important work in its own right. Scholars and performers of both versions of Op. 8 inevitably meet with a wide range of speculation as to what motivated the recomposition. In my opinion, it is important to acknowledge the validity of Op. 8a as part of the piano trio repertoire independent from its revised version, as this is a unique case in Brahms’s output where two very different versions of the same work coexist. Without broader acknowledgement of this point, Op.

8a will continue in the shadow of Op. 8b as an obscurity, merely an earlier version without its own identity. Speculations on the motivation behind the recomposition of Op. 8a should be considered with caution, particularly those that have a one-dimensional view towards the reception of Op. 8a. Commentary such as ‘Brahms was afterwards so ashamed of it [Op. 8a] he wrote a completely other [different] version of it’,<sup>31</sup> can still be heard today. Current scholars, although in a better position to evaluate the work with more resources available, do not seem to have come closer to comprehending Brahms’s motivation in revising the work than the composer’s own circle at the time. Brahms’s contemporaries responded with varying degrees of surprise and protest, yet there does not seem to be any documentary source that definitively identifies what might have motivated the recomposition.

The responses to the recomposition from Clara Schuman and the Herzogenbergs are well known, and have been mentioned in previous chapters. Brahms’s own perfunctory explanation to his publisher Simrock that ‘while it’s true that the old one is bad, I do not nevertheless claim that the new one is good’, cannot be taken at face value. Brahms continued to rationalise the drastic revisions to Simrock from the publisher’s sales standpoint: ‘I simply want to say that the old one will continue to sell poorly not because so much of it is ugly, but because so much of it is unnecessarily difficult’.<sup>32</sup> To Clara Schumann, he said something similar. Even to his old friend Julius Otto Grimm, who was familiar with the first version, Brahms only wrote with wry understatement, ‘I didn’t put a wig on it — but combed and tidied its hair a bit’.<sup>33</sup> The overall message is clear: he did not intend to elaborate on his reasons for the revision, as they were undoubtedly complex and personal.

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<sup>31</sup> Christopher Hogwood on BBC Radio 3’s Music Matters with Tom Service and Andras Schiff. Hogwood’s comment on Brahms’s Op. 8a appears at 5’24” (20<sup>th</sup> January 2012), <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00nfjn5>> (accessed 13th September 2013). Schiff’s response was ‘He [Brahms] has nothing to be ashamed of’.

<sup>32</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*, p. 678.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 672.

Modern evaluations have taken diverse approaches in their endeavours to speculate upon these reasons. Many of the autobiographical explanations hinge on Brahms's disposition and the romantic aspects of his relationship with Clara Schumann. Authors who read hidden meaning into the allusions suggesting unrequited love adopt the theory of autobiographical distancing, and embrace a hermeneutical explanation for the revisions. Prominent scholars including Malcolm MacDonald, Eric Sams, and David Brodbeck have all contributed to these speculations. Speaking of the seemingly omitted allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte* in the later version, MacDonald reasoned that it 'must have seemed insufficiently motivated and embarrassingly confessional, and perhaps that is why [the new second subject] seems to want almost literally to stamp out all memory of it'.<sup>34</sup> Sams, on the other hand, elaborated on the 'meaningful and deliberate allusions in the Schumann style' in Op. 8a, conversely describing Op. 8b as 'clearly presented as absolute music — telling no tales, betraying no secrets'.<sup>35</sup> He concluded by saying that 'perhaps the change of mind involved no change of heart. Brahms loved Clara Schumann all his life, in 1889 as in 1854'.<sup>36</sup> Discussing specifically Brahms's Op. 8a, Kenneth Hull subscribed to Sams's view that there are two well-known allusions connected with Clara Schumann.<sup>37</sup> Hull, like Sams, concluded that 'a large part of Brahms's motivation in revising the Trio was precisely to eliminate the allusive references',<sup>38</sup> implicitly accepting that none of the other existing explanations are entirely convincing.

This autobiographical hypothesis has been regarded as problematic by scholars such as Michael Struck, who argued that the signed date on the manuscript of Op. 8a precedes the autobiographical events that could have inspired the allusions as the manifestation of a love story as

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<sup>34</sup> Macdonald, *Brahms*, p. 341.

