



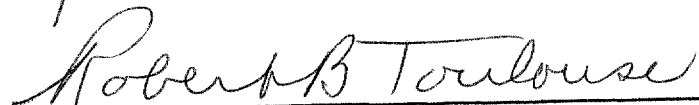
AN ANALYSIS OF BRAHMS, QUINTET IN B MINOR, OP. 115
FOR CLARINET AND STRINGS

APPROVED:


Major Professor


Minor Professor


Dean of the School of Music


Dean of the Graduate School

379
N81
No. 361

AN ANALYSIS OF BRAHMS, QUINTET IN B MINOR, OP. 115
FOR CLARINET AND STRINGS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

By

Jack E. Graham, B. M. E.

Denton, Texas

January, 1968

PREFACE

Although many volumes concerning the life and works of Johannes Brahms have been written, it has been found that the majority of these writings treat the material of the subject in a rather poetic and romanticized fashion. This is especially unfortunate in those volumes where the works of Brahms are analyzed with programatic implications, since Brahms himself eschewed the use of extramusical elements in his composition. This investigation, therefore, is an attempt to present a careful analysis of one of these compositions, the Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, for clarinet and string quartet.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE.	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.	vi
 Chapter	
I. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND.	1
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> Richard Mühlfeld First Performances Brahms, <u>Trio in A Minor</u>, Op. 114 </div>	
II. ANALYSIS.	13
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> First Movement <u>Allegro</u>, B Minor, 6/8 Meter Sonata-Allegro Form Second Movement <u>Adagio</u>, B Major, 3/4 Meter Three-Part Song Form Third Movement <u>Andantino</u>, D Major, 4/4 Meter Scherzo, B Minor, 2/4 Meter Fourth Movement <u>Con moto</u>, B Minor, 2/4 Meter Theme and Variations Form </div>	
III. CONCLUSIONS	54
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> Melodic Range Literal Repetition Cyclical Aspects Similarities to Mozart Quintet Aspects of Brahms' Scoring for the Clarinet Interpretation Importance of the Quintet in Clarinetist's Repertory </div>	
APPENDIX A	66
APPENDIX B	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY	69

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Outline of Movements.	13
II. Range of Thematic Material Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u>	55
III. Summary of Form	66
IV. Available Recordings of Brahms Quintet.	68

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Brahms, <u>Trio in A Minor</u> , <u>Op. 114</u> , first movement, measures 1-6.	8
2. Brahms, <u>Trio in A Minor</u> , <u>Op. 114</u> , second movement, measures 1-2.	10
3. Brahms, <u>Trio in A Minor</u> , <u>Op. 114</u> , third movement, measures 1-3.	10
4. Brahms, <u>Trio in A Minor</u> , <u>Op. 114</u> , fourth movement, measures 1-4.	11
5. Brahms, <u>Trio in A Minor</u> , <u>Op. 114</u> , fourth movement, measures 5-6.	12
6. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 1-2.	14
7. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 3-4.	15
8. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 5-13	15
9. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 14-17.	16
10. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 23-24.	16
11. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 25-27.	17
12. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measure 29.	17
13. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 38-40.	18

Figure		Page
14.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 59-60.	18
15.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 100-104.	20
16.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measure 120	21
17.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 111-113.	22
18.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measures 209-218.	23
19.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 1-4.	24
20.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 5-8.	24
21.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 17-20.	26
22.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 42-45.	27
23.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 52-53.	27
24.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 79-80.	29
25.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measure 85.	29
26.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measure 58.	30
27.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measure 69.	30
28.	Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 70-71.	31

Figure	Page
29. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , second movement, measures 128-138.	32
30. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 1-5.	33
31. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 11-15.	34
32. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 19-22.	34
33. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 26-28.	35
34. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 34-37.	36
35. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 38-39.	36
36. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 54-62.	37
37. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 64-66.	37
38. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 89-91.	38
39. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 107-112.	38
40. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 114-121.	39
41. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , third movement, measures 174-177.	40
42. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 1-10	41
43. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 27-32.	42

Figure	Page
44. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 33-36.	43
45. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 1</u> , <u>in C Minor</u> , <u>Op. 68</u> , third movement, measures 1-5.	44
46. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 1</u> , <u>in C Minor</u> , <u>Op. 68</u> , fourth movement, measures 62-68.	44
47. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 1</u> , <u>in C Minor</u> , <u>Op. 68</u> , fourth movement, measures 449-452.	44
48. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 2</u> , <u>in D Major</u> , <u>Op. 73</u> , first movement, measures 1-8.	44
49. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 2</u> , <u>in D Major</u> , <u>Op. 73</u> , first movement, measures 44-45.	45
50. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 2</u> , <u>in D Major</u> , <u>Op. 73</u> , third movement, measures 49-50.	45
51. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 2</u> , <u>in D Major</u> , <u>Op. 73</u> , third movement, measures 1-6 (inversion).	45
52. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 2</u> , <u>in D Major</u> , <u>Op. 73</u> , fourth movement, measures 1-4.	45
53. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 3</u> , <u>in F Major</u> , <u>Op. 90</u> , second movement, measures 1-4.	46
54. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 3</u> , <u>in F Major</u> , <u>Op. 90</u> , fourth movement, measures 1-4.	46
55. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 4</u> , <u>in E Minor</u> , <u>Op. 98</u> , first movement, measures 27-30.	46
56. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 4</u> , <u>in E Minor</u> , <u>Op. 98</u> , third movement, measures 1-4.	46
57. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 4</u> , <u>in E Minor</u> , <u>Op. 98</u> , fourth movement, measures 97-98.	47
58. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 4</u> , <u>in E Minor</u> , <u>Op. 98</u> , fourth movement, measures 193-196.	47

Figure	Page
59. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 65-68.	47
60. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 81-84.	48
61. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 97-100, 113-114.	48
62. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 129-130.	49
63. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 161-164.	51
64. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , fourth movement, measures 193-222.	53
65. Brahms, <u>Symphony No. 1</u> , in <u>C Minor</u> , <u>Op. 68</u> , first movement, measures 42-51.	54
66. Mozart, <u>Quintet in A Major</u> , <u>K. 581</u> , fourth movement, measures 49-52.	59
67. Mozart, <u>Quintet in A Major</u> , <u>K. 581</u> , fourth movement, measures 65-66.	59
68. Brahms, <u>Quintet in B Minor</u> , <u>Op. 115</u> , first movement, measure 114.	61

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Richard Mühlfeld

Twice in his lifetime Johannes Brahms expressed the opinion that he had "written himself out;"¹ once was at the age of twenty-three, probably during a stage of youthful depression. The second time, however, was in 1891, at the age of fifty-eight, with a great wealth of music in his wake, including all the orchestral music, all the concerti, most of the lieder and piano music, and, with the exception of the four works which employ the clarinet, all of the chamber music. In 1891 Brahms did not possess his former youthful vigor, a fact which is reflected in his works of the period.² Brahms himself said at this time: "I have tormented myself to no purpose lately, and till now, I have never had to do so at all; things always came easily to me."³

¹Madeleine Goss and Robert Haven Schauffler, Brahms, the Master (New York, 1943), p. 290.

²Daniel Gregory Mason, The Chamber Music of Brahms (New York, 1933), p. 219.

³Florence May, The Life of Johannes Brahms, 2 vols. (London, 1905), II, 248.

It was Richard Mühlfeld, the famous clarinetist, who transformed this despondency into one of the most fruitful periods of Brahms' life. However, this did not come about overnight, as is often thought. Brahms, in fact met Mühlfeld, and heard him play as early as 1885, at a rehearsal under the direction of Bülow,⁴ and a period of at least five years elapsed before the fruition of this first meeting came to pass (the first works for clarinet were not written until 1891). Whether at first Brahms was not totally impressed with Mühlfeld's performances, or was merely reluctant to include the clarinet in his chamber music, is a point for speculation. It is known, however, that Brahms, before his friendship and admiration for Mühlfeld reached its peak, thought that the art of clarinet playing had deteriorated.⁵

As a preliminary to the composition of the works using clarinet (the Trio in A Minor, Op. 114, for piano, clarinet, and cello; the Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, for clarinet and strings; and the Sonatas in F Minor and E flat Major, Op. 120, Nos. 1 and 2, for clarinet and piano), Brahms requested

⁴ Edwin Evans, Handbook to the Chamber and Orchestral Music of Johannes Brahms, 2 vols. (London, 1933-35), II, 264.

