

# Brahms Symphony No. 1 – Movement IV

## WJEC: A Level Set Work

### Teachers' Notes

#### Background information

The following materials are essential for use with this resource:

- Eulenberg score of Symphony No.1 Op.68 by Brahms [ISBN 3-7957-6682-6]
- Recording of the Brahms' Symphony

Preparatory information work with class regarding:

- the musical and stylistic conventions of the Romantic era
- the development of the Symphony, 1830 - 1910
- Brahms' musical style
- an analysis of the movement required for study i.e.  
*Movement IV: Adagio – Allegro non troppo ma con brio*

These notes are intended to assist music teachers in their preparation and delivery of the set work. They are offered as outline guidance, and contain suggestions as to the necessary musical content and background for study, but are not meant to be an exhaustive resource. The information includes the analysis, and some additional questions have also been included to support further research and extended understanding.

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#### The main stylistic characteristics of Romantic music

The meaning of Romantic as applied to the music of the 19<sup>th</sup>C is not straightforward to define. It was a complex style including individual styles with musical elements in common. Difficult to define because earlier composers demonstrated tendencies of the time associated with the description. Early sources of the musical style were to be seen in Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> symphonies, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Magic Flute* and Haydn's *Creation* and *Seasons*. Composers such as Beethoven, Weber and even Schubert bridged the transition from the Classical era to the Romantic.

Nevertheless, guidelines for student understanding and an overall appreciation are straightforward, though it is possible to offer only a brief outline and some suggestions here in the Teachers' Notes.

It is generally accepted that Romantic era offers music that was inspired by literature, history, nature and human emotion. Heine wrote: '*Classical art had to express the finite....romantic art had to represent the infinite and the spiritual*'. Romantic composers were no more versatile or powerful than Mozart or Bach, but almost all of them experienced a wider general culture, as musicians were welcomed in literary and artistic circles. The political situation after the Napoleonic Wars had their effect in many areas of society, and while scientists were trying to explain the universe and its mechanics, music and literature were reflecting a reaction to the rationalism of the previous century. (Of all the social changes related to music, however, the eventual decline of the old system of patronage was probably the most important).

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#### General characteristics of Romantic music

- Early Romantic composers included Schubert and Mendelssohn, and more characteristically, Schumann, Chopin and Weber. Later stages of Romanticism are reflected in the work of Wagner, Liszt and Berlioz. Other notable composers from this era included Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, Smetana, Verdi and, of course, Brahms.
- Structures – a more personal expression of emotion was evident, and a greater freedom of form and design. Formal distinctions between the movements of the symphony began to breakdown.
- Closer links with the other arts gave rise to programme music i.e. the symphonic poem, the programme symphony and the concert overture.
- Further organisation and unity brought to compositions in the use of recurring themes, often developed and transformed i.e. *idée fixe* (Berlioz), *leitmotif* (Wagner) thematic transformation/metamorphosis of theme (Liszt).
- More variety in the 'types' of music i.e. short songs and piano pieces, to multi-movement orchestral works, song-cycles, extended and spectacular music dramas. The shorter pieces were excellent vehicles for Romantic lyricism.
- Expansion of the orchestra, improvement in various instruments notably brass; the orchestral palette was extremely rich and colourful, capable of massive dramatic contrasts, capable of both power and extreme delicacy in musical expression.
- Emphasis on the virtuosic (particularly pianists and violinists); range and power of the piano increased as the instrument continued to evolve (e.g. greater use of pedals gave new opportunity in terms of sonority).
- Textures include many contrasts, influenced by past homophonic and contrapuntal styles, capable now of wider range in terms of pitch, tone-colour and dynamics. Composers more at home with harmonic resources – counterpoint was less natural to many composers of the period.
- More emotive and less mechanical thematic material, with an emphasis now on lyrical melodic substance; the melody became more expressive, enriched through expressive dynamic nuance; note the clear definition of melodic substance through use of solo instruments – and an exploitation of the unexploited registers of the instruments.
- Harmonic exploration evident: already noted in some works by Beethoven, composers include unexpected and adventurous modulations, chords are increasingly complex, bold and chromatically inflected – often with harmonic functionality, some of which was, however, more ambiguous. Sense of tonality beginning to breakdown in the work of some (Wagner), where the use of dissonance obscured the sense of key and melodic phrasing which avoided regular key-defining cadences. The new generation of Romantic composers started to turn their backs on previous functional harmony and the sense of key relations.

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- Growth of Nationalism in the works of certain composers, seen as a reaction against German influences in music.
- Commercialism flourished in music with the freer markets and state support (commercial concerts, the opera, the travelling virtuoso, the music critic / journalists/ education in music became far more widespread, and printed music become more widely available).