<sup>35</sup> Sams, 'Brahms and His Clara Themes', p. 434.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 434.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 232–239.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

proposed by Sams.<sup>39</sup> My own observation is that there are certainly other allusions in Brahms's oeuvre that remain intact. Around the time when his Op. 8a was written, Brahms also overtly alluded to Clara Schumann's Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann, Op. 20, which Brahms used as a thematic basis for his Op. 9 — a work that shares the exact same title as Clara Schumann's and was dedicated to her. The fact that Brahms's Op. 8a was written in the same year as Op. 9 shows that the practice of incorporating allusions, particularly those related to the Schumanns, evidently provided creative stimuli for Brahms at the time. It is important to bear in mind that Brahms did not alter his Op. 9, or many other works containing allusions that had connections with the Schumanns.

The autobiographical approach towards the allusions has an accessible appeal, yet it can be misleading when this aspect is emphasised as the overarching motive for recomposition; it offers a narrow and seemingly illogical explanation which overshadows other important factors such as musical and aesthetic motives. Another speculation focuses on historical distancing. Scholars such as Jacquelyn Sholes have examined Op. 8b as a testament to Brahms's distancing his music from that of earlier composers, and even from his youthful self. Focusing on a discussion of historical allusions, Sholes posited, 'if the original trio represents an elegy for the musical past, rather than — or even in addition to — a lament for Clara, then the 1889 revisions, not to be understood simply as Brahms's attempt to expunge an embarrassing confession of love, must be considered in terms of the historical perspective of the mature composer.'<sup>40</sup> The interpretation of historical distancing presents a similar problem to the autobiographical approach since many other examples exist where Brahms referenced the musical past and did not try to hide it by revising it later. Sholes based her argument on a reference to Scarlatti's Sonata in C major, K. 159 in Brahms's Op. 8a, which was

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<sup>39</sup> It is not clear that the date on the manuscript 'January 1854' marked the final completion of Op. 8a, since Brahms mentioned that he still wanted to make a few changes to Op. 8a in April, two months before he sent it to the publisher in June 1854.

<sup>40</sup> 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* 34/1 (2010), pp. 61–86.

removed in Op. 8b.<sup>41</sup> However, it is unclear whether the resemblance was coincidental (the allusion in question is a melodic and rhythmic variation on the opening theme of Op. 8). Furthermore, if Brahms's allusions indeed establish an extramusical narrative based largely on literary and poetic associations, then drawing upon a purely instrumental Scarlatti sonata would seem unlikely.

Other musicologists such as Tovey have focused on technical reasons, viewing Brahms primarily as an 'absolute' musician, who would not consciously use extramusical references, or, to put it another way, who would not deliberately remove references purely for autobiographical reasons.<sup>42</sup> Although it is more straightforward to attribute the revisions to more sober reasoning – to simply improve a composition – this approach leaves too many questions unanswered to provide the totality of the explanation. It also does a disservice to Op. 8a by casting it primarily as a weak composition. The simple fact that Brahms allowed both versions to coexist attests to his approval of the original version, whatever its weaknesses might be. Aesthetic and critical considerations have been explored by Antonio Baldassarre and Roger Moseley, both of whom discussed Brahms's early literary preoccupation with E.T.A. Hoffmann, and his identification with Hoffmann's alter ego Johannes Kreisler, as discussed in the previous chapter. Moseley used the analogy of a surgeon to describe Brahms's process of reconstituting Op. 8, writing that he 'engaged with the removal of foreign bodies in order to preserve organic integrity, but [that] traces of others – and of the past – persist throughout the revised trio.'<sup>43</sup> It seems that rather than 'removing foreign bodies', Brahms introduced new material and reworked the allusions so that everything bore his stamp as a master, and in so doing he fulfilled Schumann's prophesy that he embodied the 'poetic future'.

Undoubtedly, some of these speculations are fascinating and shed a much different light on the recomposition of Op. 8. What is common among them is the implication that Brahms somehow

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 61–86.

<sup>42</sup> Tovey, 'Brahms's Chamber Music', pp. 226–230.