⁵ Bernard Portnoy, "Brahms' Prima Donna," Woodwind World, IV (February 15, 1963), 12.

Mühlfeld to play the Mozart and Weber concerti, and other works for which he had become famous, in a private recital. During this session, the composer and artist discussed the physical and musical possibilities of the instrument.⁶ Thus the clarinet "opened to Brahms what is virtually a new vein in his genius."⁷

The similarity of the Brahms-Mühlfeld relationship to former such duos is interesting; Spohr was inspired by the clarinetist Hermstedt; Weber and Mendelssohn by Heinrich Baermann.⁸ The first and most famous of these, of course, was the friendship between Mozart and Anton Stadler. Speaking of Mozart, Blom states: "In this, if in nothing else, he was emulated by Brahms a century later. Mozart's composing for Anton Stadler and Brahms' for Richard Mühlfeld are curiously analogous."⁹ What Blom obviously refers to here is that the specific works which Brahms wrote seem to coincide with those written by Mozart, even in the order in which they were written. Mozart's first major composition written with Stadler in mind was the Trio in E flat Major (Kegelstatt), K. 498, for piano,

⁶Ibid.

⁷Mason, p. 221.

⁸James Mack Mahoney, "The Development of the Clarinet as a Solo Instrument During the Eighteenth Century," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Music, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1966, p. 33.

⁹Eric Blom, Mozart (London, 1935), p. 154.

clarinet and viola, followed by the Quintet in A Major, K. 581, for clarinet and strings, and the Concerto in A Major, K. 622, for clarinet and orchestra. Mozart also wrote other works for Stadler, including some virtuoso clarinet and basset-horn passages in his opera seria La Clemenza di Tito, K. 621,¹⁰ notably the two soprano arias, "Parto, parto, ma tu ben mio," and "Non piu di fiori."

Richard Mühlfeld was born at Salzungen, Germany, on February 28, 1856 and died at Meiningen on June 1, 1907. He received his first musical training on the violin, studying with his father, Leonhard Mühlfeld, and began his career as violinist with the Ducal orchestra at Meiningen in 1873.¹¹ But in 1876 he took over the position of first clarinet in that orchestra, having taught himself to play that instrument.¹² It is said that he abandoned the violin in favor of the clarinet because he felt the latter a more expressive instrument.¹³

¹⁰Alfred Einstein, Mozart: His Character, His Work, translated by Arthur Mendel and Nathan Broder (London, 1945), p. 410.

¹¹Imogen Fellingner, "Mühlfeld, Richard," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, edited by Friedrich Blume, 13 vols. (Kassel, Barenreiter, 1961), IX, 846-47.

¹²J. A. Fuller-Maitland, "Mühlfeld, Richard," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th edition, edited by Eric Blom, 9 vols. (London, 1954), V, 988.

¹³James Frederick Rogers, "The Rise of the Clarinet," The Etude, XLVII (December, 1929), 893.

He was a musician of the highest order and his performances are said to have been "perfect models of what musical interpretation should be."¹⁴ For several years, he acted not only as first clarinetist, but as sub-conductor of the orchestra, rehearsing the members singly and in groups, and is said to be responsible for many of the details of excellence of the orchestra.¹⁵ He took part, as first clarinetist, in the Bayreuth Festivals from 1884 to 1896. Brahms probably thought more of Mühlfeld than any other wind instrument player of the time; he often referred to him in public as "Fraülein von Mühlfeld, meine prima donna."¹⁶ He was so devoted to Mühlfeld's artistry that less than a fortnight before dying, though very ill, he attended Mühlfeld's performance of the Weber Quintet.¹⁷

First Performances

In the summer after his visit in 1891 with Mühlfeld, Brahms returned to Ischl, where he had spent several summers, and wrote the Trio, Op. 114, and the Quintet, Op. 115.¹⁸ The

¹⁴Fuller-Maitland, p. 988.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Richard Specht, Johannes Brahms (London, 1930), p. 246.

¹⁷May, p. 283.

¹⁸Goss, p. 291.

first private performance of both works took place on November 21, 1891, before the Ducal circle at Meiningen Castle. Brahms, Hausmann and Mühlfeld performed the Trio; Mühlfeld, Joachim, Hausmann, and two members of the Meiningen orchestra (second violin and viola) played the Quintet.¹⁹ The first public performance was in Berlin, on December 12, on one of the famed "Joachim Quartet" concerts. The same ensemble performed the Trio; the Quintet was played by Mühlfeld and the Joachim Quartet. The Joachim concerts, at the time, were the most renowned in Berlin, and until this concert, no works other than those exclusively for strings were allowed on the programs.²⁰ That Brahms felt highly honored by this fact is revealed in a letter to Hanslick:

. . . Joachim has sacrificed the virginity of his Quartet to my newest things. Hitherto he has carefully protected the chaste sanctuary but now, in spite of all my protestations, he insists that I invade it with clarinet and piano, with Trio and Quintet.²¹

The Quintet was immediately more popular than the Trio,²² as perhaps it should be. In fact, the success of the Quintet

¹⁹May, p. 249.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Donald Francis Tovey, "Brahms, Johannes," Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, edited by W. W. Cobbett, 2 vols. (London, 1929), I, 180.

was greater than that of any of his previous works.²³ At the December 10 public rehearsal prior to the Joachim concert, the audience demanded a repetition of the entire work. Joachim and Mühlfeld responded by repeating the Adagio.²⁴ Not only the public, but Brahms' colleagues also responded similarly. At a small private concert of Op. 115 by Richard Mühlfeld and the Kneisel Quartet, Mrs. Carl Derenbrug recalls that after the performance, the members of the audience (besides herself, Herr and Frau Steinbach, Herr and Frau Nikisch and Brahms) were "all so moved that nobody found a word to say. But Nikisch fell on his knees before Brahms, and that expressed our feelings."²⁵

Brahms, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114

Since the Quintet and the Trio, Op. 114, were written in the same summer and were so often played together by Mühlfeld, it seems appropriate to discuss the latter work briefly here.

The Trio is probably the most controversial of Brahms' chamber works, and certainly the least played of the four works for clarinet. It has been called everything from unconvincing to commplace, and Brahms lovers have tried to hide

²³Specht, p. 325.

²⁴May, p. 250.

²⁵Mrs. Carl Derenburg, "My Recollections of Brahms," The Musical Times, LXVII (July 1, 1926), 598.

the work, hoping that it will not be noticed. Reginald Kell, however, considers it to be a fine work, and an example of the composer's "simpler elegance."²⁶ There is no doubt that the work does not come up to the standards of the monument that immediately followed it. Indeed, much of the Trio's neglect at the present time must have stemmed from the fact that it was so often played on the same program with the Quintet, which would be a test for any piece. The fact that it does not equal the Quintet in excellence is, or should be, beside the point. It is undoubtedly a good piece and does not totally deserve the criticism it so often gets.