<sup>43</sup> Roger Moseley, 'Reforming Johannes: Brahms, Kreisler Junior and the Piano Trio in B, Op. 8', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132/2 (2007), p. 304.

wished to distance himself psychologically from a person or a time: from Clara Schumann, his own musical youth, or the musical past. Indeed, it seems to be the case that if one compares the two versions of Op. 8 many of these speculations seem inevitable.

As in many cases with revisions, they often lose something of their essence. One telling example involves Brahms's advocating the original version of Schumann's Symphony No. 4 in D minor (1841), for which he was instrumental in its publication in 1891 as part of the Schumann complete edition under Clara Schumann's name. In the initial disagreement with Clara over the two versions of the Symphony, Brahms clearly loved and admired the original version and wrote in April 1888,

Everyone who sees it [revised version of Schumann's Symphony No. 4 (1851)] agrees with me that the score has not gained by being remodelled; it has certainly lost in charm, ease and clarity...In this new (or rather old) version one will find no difficulty, only enjoyment...and a change, and a refutation of the usual manner of orchestration.<sup>44</sup>

The extent to which Brahms advocated the original version of Schumann's Symphony No. 4 shows that different versions of a work can involve highly contentious issues. His insistence on its publication alongside the revised version almost cost him his friendship with Clara, who called the incident 'one more bad experience'.<sup>45</sup> The following extract from his letter to Clara shows his heartfelt devotion towards the Schumanns as late as 1892:

It is hard, after 40 years of faithful service (or whatever you wish to call my relationship to you) to be nothing more than 'one more bad experience'...But I can repeat to you today that you and your husband are for me the most beautiful experience of my life, and represent its greatest treasure and its noblest content...

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<sup>44</sup> Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader*, p. 166.

<sup>45</sup> Avins, *Johannes Brahms*, p. 689.

I sense that – through my manner, not through anything else, I might have deserved the great pain of your turning away from me, but my loving and reverent contemplation of you and him will always shine brightly and warmly.

This letter is revealing on many levels. Apart from deeply personal feelings, it demonstrates Brahms's commitment to the Schumanns, and his unwavering championing of Schumann's music alongside Clara Schumann (as evidenced through his including unpublished works by Schumann, with Clara's permission, in the supplementary volume under his name in Clara's complete edition). Through Brahms's heartfelt confession, he and Clara were soon reconciled. In addition, Brahms's admission of the depth of his devotion to the Schumanns at this late stage should be taken into consideration in understanding the revision of his Op. 8; any suggestion that Brahms wished to exert an autobiographical distancing between the Schumanns (or the memories of the Schumanns) and himself through the revision of Op. 8 certainly seems incomprehensible.

Gustav Jenner, Brahms's only long-term composition pupil from 1888 onwards, quoted Brahms's stance on this matter in his memoirs, 'It is rare that a piece, once it has been completed, becomes better through revision; usually, it gets worse'.<sup>46</sup> He further quoted Brahms's advice as follows,

The pen is not only for writing, but also for deleting. But take care. Once something has been written down, it is hard to get rid of it. But if you have come to the conclusion that it will not do – even if it is good in itself – then don't think about it for long: simply strike it out.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Gustav Jenner, 'Johannes Brahms as Man, Teacher, and Artist', trans. Susan Gillespie and Elisabeth Kaestner, *Brahms and His World*, Revised Edition, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Karnes (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), p. 404.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

These comments are particularly revealing since they were made after 1888, around the same time when he advocated and assisted on the publishing of the first version of Schumann's Symphony No. 4 in D minor, and the revision of his own Op. 8. These principles that Brahms passed on to his pupil provide a contrasting perspective to his own revision process with Op. 8. It was likely to have been a challenging process, judging from his experience with Schumann's Symphony and his view on revisions in general.

Having considered the myriad of suggestions made by scholars regarding the recomposition of Brahms's Op. 8, I propose a more complete aesthetic explanation: that Op. 8b is a Brahms retrospective which reflects an evolution in the ideological influence of the *Davidsbündler*. Through the recomposition of Op. 8, the late Brahmsian was merged into his early musical aesthetics derived from the *Davidsbündler* ideology: a reimagined *Davidsbündler*. This retrospective consists of a selective demonstration of Schumann's influence on Brahms within one single work. Brahms minimised certain overtly Schumannesque elements while building on the Schumann model in a thematically and structurally synthesised way.