The theme which opens the first movement is one of great

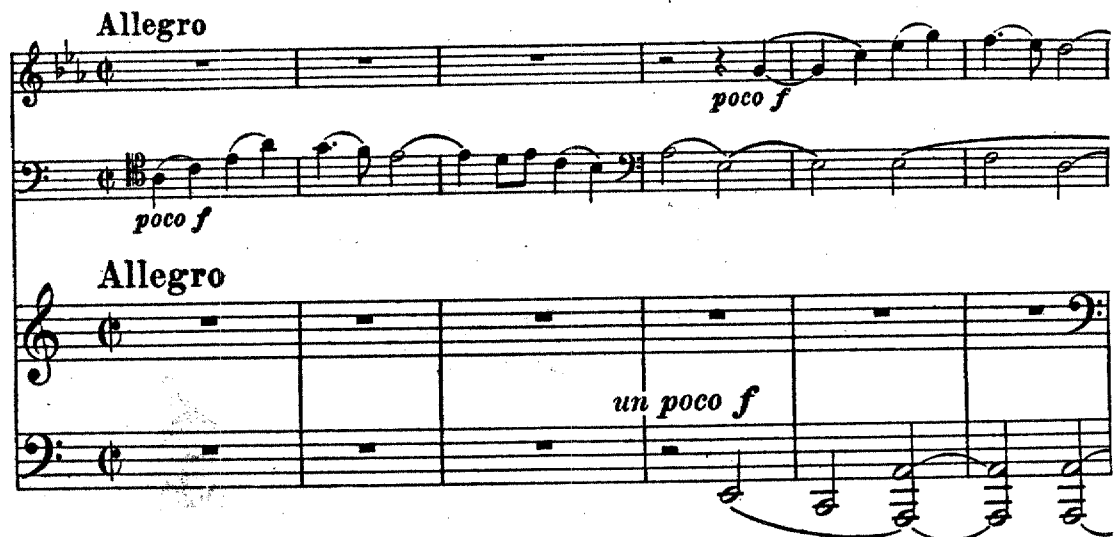


Fig. 1--Brahms, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114, first movement, measures 1-6.

²⁶Reginald Kell, "The Clarinet Music of Johannes Brahms," Woodwind World, IV (December 1, 1961), 5.

breadth, and it is thought that Brahms had originally planned to use the theme in a fifth symphony.²⁷ Its mood, and the mood of the whole movement is typical of the sombre color of Brahms' later works (see Chapter Three). In this movement, there is no great wealth of melodic material, and to rectify this situation, Brahms often uses imitation by inversion to fill up space.

The development consists largely of technical display, and at the point of return, it is not the first subject which appears but the material which immediately followed that subject in the exposition. The first subject is not heard in its original form in the recapitulation. Only fragments of the theme are presented, merely suggesting the theme itself.

The opening theme of the Adagio is characterized by a rhythmic figure of a quarter note tied to the first of four sixteenths. This pattern occurs repeatedly in the first few measures of the movement and tends to make the rhythmic movement a bit monotonous:

. . . the rhythmic structure lacks the usual rich Brahmsian variety, tending to harden into pattern figures repeated literally This automatism is frequent enough in composers like Schumann and Tschaikowsky in their weaker moments, and is even not incompatible with lyric charm; but minds capable of the organic structure of Bach's air for the G-string, or the opening theme of Beethoven's A major Cello Sonata . . . , lapse into it only in moments of depressed vitality.²⁸

²⁷Tovey, p. 180.

²⁸Mason, p. 223



Fig. 2--Brahms, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114, second movement, measures 1-2.

The movement is in rather straightforward three-part song form with a short coda.

The form of the third movement resembles a minuet and trio, but the return is radically abbreviated. Including the



Fig. 3--Brahms, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114, third movement, measures 1-3.

coda, it is only one-third the length of the first section. The main subject is one with immediate appeal to the ear, and the trio presents a contrasting section of eighth-note obbligato in the clarinet.

The Finale is in modified rondo (ABACABA) form. The principal subject is not the one presented in the first few measures (Fig. 4) but is based on a fragment first heard in measure five. This fragment becomes increasingly important



Fig. 4--Brahms, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114, fourth movement, measures 1-4.

as the movement progresses. The biggest weakness of the movement, and possibly of the whole Trio is its ending. Here is not found one of the brilliant codas which Brahms was capable of writing, but instead a rather awkward and certainly anticlimactic finish.

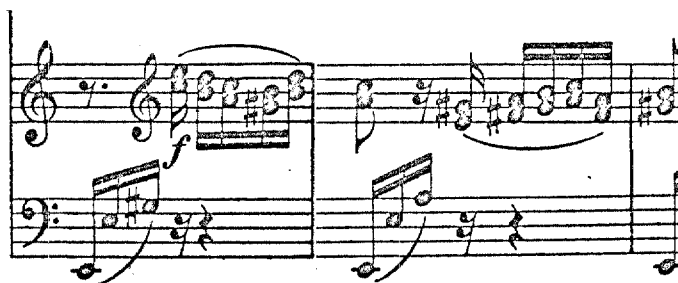


Fig. 5--Brahms, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114, fourth movement, measures 5-6.

Despite its more obvious weaknesses, some of which were illustrated above, the Trio is a charming piece of chamber music and certainly deserves a higher place in the repertory of the clarinetist. Though it possesses none of the deep inner meaning of the Quintet, it is a remarkable example of beauty through outward simplicity.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS

The Quintet is in four movements, all in closely related keys, as shown in the table below:

TABLE I
OUTLINE OF MOVEMENTS

Movement	Tempo and Meter	Form	Tonality
I	Allegro--6/8	Sonata-allegro	B minor
II	Adagio--3/4	Three-part song	B major
III	Andantino--4/4 Presto--2/4	Introduction Sonata-allegro	D major B minor
IV	Con moto--2/4	Theme and variations	B minor

First Movement Allegro, B Minor, 6/8 Meter
Sonata-Allegro Form

Introduction

The Quintet opens with what Mason refers to as the "circling motive,"¹ which, for the first two measures, avoids

¹Mason, op. cit., p. 231.

any feeling of a definite tonality. If the second measure continued as the first, with the violins playing in parallel



Fig. 6--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 1-2.

thirds, the question of key center would be resolved by the A which would appear in the second violin, an A sharp indicating B minor. But Brahms neatly avoids this issue by dropping the second violin to the sixth below in the second measure, thus by-passing the A. In fact it is only at measure fourteen that B minor is firmly established; this delay creates a feeling of ambiguity which Mason describes as an "uncertain hovering between D major and B minor as a lost soul might hover between earth and heaven."²

A germ appears in the third measure which is to become the first subject. Because of the resolving appoggiaturas (A sharp to B, and E sharp to F sharp), approached from above,

²Ibid.

Mason calls this the "dipping motive"³ (for convenience in further reference, Mason's names for these two motives will be used here). These two measures are in B minor, but upon



Fig. 7--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 3-4.

the entrance of the solo instrument in measure five, D major is hinted at again. After a rising D major arpeggio the clarinet states the circling motive, now with the first note lengthened.



Fig. 8--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 5-13.

Exposition

At the end of this cadenza-like passage, rising, then falling, the first subject appears in the viola and cello, now finally in the tonic key. Two interesting features of

³Ibid.

of this passage are the horn fifths in measure 15, and the contrary motion in measure 16. The cello is placed above the



Fig. 9--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 14-17.

viola, reminiscent of that same sonority in the first movement of Brahms' Second Symphony, Op. 73, second subject.

The violins repeat the subject in octaves, accompanied by the clarinet and viola, bringing the first subject to a close. The last two measures of this section are interesting from a rhythmic standpoint, and illustrate Brahms' facility in handling cross-rhythms. In these two measures, each of the instruments plays a different rhythmic figure, which gives the feeling of movement on each beat of the measure.



Fig. 10--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 23-24.

A bridge section follows, leading to the second subject.

There are three main ideas presented in this short bridge:

1) a rhythmic motif (Fig. 11), stated first by the whole ensemble, and found again in the viola and cello, 2) a vigorous eight-note motif (Fig. 11), with anacrusic sixteenth, first in the strings and later in the whole ensemble in stretto, and



Fig. 11--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 25-27.

3) a scrambling triplet figure, played first by the viola



Fig. 12--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measure 29.

and repeated several times in the violins and clarinet in its original form and in inversion.

The second subject, one of extreme simplicity, is a dialogue between the clarinet and first violin. For the most part it is diatonic, in D major. The subject seems to die out, but soon returns in rhythmic mutation, and appassionato,



Fig. 13--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 38-40.

where before it was only espressivo. This leads to what appears to be a combination of the accented non-harmonic tones



Fig. 14--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 59-60.

of the first subject, combined with the rhythmic elements of the second subject. It is first played forte, with sforzando accents on the anacrusis of each half of the measure, then piano, with a leggiero triplet accompaniment in the first violin. Leading into the development is the circling motive again, now in a lower register.

Development

The development begins with a statement in the clarinet of the rising D major arpeggio from measure five. Statements of the circling motive in the cello and first violin, with sustained harmonies in the remaining instruments, lead to the key of C sharp minor. The circling motive is the first theme to be developed, and quite extensively, which illustrates the real importance of this theme in the movement. Here Brahms makes good use of one of his favorite devices, inversion; in this case the inversion is superimposed upon the original. Then the first three notes of the motive (and likewise, the first three notes of its inverted form) are tossed back and forth among the members of the ensemble in an almost heated frenzy, reaching a climax on an ascending arpeggio to G sharp. This G sharp drops slowly in octaves, and instead of resolving

to the tonic C sharp, Brahms moves enharmonically to D flat major.⁴

In this section, marked piano and Quasi sostenuto, the bridge material from the exposition is developed. The rhythmic motif now becomes a subdued ostinato over which the eighth-note figure is completely transformed, becoming a beautifully



Fig. 15--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 100-104.

lyrical melody. The first four notes of this "new" theme (sometimes the anacrusis is omitted, making only three) are then used in a dialogue between the clarinet and first violin,⁵

⁴Instead of moving the clarinet to D flat with the rest of the ensemble, putting that instrument in the awkward key of F flat, Brahms puts it in C sharp major, or E major, transposed, the more logical of the two enharmonic keys.

⁵Mason refers to these two instruments, in speaking of the Quintet, as ". . . the two chief protagonists of the drama . . ." probably because the two so often play in unison, octaves, or in a dialogue-type conversation. Mason, op. cit., p. 232.

and somewhat later, muttered repeatedly in the cello. This fragment is also used as a device to change from the major to the minor mode (the key center shifts frequently, moving through A major, C major and minor, D major and minor, B flat major and minor, F sharp minor and E minor). The third note (second eighth note) is merely changed from a major third to a minor third, as in measure 120, in the cello and first



Fig. 16--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measure 120.

violin. It also appears in its inverted form in the clarinet, against the original in the cello.

Throughout this section, the rhythmic motif underlies the whole scheme. At one point, to heighten a crescendo, the value of the quarter note is reduced to a dotted eighth, adding rhythmic drive to the crescendo (see Fig. 17).

Only in the last nine measures of the development does the first subject of the exposition appear. Its first two measures are stated twice in B major, followed by a transition



Fig. 17--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 111-113.

to the recapitulation, based on the third measure of the first subject.

Recapitulation

The circling motive, heard exactly as at the beginning, signals the return. The first subject follows immediately, and except for its first four measures, is precisely the same as when it first appeared. The bridge is also similar, but leads to G major, rather than the relative major, D. The second subject as well adheres to the format set up in the exposition, but in the new key.

Tremolo in the lower strings, followed by a rising scale in the whole ensemble, crescendos and leads to a forte statement, in B major, of the circling motive. This marks the beginning of the coda. Agitated tremolo and descending

triplet arpeggios accompany the first subject, still forte. This soon dies out, and a rising arpeggio leads to the circling motive, once more exactly as it was first stated. The clarinet utters the first measure of the dipping motive, now with the natural stress placed on the third note rather than the first, and the movement ends with two quiet B minor chords.



Fig. 18--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measures 209-218.

Second Movement Adagio, B Major, 3/4 Meter
Three-Part Song Form

First Part

The opening theme of the B major Adagio lies in the clarinet, with the first violin following along one and one-half beats later in imitative style. The first eight measures are repeated, almost literally, but with the violin and clarinet exchanging places, the violin leading, and the clarinet following. The peak of each of these phrases is marked by a



Fig. 19--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 1-4.

sforzando chord, built on the flatted sixth (Fig. 20), in the fifth and thirteenth measures, respectively. For these first sixteen measures, the remaining three instruments seem to move along almost ignoring the solo lines (though, of course, harmonically supporting them). Their duple against triple rhythms tend to destroy any rhythmic pulse which the melodic lines might have established. Instead, this pulse is replaced



Fig. 20--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 5-8.

with a homogenous rhythmic flow, unique to chamber music. In the last two measures of each of these two phrases is a reiteration of the two preceding measures, using different instrumentation to vary the tonal color. This device is not new in Brahms' slow movements, but can be found in such major works as the Third Symphony, Op. 90, in F Major, in the opening theme of the second movement.

In measure seventeen, the violins offer a new subject in octaves, still in B, but cadencing in F sharp, accompanied by an obbligato in the clarinet. This obbligato is based on a rhythmic fragment found in the fifth measure of the first phrase of the movement (Fig. 20). In this case, Brahms departs from his usual practice in this opus, of combining the clarinet and first violin in the melodic material, while assigning the second violin to an accompanying role with the rest of the ensemble. In all probability the exception is made here to ensure that the subject will be easily heard, since the clarinet obbligato moves at a faster pace and covers a wider range. This obbligato spans almost three octaves, at first rising slowly, and in its final measure, descending by octaves. The violins, however, are confined to the space of a minor seventh. The rhythmic motif is preserved throughout the entire eight-measure phrase, for in the fourth and eighth measures of the

phrase, when the clarinet plays a different rhythm, the violins take over the motif.



Fig. 21--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 17-20.

In measures 27-31, the transition back to the first subject, again in B major, is based on the first three notes of the first subject itself, expanded to four notes. In reaching B major from F sharp, instead of simply resolving the dominant F sharp, Brahms digresses through the keys of D major, C major and B minor, ending on a German sixth chord, which resolves to the tonic in root position.

The restatement of the first subject is similar to the beginning, but with the violin doubling the clarinet one octave higher, and with the substitution of a Neapolitan chord for the flatted sixth at the point of climax.

The entire first section is in AABA form, with a seven-measure transition from B back to A. At the final cadence of this section, the tonality shifts abruptly to B minor.

Second Part

A recitative in the new key, based on the circling motive from the first movement, links the first and second parts of the movement.



Fig. 22--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 42-45.

This second section is usually described by writers as "gipsy" or "Hungarian-like," or something of the sort. It is the only spot in the whole work where the solo instrument is allowed to "show off" in virtuoso, almost improvisatory style. But, in true Brahmsian style, no matter how flashy a technique is displayed in the composition, it is still well within the limits of good musical taste, and is coherent

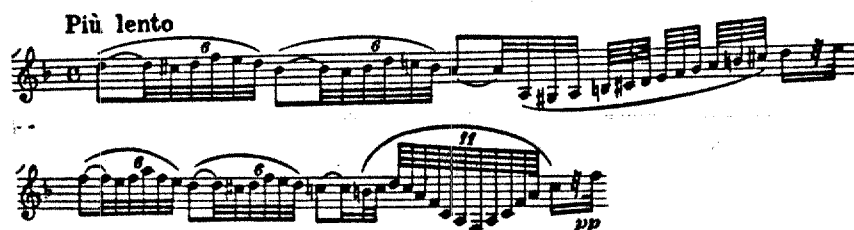


Fig. 23--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 52-53.

formally with the rest of the movement. The flourishes, in this case, are nothing more than elaborate embellishments of the first measure of the main subject, with the meter changed to 4/4. After each of these cadenza-like passages in the clarinet, the first violin answers with a figure which revolves around F sharp, with F sharp minor and B minor harmonies, and ending on the dominant of B minor. Each of these statements by the violin has the effect of relaxing the atmosphere after the frenzied agitation of the clarinet passages. The first two solo passages in the clarinet begin in B minor and cadence in F sharp minor. The third begins in B minor, but shifts quickly to A major, and moves through A minor and G major before cadencing in B minor. This cadence marks the beginning of a crescendo to the first climax of the movement. After this peak, the violin again states its relaxing theme, this time revolving around B, as the cadence was in B minor. The meter changes back to 3/4, and a longer crescendo starts. The key signature also changes, to E flat minor (again, the clarinet is placed in the more sensible of two enharmonic keys, D sharp minor, or F sharp minor, transposed), and a reminiscence of the clarinet's ornamental figure is heard in the cello. The clarinet offers a plaintive dotted-eighth-and-sixteenth figure in its highest, then lowest register. The crescendo



Fig. 24--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 79-80.

continues, and finally the clarinet breathes its last gipsy breath, in E flat minor, fortissimo.