As discussed, Op. 8a is imbued with Schumannesque elements that I have categorised under Schumann's *Davidsbündler* of the middle-late period, as exemplified by the extramusical narrative via allusions, Bachian and Baroque elements, and episodic large-scale structures. When Brahms recomposed Op. 8, he reinterpreted these overt aspects of Schumann's *Davidsbündler*, and instead availed himself of a sophisticated usage of thematic transformation that he had similarly inherited from Schumann.

The end result is a composition that is certainly less linear as a narrative and displays more formal coherence, which is achieved to some extent through a reconfiguration of pre-existing building blocks. It reveals Brahms, towards the end of his life, as a master builder whereas previously he was an apprentice to Schumann. Each of the new themes bears the unmistakable

stamp of late Brahms, which can also be found in his other piano trios Op. 87 and Op. 101. This blend of old and new, with a mature aesthetic, shows Brahms undertaking a complete reconsideration of Schumann's influence on him. Only Op. 8, filled to the brim with Schumannesque elements, offered him this opportunity.

In summary, the two versions of Brahms's Op. 8 relate very differently to Schumann's Op. 63. A distinctive feature in Op. 8a, which is contained in Schumann's Op. 63, is the use of thematic combinations that result in highly contrapuntal textures. In Op. 8b this usage is not as prominent, partly due to the fact that many themes are either changed or fragmented. The homophonic element is stronger in Op. 8b and the instrumental texture tends to shift to place greater emphasis on the piano. Instead of using references to external works in a manner that reflects the *Davidsbündler* of Schumann's middle-late period, Brahms integrated these references and alluded to them only indirectly in the revised version. The extramusical element is now dramatically undermined and the poetic narrative of lost or unfulfilled love has been obscured under a veil of reinvention and self-allusion. In this respect, Op. 8b has indeed become far removed from Schumann's *Davidsbündler*.

Yet, in a sophisticated way, Op. 8b is more closely aligned with Schumann's Op. 63 in terms of structural coherence. The sonata-form movements are clearly more concise. Brahms in his Op. 8b used the technique of thematic transformation in a manner highly reminiscent of Schumann's usage in the large-scale works discussed above: by transforming his allusions and distributing them across movements Op. 8b gains a strong sense of structural unity that is now on a par with Schumann's Op. 63.

## Conclusion

As Schumann revisionists examine his large-scale works and late style through new paradigms and perspectives, his musical and aesthetic relationship to Brahms should be revised accordingly. The resulting gap in scholarship on Schumann-Brahms performing issues, as this study seeks to address, potentially impacts on interpretations and performances of works by both composers. That Clara Schumann and her pupils were, undoubtedly, the leading figures in founding a performing tradition of works by Schumann and Brahms should be seen as strong support for a case in forming an interpretative approach that maintains a parallel tradition in their works.

As the present research demonstrates, it has become clear that many performing issues in Schumann and Brahms require both musicological knowledge and practical performance insights. It must be acknowledged that great performances often do reflect a secure musicological understanding, and it is increasingly the case that performing musicians are themselves musicologists or have teachers who transmit knowledge from musicological research. The two disciplines are perhaps not as far apart as they once were due to the unprecedented access to musicological resources and performances in the digital era.

In the case of interpreting Schumann through the lens of Brahms and vice versa, the often divergent perspectives of performance and musicology, which I have endeavoured to synthesise throughout the present research, should work hand in hand towards the same goal of shedding new light on both composers. Admittedly, the musicological approach is one way for performers to approach historical works from intellectual and analytical perspectives. Yet this approach is best integrated within the context of contemporary performances and performing traditions passed down by pedagogues. In so far as these different approaches share the aspiration of getting as close as possible to the spirit of the composition or the composer's vision, they are complementary and relevant to one another. In the case of the present practice-based research, one of the most

important questions is: what are the practical implications for the performer who seeks to incorporate and demonstrate the shared musical aesthetics between Schumann and Brahms, as embodied in Schumann's *Davidsbündler*, through interpretations in performance?