Fig. 25--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measure 85.

The accompaniment throughout this entire section seems to have been almost contrived to produce a constant growing in intensity and agitation, in accordance with the solo line. Much of this is produced through the use of fingered tremolo.

During the early stages of this section, perhaps one or two instruments use tremolo, not necessarily at the same time. As the volume and excitement increase, more of the instruments



Fig. 26--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measure 58.

employ it, until finally, at the first climax, the three lower instruments tremolo together, while the first violin

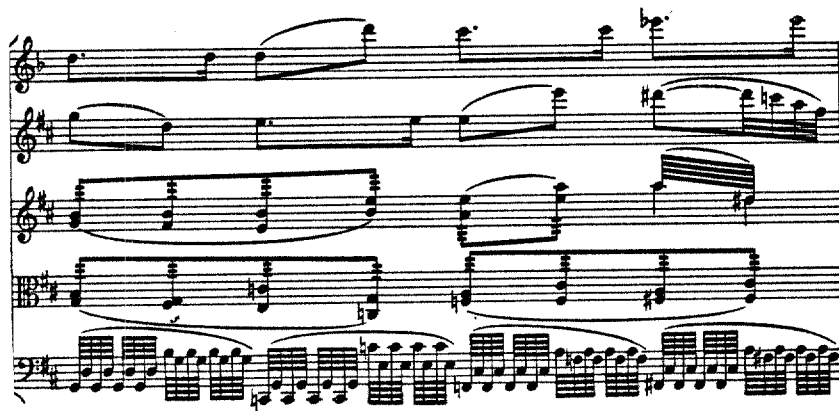


Fig. 27--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measure 69.

plays in counterpoint with the clarinet. Bowed tremolo is also used, as in the second point of climax (see Fig. 25).

Syncopation, as well, is used extensively in the accompaniment. At first barely noticeable, it becomes increasingly important as the intensity mounts. At one point during the first climax, two different syncopated rhythms are heard at once, one being twice as fast as the other.



Fig. 28--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 70-71.

Third Part

In measure 87, a dominant arpeggio rising through cello, viola and clarinet, signals the return to the first section. Except for the first phrase, which is one measure shorter than before (the first measure is omitted), the return is an exact repetition, though written out, of the first section. A coda begins in measure 128, based on the clarinet's obligato figure, transformed into a slower, more lyrical passage, and the movement closes with the clarinet whispering the first two notes of the first subject.



Fig. 29--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, second movement, measures 128-138.

Third Movement Andantino, D Major, 4/4 Meter
 Scherzo, B Minor, 2/4 Meter

Introduction

The Andantino which opens the third movement can be considered not only an introduction to the scherzo which follows, but also a transition from the restful, almost hypnotizing atmosphere of the Adagio. To begin the scherzo without this transition would be too much of a jolt, but with the Andantino, Brahms carries the listener from one mood to the other without an awareness of the broad gap that has actually been spanned. This transition also serves to present all of the melodic

material which is to be used in the scherzo proper. This type of scherzo movement is not new in Brahms:

The Andantino is the last example . . . of that type of light movement in which a lyric section is contrasted with a deft presto or vivace, usually with some interrelation of pace between the two, sometimes with actual thematic resemblance. In this case we find both, with also an experiment, rather unusual, in the exact equivalence of the cadences of the two sections.⁶

An example of this type of movement in the symphonic works is the G major scherzo from the Second Symphony, Op. 73, in D Major.

The first theme of the introduction is heard in the clarinet in measure one, accompanied by similar rhythmic



Fig. 30--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 1-5.

patterns in the lower strings. Beginning with this movement, the lower three voices of the ensemble, which before have been

⁶Mason, p. 242.

subordinate, or contrasting in rhythmic and melodic treatment, assume a new stature, at least rhythmically, if not melodically. The first phrase is repeated, once again as so often before, with the violin doubling the clarinet an octave higher. This



Fig. 31--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 11-15.

time, however, the phrase is one measure longer, with an extension in the middle of the phrase. Once again the theme



Fig. 32--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 19-22.

is started, in slight variation, but is interrupted by new material. This material is rather incidental in the introduction, but will become increasingly important in the scherzo proper.

A series of broken arpeggios, shared between the viola, first violin, and clarinet, brings back for the final time,



Fig. 33--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 26-28.

the main theme of the introduction. The cadence in D (the entire thirty-four measure introduction is in D, without modulation) prepares for the B minor scherzo, which is in 2/4 meter, marked Presto, non assai, ma con sentimento.

Exposition

The main subject of the scherzo is a transformation of the introductory theme, with an accompaniment based on the short fragment presented in measure 20 of the introduction

(see Fig. 32). The main subject is composed entirely of two ideas, or germs, both more rhythmic than melodic. The first



Fig. 34--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 34-37.

is four staccato sixteenth notes, all on the same pitch except for the third note, which drops one step diatonically. This fragment is developed as early as the fifth measure of the scherzo in the accompaniment, occurring after a sixteenth



Fig. 35--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 38-39.

rest, and with its fourth note omitted. Also in the same measure is its inversion, treated in the same manner. The second germ is the dotted-eighth-and-sixteenth rhythm on the

second beat of the first measure (see Fig. 34). Both of these fragments will be treated extensively in the development.

The second subject, in F sharp minor, like the accompaniment figure of the first subject, is derived from measure 20 of the introduction (see Fig. 32). It first appears in the



Fig. 36--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 54-62.

clarinet in syncopation, and then in the violin in triplet



Fig. 37--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 64-66.

syncopation. A four-measure phrase extension, cadencing in F sharp minor, leads to the development.

Development

The development consists of a gradual deterioration of the main subject into its two composite parts, mentioned before. To begin with, the first two measures of the subject

are stated repeatedly in B minor, followed by constant repetition of only the first measure, in a melodic and harmonic sequence ending in D major. A triplet figure, heard in inverted pyramid,



Fig. 38--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 89-91.

is based on the first fragment of the subject; this paves the way for development of the accompaniment figure (see Fig. 32). Following this is the final decay of the main subject into its two germs. The first fragment provides an ostinato, forever pounding out D's and C sharps, while the second



Fig. 39--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 107-112.

fragment assumes the shape of a typical Brahmsian melody, sweeping from the top to the bottom of the ensemble, in thirds and sixths. The ostinato becomes increasingly obstinate, and in the violin, decays into triplet form, leading into the recapitulation.



Fig. 40--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 114-121.

Recapitulation

The return adheres to classical standards; it is somewhat shorter, and the second subject is in the tonic.

The coda begins in G major, and is at first reminiscent of the development. The arpeggios from the introduction (See Fig. 33) appear, but are interrupted by the two fragments, now barely recognizable. The first fragment is in the second violin, with its last sixteenth tied to a quarter. Of the second all that remains are the first two notes in the first violin, against the first two notes inverted, in the clarinet. The octaves, D, in the cello are suggestive of the ostinato in the development. The arpeggios enter again, and this time lead to a literal restatement of the final measures of the



Fig. 41--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, third movement, measures 174-177.

introduction. The introduction was in 4/4 meter and the scherzo in 2/4 meter, and since the quarter-note beat remained the same, there are twice as many bars here as there were in the introduction, but the effect is exactly the same.

Fourth Movement Con moto, B Minor, 2/4 Meter
Theme and Variations Form

The Finale consists of a theme and five variations; each section is composed of one sixteen-measure period, followed by a repeated sixteen-measure period. The movement can be said to resemble rondo (ABACA) form, as the third and fifth variations more clearly outline the contour of the theme,⁷ while the remaining sections develop other aspects of the theme. In effect, the entire movement serves as a transition

⁷Karl Geiringer, Brahms: His Life and Works, translated by H. B. Weiner and Bernard Miall (New York, 1936), p. 248.

back to the thematic material of the first movement, completing a cycle, as will be seen.

Theme

The entire theme is built upon two fragments. The first is a four-note descending passage offered first by the violins and echoed by the clarinet, and the second is a quarter-note figure (sometimes with anacrusis). These two parts of the theme are sometimes very hard to separate, as they are often heard simultaneously, and other times fused together, so that the end of one becomes the beginning of the other. The first of these fragments, however, is the more significant, as it provides



Fig. 42--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 1-10.

the basis for the variations. It will, therefore, be referred to as the theme. In the last six measures of the opening section, the theme is repeated five times in sequence, as if



Fig. 43--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 27-32.

Brahms wanted to make certain that these four notes are recognized as the theme, possibly because the four-note pattern as such does not appear again until the third variation.

The basic formal plan within each variation remains the same throughout the entire movement: AA'BB". The B section is always very similar in melodic content and is in a closely related key (the A sections are all in the tonic).

Variation I

The first variation is a solo for the cello; the shape of this melody is derived from the first two measures of the cello part from the theme section (see Fig. 42). In its wide leaps and string crossings, outlining the chordal structures it is reminiscent of J. S. Bach's unaccompanied cello suites. When the cello comes to rest on a half note, the remainder of the ensemble echoes what the cello has just played. Here



Fig. 44--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 33-36.

again Brahms uses a favorite technique, used previously in the theme of this movement, and in the first subject of the Adagio. The harmonic structure in this variation follows closely the scheme introduced in the first section, as do all the variations: the first sixteen measures are in B minor, moving to G major in the first phrase of the repeated section, and back again to B minor.

Variation II

In the second variation, Brahms introduces a melodic germ which stems from his earlier works, notably the four symphonies. This germ consists of three notes: F sharp, E sharp and F sharp. The following examples show this motive as it appears in its various forms and transpositions, in the symphonies of Brahms:



Fig. 45--Brahms, Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68, third movement, measures 1-5.



Fig. 46--Brahms, Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68, fourth movement, measures 62-68.



Fig. 47--Brahms, Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68, fourth movement, measures 449-452.



Fig. 48--Brahms, Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73, first movement, measures 1-8.

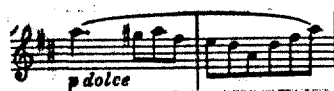


Fig. 49--Brahms, Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73, first movement, measures 44-45.



Fig. 50--Brahms, Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73, second movement, measures 49-50.



Fig. 51--Brahms, Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73, third movement, measures 1-6 (inversion).



Fig. 52--Brahms, Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73, fourth movement, measures 1-4.



Fig. 53--Brahms, Symphony No. 3, in F Major, Op. 90, second movement, measures 1-4.



Fig. 54--Brahms, Symphony No. 3, in F Major, Op. 90, fourth movement, measures 1-4.



Fig. 55--Brahms, Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98, first movement, measures 27-30.



Fig. 56--Brahms, Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98, third movement, measures 1-4.



Fig. 57--Brahms, Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98, fourth movement, measures 97-98.



Fig. 58--Brahms, Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98, fourth movement, measures 193-196.

This, if anything, can be called the "Brahms" motif, as it appears in his work so often. In this case, it is accompanied by rising and falling diminished seventh arpeggios, and agitated syncopation. In measure 81, the clarinet offers an entirely new lyrical theme in eighth notes, to ease the tension between



Fig. 59--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 65-68.

themes to appear is the circling motive in the violin, echoed by the clarinet. It is actually not only the circling motive, but a combination of that motive with the theme of the last movement. Following the first period, the clarinet plays a staccato figure of a nature that has prompted one writer to refer to this as the "music-box" variation.⁸

Variation IV

The fourth variation in B major (the only variation not in B minor), reverts back to the "Brahms" motif (F sharp, E sharp, F sharp, now transposed) for melodic material. This time, however, the motif is combined with the subject from the Adagio (see Fig. 19), as the first, third and fourth notes of the first measure, plus the first note of the second measure outline the intervals of that subject. The circling



Fig. 62--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 129-130.

⁸Henry S. Drinker, The Chamber Music of Johannes Brahms (Philadelphia, 1932), p. 130.

the outer section of the variation. The syncopation continues through this phrase, but is smoother and more subdued. The



Fig. 60--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 81-84.

outline of the theme is heard for the first time in the last four measures of the variation in rhythmic mutation.

Variation III

The third variation signals the beginning of what might be considered the recapitulation of the whole Quintet. Starting here, the themes of the previous movements reappear, forming a cycle (see Chapter Three). The first of these



Fig. 61--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 97-100, 113-114.

motive is also heard simultaneously in the lower voices. In addition to these three fragments, one of which is not even directly related to the work, the basic outline of the theme is still discernible. Also interesting is the treatment of the material as far as instrumentation is concerned. The melodic and accompanimental lines are split up between instruments, tossed back and forth, as it were, at regular metric intervals. In this case, constant sixteenth-note motion as well as eighth-note motion is established (see Fig. 62).

The middle section concentrates on the "Brahms" motif, with a syncopated accompaniment similar to that of the second variation.

Variation V

In the final variation the meter changes to 3/8. There is no tempo indication, but it is clear from the melodic content, that the eighth note should be slightly faster than the original eighth note of the first movement, so that when the 6/8 actually returns, the impact will be felt by the sudden halting in tempo. In this variation the theme is all but shoved aside for the presentation of the first-movement themes. In the first section, three motives are restated:

- 1) the cello melody from the first variation, now pizzicato,
- 2) the circling motive, and 3) the theme in the viola.



Fig. 63--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 161-164.

The second section presents a version of the dipping motive, along with the circling motive, leading back to the A section, and to the coda.

Coda

The coda, in 6/8 meter, presents no new material, but represents a struggle between the motives of the first movement and the theme of the finale. The circling motive and dipping motive are heard first, in E minor, cadencing in G major. In measure 200, the theme is heard over dominant harmonies in B, cadencing instead in E minor. The first-movement motives are heard again, this time cadencing in C major. The theme is heard twice more, and both times the dominant chord resolves down diatonically to E minor. The clarinet offers a final cadenza, at first rising, then falling slowly to the final two statements of the dipping motive, and

the work closes with a restatement of the final measures of the first movement, in augmentation.

Un poco meno mosso

fp dim. pp

fp dim. pp

fp arco dim. pp

200

p p p p p

p rinf. rinf. f p

210

p p p p p

f p p p p



Fig. 64--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, fourth movement, measures 193-222.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS

Melodic Range

It has been said that there is nothing new in the Quintet, it being simply a synthesis of the best features of Brahms' earlier works.¹ One of his best features is his power to draw upon elements of extreme simplicity, and to evoke from these elements an immense depth of meaning. This power reaches a state close to perfection in the Quintet.² This extreme simplicity of melodic material can be shown in every movement of the work. Compare for example the first subject of the opening movement (see Fig. 9), with the corresponding subject of the Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68, also in 6/8 meter. This vigorous subject spans two and one half



Fig. 65--Brahms, Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68, first movement, measures 42-51.

¹Geiringer, p. 247.

²Mason, p. 231.

octaves, whereas the Quintet theme stays within the range of a major seventh, even when in full bloom. The following thematic table illustrates the respective ranges of all the thematic material in the Quintet.