With Schumann's Op. 63 and Brahms's Op. 8a, it is the concept of the episodic elements in a large-scale narrative, as in the idea of 'between absolute and programmatic', that the performer should address in the interpretation. Other scholastic aspects of both works – Bachian allusions, contrapuntal textures and fugato – should be interwoven with performing practices suited to Romantic music, so that the erudition and 'academic' correctness required by such passages are executed in context. The allusions should by all means evoke the conventions of a given form or musical feature, such as lyricism in song, clear entries in fugue, speech quality in recitatives, though only to the extent that they are interwoven within a coherent sound world. For instance, an abrupt change in the strings to no vibrato in a fugal passage is out of place in the context of Brahms's Op. 8a. On the other hand, in considering performing practices, Brahms himself was known to have instructed that one must not play staccato in Bach, regardless of fashion.<sup>48</sup> Even though this may not hold true for playing the Bachian elements of his own works, Brahms's view should be taken into consideration in interpreting the fugal elements in his Op. 8a.

With a new understanding of the aesthetic reinvention and the self-allusions that Brahms incorporated in Op. 8b, performers can reconstruct a narrative that until now was seemingly hidden. The work is no longer as free and improvisatory as Op. 8a, but has gained a tighter structure. In many ways, it is more straightforward to interpret this work than either Schumann's Op. 63 or Brahms's Op. 8a because the elusive elements have been reduced and much of the work is replaced

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<sup>48</sup> Eugenie Schumann, *The Schumanns and Johannes Brahms: Memoirs of Eugenie Schumann*, trans. Marie Busch (London: William Heinemann, 1927), p. 145.

by a clear, late Brahmsian language. Schumannesque compositional techniques such as thematic transformation are utilised as tools to transform old themes to fit in with the new structures.

Schumann's Op. 63 marks a mature compositional style characteristic of his middle-late period, one that arguably coincides with a change in artistic direction to reinvent his early *Davidsbündler* ideology. While Brahms assimilated the *Davidsbündler* ideals and revealed the first and most overtly Schumannesque influences boldly through Op. 8a, he soon followed his own voice, striking out a new path that distinguishes him from other Schumann followers. This was noted by prominent music writers of the time. As the critic Eduard Hanslick stated in a review of Brahms's Viennese debut in 1862 as composer and pianist in *Neue freie Press*,

Above all else, Brahms's music shares with Schumann's a sense of chastity, of inner nobility...But Brahms's work also shares with Schumann's a sovereign subjectivity bordering on esotericism, a brooding quality, a turning away from the outside world, a sensibility turned inward. In fullness and beauty of melodic invention, Schumann towers over Brahms. But Brahms frequently matches him in richness of a purely formal sort, and it is here that we encounter Brahms's greatest strength. From Schumann he acquired the brilliant modernization of the canon and the fugue. But the common well from which they both have drawn is *Sebastian Bach*.<sup>49</sup>

On this occasion, Brahms gave the Vienna premiere of Schumann's *Fantasie*, Op. 17 and his own 'Handel' Variations.<sup>50</sup> Most significantly, Hanslick praised highly Brahms's performance of Schumann's work and wrote, 'we cannot imagine a truer or more deeply affecting realization of this work than the one brought to us under Brahms's hands', and 'here plays a true and genuine artist, a

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<sup>49</sup> Eduard Hanslick, 'Johannes Brahms (1862–63)', trans., intro. and annotated by Kevin C. Karnes, *Brahms and his World*, revised edition, eds. Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Karnes (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009), pp. 218–219.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 220–221.

man of spirit and soul and unpretentious self-awareness'.<sup>51</sup> No other description of a shared Schumann-Brahms performing tradition is more revealing of the close bond between the two composers in multiple realms: poetic, artistic and spiritual.

While the Schumannesque features in Op. 8a could be seen as his first tribute to the Schumanns, the work as a whole is symbolic of his calling to the *Davidsbündler* ideology. Far from departing from the 'secret society' of the *Davidsbündler* when he recomposed Op. 8, Brahms transformed and merged the musical aesthetics of the *Davidsbündler*, the early and mature Brahmsian, thus fulfilling his role as prophesised by Schumann. At the crossroads where the torch of Schumann's *Davidsbündler* was reignited and passed to its most worthy successor, it may indeed be the case that Op. 63 represents Schumann at his most Brahmsian and Op. 8a represents Brahms at his most Schumannesque.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 222.

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## VIDEO

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