Melodic range is not the only point to be considered, however. When other factors, such as rhythm or key center are compared, the Quintet will, a greater per cent of the time, be the more straight-forward work. This is not meant to lessen the greatness of such works as Op. 68, but simply to show the culmination of a lifetime of development towards this perfection.

TABLE II

RANGE OF THEMATIC MATERIAL BRAHMS,
QUINTET IN B MINOR, OP. 115

Theme	Range
First movement	
Circling motive	Diminished 5th
First subject	Major 7th
Second subject (dialogue)	
Upper voice	Perfect 4th
Lower voice	Major 6th
Second movement	
First subject	Minor 7th
Second subject	Minor 7th
Third movement	
Introductory subject	Octave
First subject	Perfect 5th
Second subject	Minor 14th
Fourth movement	
Theme (dialogue)	
Upper voice	Perfect 4th
Lower voice	Minor 6th

Literal Repetition

The use of literal repetition also adds to the overall simplicity of the work. In the majority of his earlier works, Brahms shies away from this device; especially in the sonata-allegro movements the recapitulation is usually varied to some extent, involving instrumentation and tonal color, and sometimes including melodic mutation (see Brahms, Symphony No. 3, in F Major, Op. 90, last movement). In the first and third movements of the Quintet (the sonata-allegro movements), however, the recapitulation is almost a reprint of the exposition, with very little variance even in instrumentation. And, as pointed out, the close of the third movement is an exact statement, in epilogue fashion, of the final measures of the introduction of that movement. The adagio makes the greatest use of literal repetition; the return is a written-out repeat of thirty-nine measures. This is unique to the Quintet; in none of the other slow movements from the larger (quartet-size or larger) chamber works is this device found. It is, of course, impossible to pin-point the exact cause for this continuous simplicity of form in this opus, but it seems highly likely that at least a small part of the reason was Brahms' age and reported mental outlook (see Chapter One) at the time.

Cyclical Aspects

"With Brahms, the later the work, the more sombre the color."³ One factor contributing to this darkness of mood is the fact that all the movements end quietly, and this, again, is unique in Brahms' chamber music. Another factor is the "descending" quality of the principal subjects:

Every one of its principal themes droops from a high note; so constant is this outline that it is possible to imagine that all are conscious variants of one idea, and when the actual melody of the first movement comes back as a coda to the . . . Finale, it hardly seems to be . . . a return to an idea long left behind, but merely the last word on one which has been present to the mind throughout.⁴

This theme and variations concept is not an unique opinion concerning Op. 115:

In its choice of instruments, and the narrow range of the principal keys used in the different movements (B minor, B major, D major), the Clarinet Quintet is akin to the old forms of Suite and Divertimento; even to a definite type: the Variation-Suite, in which one movement represents the theme and the others its variations. Doubtless Brahms was acquainted with this form, so often used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Haydn's Feldpartita, containing the Chorale St. Antonii from which Brahms took his theme for the Haydn Variations, is just such a Variation-Suite. In this connection it may be mentioned that the method of the Clarinet Quintet, which brings out the actual theme only in the 4th movement, had already been employed in the Variation-Suite.

³Ibid., p. 220.

⁴H. C. Colles, The Chamber Music of Brahms (London, 1933), p. 59.

There it was always the rule never to begin with the theme, but to let it appear only in the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th movement, so as to give more variety to the work.⁵

The variation suite (most sources indicate no capitalization or hyphen) was originally a joining of two pairs, or "couples" of pre-existing dance forms, the pavanne and galliard, and the allemande and courante:

The most important German contribution to the development of the suite was the expansion of the form by progressive variation--a procedure that closely corresponds to the variation canzona. The varied couple could not yet be regarded as a cyclic form but the combination of two varied couples led to the organization of the variation suite. This truly cyclic form was unified not only by the same key but especially by the use of the same thematic material for all the dances of the suite.⁶

It is plausible to apply this principle in modified form to the Quintet, but it would certainly suffice to simply apply the term cyclical, and leave it at that. The elements of the cycle are definitely present, though not to the extent that they were used by such composers as Mendelssohn and Franck.

Similarities to Mozart Quintet

As pointed out, Brahms' chamber music for the clarinet, if taken as a whole, resembles the corresponding works of Mozart, but even more strikingly similar are the two quintets

⁵Geiringer, p. 248.

⁶Manfred F. Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era: from Monteverdi to Bach (New York, 1947), p. 112.

(Mozart, K. 581 and Brahms Op. 115) themselves. Both employ the A clarinet, being in the closely related keys of A major and B minor, respectively. The movements of Mozart's Quintet are as follows: Allegro, 4/4 meter; Larghetto, 3/4 meter; Menuetto, 3/4 meter; Allegretto con Variazioni, 4/4 meter. The resemblance is most apparent in the second and fourth movements. The 3/4 Larghetto is in three-part song form and the third section is a literal repetition of the first, while the second section is based on thirty-second-note scale figurations in the clarinet and first violin, thus resembling Brahms' Adagio. The Finale (Allegretto) is a theme with five variations and a coda, and two of the variations seem to coincide with those of Brahms. The viola figure in the third



Fig. 66--Mozart, Quintet in A Major, K. 581, fourth movement, measures 49-52.

variation appears very much like the cello variation (see Fig. 44) at least in melodic contour and expressive quality. The arpeggio passage in the fourth variation seems to be the



Fig. 67--Mozart, Quintet in A Major, K. 581, fourth movement, measures 65-66.

predecessor of Brahms' "music-box" variation (see Fig. 61). It is certainly reasonable to assume that Brahms was at least moderately influenced by Mozart's work, since he had probably heard Mühlfeld play the piece, either in their private meeting (see Chapter One) or at a public concert.

Another aspect of the Quintet, mentioned briefly before, is the importance of the clarinet and first violin, especially in the presentation of melodic material. This also compares to Mozart's handling of the ensemble, but this was the accepted practice of his day; the first violin was definitely the solo instrument of the string quartet. In the romantic era, however, the voices of the ensemble are normally treated more equally, and indeed, much of this evolution in instrumentation was due to Brahms himself. As the work progresses into the third and fourth movements, the two solo instruments lose their soloistic characteristics and blend in more with the ensemble. Thus, in this aspect, the total evolution from one style to the other can be seen in the one work.

Aspects of Brahms' Scoring for the Clarinet

One feature not discussed to this point in Brahms' technique in writing for the clarinet as a solo instrument. Keeping in mind the fact that the Quintet is unquestionably a monumental piece of chamber music, it must be pointed out

that the writing for clarinet is also quite good. Many composers before Brahms (Weber, Spohr, Stamitz, to name a few) knew how to write well for the clarinet, but only Mozart and Brahms before the twentieth century combined the attributes of a genius for composition and a gift for scoring for the instrument. This is not to say that there are no flaws in the writing, however. There are several passages of extreme awkwardness in the Quintet which must be overcome in order to ensure a smooth performance. These will be discussed briefly here.

The first movement, in general, offers few problems from a technical standpoint. Intonation is quite another matter. In measure 114, the clarinet plays in its highest register in octaves with the violin, and this can be very problematic,



Fig. 68--Brahms, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, first movement, measure 114.

as the A clarinet usually has its intonation difficulties, especially in the extreme registers. This same problem occurs in the slow movement in measure 70 (see Fig. 28), where the clarinet is perched even higher, on its highest note, G. This

problem is heightened by its placement in the phrase; it occurs after a long crescendo with little or no rest in the clarinet part, making possible fatigue an added factor. When played well, however, this particular passage is extremely effective. Another intonation difficulty stemming from the use of the high register is in measure 66 of the fourth movement, (see Fig. 59). The clarinet, following a rest, begins a descending arpeggio on the high G, a note which, aside from its poor intonation, tends not to speak well.

The most difficult passage from a technical standpoint appears in the second movement, in measures 85 and 86 (see Fig. 25). At this point the clarinet is in the key of F sharp minor and the rapid F sharp minor, B sharp diminished and C sharp minor arpeggios make this spot extremely difficult. Often, a part for the B flat clarinet is written along with the A part so that the player can switch instruments shortly prior to this section and play the passage in the more comfortable key of F minor.

The third movement is relatively free of technical and intonation problems, but a breathing difficulty exists in the Andantino introduction. The clarinet plays for nineteen measures without a rest, and with no logical place in the phrase to breathe. The performer must therefore break the phrase at whatever points he feels most justifiable.

Interpretation

Aside from the few physical difficulties just mentioned, there remain no serious technical problems for the clarinetist in the performing of this work. The interpretation and phrasing are quite another matter, however. It is often very tempting for the amateur to undertake this work early in his career, having mastered the few awkward passages. What Kell states about the Sonatas, Op. 120, could very well be applied to the Quintet: "Clarinetists who are not fully developed musically and who are happy just playing the instrument instead of using it to music's end would be well advised to turn their attention to a less complex style."⁷

It is suggested here that before attempting the Quintet, the student should make a study of the other works of Brahms, as well as other works of a similar medium. Some works which might lead up to the study of the Quintet are Mozart, Quintet in A Major, K. 581; Brahms, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114; Brahms, Sonata in E Flat Major, Op. 120, No. 1, and Brahms, Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, No. 2. If the student can skillfully interpret the preceeding works, he should have a solid background to begin study of the Quintet. It is, of course, assumed that other works will have been studied, but those mentioned are the ones most nearly related to the Quintet.

⁷Kell, p. 5.

Unfortunately, due to the unusual combination of instruments employed in the Quintet, it is rare that it will be performed live by a professional touring chamber ensemble. It can be heard, however, on college campuses by resident ensembles, and there are several recordings available (see Appendix II).

Importance of the Quintet in Clarinetist's Repertory

As mentioned previously, the Quintet was one of the most popular of Brahms' works during his lifetime, and the piece has certainly retained that position since his death. This is understandable, since it is unquestionably one of the finest examples of chamber music in existence. The importance of this work in the chamber music repertory of the clarinetist cannot be stressed enough. The two pinnacles formed by this work and its predecessor, the Mozart Quintet, are not equalled in excellence in the rest of the clarinetist's repertory. The fact that the Quintet also serves as a technical display piece seems rather incidental to its real position as a monument of music:

It may have been Brahms' purpose here to display the clarinet to advantage. Certainly every opportunity is given that instrument; lyric melody, dramatic figuration, rhapsodic utterance, delicate passage work, and complete range are employed. But the quintet is in no sense merely a virtuoso display piece; it is an example of

of perfectly conceived, lovingly planned chamber music of the highest quality.⁸

⁸Homer Ulrich, Chamber Music: The Growth and Practice of an Intimate Art (New York, 1948), p. 332.

APPENDIX A

TABLE III

SUMMARY OF FORM

Subject, Theme or Section	Measures
First Movement Sonata-Allegro Form	
Introduction	1-13
Exposition	14-70
First subject	14-24
Transition	25-37
Second subject.	38-47
Transition	48-58
Closing subject	59-70
Development.	71-135
Recapitulation	136-194
First subject	138-148
Transition	149-158
Second subject.	159-168
Transition	169-179
Closing subject	180-194
Coda	195-218
Second Movement Three-Part Song Form	
First part	1-51
First subject	1-16
Second subject.	17-25
Transition	26-31
First subject	32-41
Transition	42-51

TABLE III--Continued

Subject, Theme or Section	Measures
Second part.	52-87
Return to first part	88-138
First subject	88-102
Second subject.	103-111
Transition	112-117
First subject	118-127
Coda	128-138

Third Movement
Sonata-Allegro Form

Introduction	1-32
Exposition	34-75
First subject	34-53
Second subject.	54-75
Development.	76-121
Recapitulation	122-161
First subject	122-139
Second subject.	140-161
Coda	162-192

Fourth Movement
Theme and Variations' Form

Theme	1-32
First variation	33-64
Second variation	65-96
Third variation	97-128
Fourth variation	129-160
Fifth variation	161-192
Coda	193-222

APPENDIX B

TABLE IV

AVAILABLE RECORDINGS OF BRAHMS QUINTET

Artists	Label	Monaural Number	Stereo Number
Boskovsky, Vienna Octet members	London	9301	6234
De Peyer, Melos Ensemble	Angel	6280	. . .
Genser, Drolc Quartet	Mace	. . .	S9029
Kell, Fine Arts Quartet	Decca	9532	. . .
Kell, Fine Arts Quartet	Concert Disc	1202	202
Michaels, Endres Quartet	Vox	VBX-5	. . .
Oppenheim, Budapest String Quartet	Columbia	ML5626	MS6226
Sorokin, Oistrakh Quartet	Bruno	14062	. . .
Wlach, Konzerthaus Quartet of Vienna	Westminster	9061	. . .

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Blom, Eric, Mozart, London, J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1935.
- Bukofzer, Manfred F., Music in the Baroque Era: from Monteverdi to Bach, New York, W. W. Norton and Co., 1947.
- Colles, H. C., The Chamber Music of Brahms, London, Oxford University Press, 1933.
- Drinker, Henry S., The Chamber Music of Johannes Brahms, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Elkan-Vogel Co., 1932.
- Einstein, Alfred, Mozart: His Character, His Work, translated by Arthur Mendel and Nathan Broder, London, Oxford University Press, 1945.
- Evans, Edwin, Handbook to the Chamber and Orchestral Music of Johannes Brahms, Vol. II (2 volumes), London, William Reeves, 1933-35.
- Geiringer, Karl, Brahms: His Life and Work, translated by H. B. Weiner and Bernard Miall, New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936.
- Goss, Madeleine, and Robert Haven Schauffler, Brahms, the Master, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1943.
- Mason, Daniel Gregory, The Chamber Music of Brahms, New York, Macmillan Co., 1933.
- May, Florence, The Life of Johannes Brahms, Vol. II (2 volumes), London, Edward Arnold, 1905.
- Specht, Richard, Johannes Brahms, translated by Eric Blom, London, J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1930.
- Ulrich, Homer, Chamber Music: The Growth and Practice of an Intimate Art, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948.

Articles

- Derenburg, Mrs. Carl, "My Recollections of Brahms," The Musical Times, LXVII (July 1, 1926), 598-600.
- Kell, Reginald, "The Clarinet Music of Johannes Brahms," Woodwind World, IV (December 1, 1961), 5.
- Portnoy, Bernard, "Brahms' Prima Donna," Woodwind World, IV (February 15, 1963), 12-13.
- Rogers, James Frederick, "The Rise of the Clarinet," The Etude, XLVII (December, 1929), 893, 933.

Encyclopedia Articles

- Fellinger, Imogen, "Mühlfeld, Richard," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, edited by Friedrich Blume, Vol. IX, Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1961.
- Fuller-Maitland, J. A., "Mühlfeld, Richard," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th edition, edited by Eric Blom, Vol. V, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1954.
- "Mühlfeld, Richard," Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, 5th edition by Nicolas Slonimsky, New York, G. Schirmer, 1958.
- Tovey, Donald Francis, "Brahms, Johannes," Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, edited by W. W. Cobbett, Vol. I, London, Oxford University Press, 1929.

Music

- Brahms, Johannes, Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115, Leipzig, Ernst Eulenburg Scores.
- Brahms, Johannes, Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68, London, Ernst Eulenburg, Ltd.
- Brahms, Johannes, Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73, London, Ernst Eulenburg, Ltd.
- Brahms, Johannes, Symphony No. 3, in F Major, Op. 90, London, Ernst Eulenburg, Ltd.

Brahms, Johannes, Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98, Paris, Heugel and Co.

Brahms, Johannes, Trio in A Minor, Op. 114, New York, International Music Co.

Mozart, W. A., Quintet in A Minor, K. 581, New York, Edwin F. Kalmus.

Unpublished Material

Mahoney, James Mack, "The Development of the Clarinet as a Solo Instrument During the Eighteenth Century," unpublished master's thesis, School of Music, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1966.