## BRAHMS – Life and Times

- German composer and pianist (1833 - 1897). Born in Hamburg, but lived mostly in Vienna. He is recognised as one of the greatest composers of all time. As an exponent of the Romantic era in music, he is considered to be both a traditionalist and an innovator; his music contains both Classical and Romantic era elements. His music is rooted in the past, both in the structures and compositional techniques of the previous two eras i.e. The Baroque and the Classical. He was a master of counterpoint and of development as seen in the works of the Classical masters, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Along with Bruckner, Brahms was undeniably respectful to the ideals of the Classical symphony as embodied in Beethoven; each was to incorporate the new Romantic ideals of harmony, figuration and orchestration in their own way.
- As a young boy, Brahms was given musical lessons by his father, also a musician; as a teenager, he was already an accomplished musician and a proficient pianist.
- Brahms began to compose early in life -but was always a perfectionist and did not keep first copies of his early works. Described by Grout as '*Naturally conscientious, severely self-critical...*' This was a practice that stayed with him, as he often destroyed pieces he thought were not up to standard. It has been said that as a young composer he papered the walls of his room with 20 self-rejected string quartets before he had composed one that he felt happy enough with to publish.
- He showed an early interest in composition, and his work achieved some acclaim when he went on tour (as accompanist) to the Hungarian violinist Reményi. In 1853, they both visited Joseph Joachim, and Brahms played some of his piano compositions for him. Around the same time, the young composer also visited Robert and Clara Schumann. He played them some piano pieces which they described as 'veiled symphonies'. The project to write his first symphony began growing from that point forward, and they were to remain close friends.
- Began composing orchestral music in 1857-9, when he had the chance to work with the Detmold orchestra, having previously studied orchestration while in Düsseldorf. His delay (and difficulty perhaps) at writing something orchestral was noted by his friends and contemporaries. His earlier output was substantial, but mostly in the form of chamber music or song.
- Some of his contemporaries considered his music to be too academic; modernist composers of the time such as Liszt and Wagner rebuked his more traditional writing. Later composers such as Schoenberg and Elgar admired his craftsmanship.

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- By the early 1870s he was principal conductor of the Society of Friends of Music, and also directed the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra for three seasons.
- Output: Brahms composed chamber music, symphonies, concertos, piano works and choral compositions. He had published 2 serenades, of quasi-symphonic scope, a large piano concerto and the 'Haydn' variations before his symphony was finally completed.

## Composers of symphonic works, 1830-1910:

**Schubert, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Schumann, Liszt, Brahms, Smetana, Bruckner, Dvořák, Mahler, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Spohr, Sibelius, Ives, Scriabin.**

For details of suggested listening, please refer to the Guidance for Teachers (WJEC website)

## BRAHMS' – Musical Style

Perhaps more than any other composer before him, Brahms was very aware of the full breadth of the tradition he inherited, and remained a traditionalist despite the powerful Romantic characteristics in his music. The Classical inclination simply cannot be ignored; in his own day he was regarded as the '*true upholder of a central German tradition*' (Groves).

In the formative years of his life, the 'new' German music was influenced by Liszt and Wagner – but, along with Joachim, Brahms opposed the programmatic working of this school. Romantic composers of the time, preoccupied with creating the emotional moment, often produced works that suffered from a loss of structure to some degree; Brahms, the scholar and the academic, wanted to redress the balance.

Behind most of Brahms' experiments with musical **structure**, was always a specific musical model that he looked to as an ideal and a guide, both in terms of sonata form and the polyphonic textures and forms of the Baroque. He was particularly influenced by Beethoven in his sense of form. Structurally, his expansion of sonata form is noteworthy - he used the form with '*magnificent success*' according to Charles Rosen. He followed the external overall structure, and the emphasis on the importance of the outer movements is evident. He followed the classical tradition of having a slow 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, with monothematic first and last sections, with central sections which offered contrasting material. In his symphonies, he never called his third movement a 'scherzo', but tended to blend the features of a minuet, scherzo and Austrian Ländler.

In terms of 'inner' structures of sonata form within a movement, he did not follow the traditional method of developing ideas, though still did not actually create anything 'new'.

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When other composers were composing programmatic works, he was still working within clear structural divisions, though the thematic material was treated intensely through the constant transformation of themes in developmental passages (even in the opening sections). There was no doubt – he was a master of variation (and of variation form, at times choosing to use themes by other composers e.g. Haydn, Schumann, Handel and Bach).

In the finale of Symphony no. 1 we encounter a fusing of the development and the recapitulation section; movement 3 of his 4th symphony also presents itself as sonata form without a development section. Apart from his last symphony, he always indicated the end of the exposition section in the first movements with the conventional repeat sign. His 2<sup>nd</sup> subjects are subsidiary and support the first subject material; furthermore, he also added elaborate passages to the main themes and used the second themes as 'digressions'. The idea of the second subject as a contrasting subject was replaced by variation and transformation of earlier ideas. Interestingly, he employed the ostinato idea of the chaconne (finale in symphony no.4), and the repeated idea heard in the bass for S2 in the finale of his first symphony also shows this influence.

He also favoured the use of cyclic devices (e.g. final of I uses the horn call from the introduction – along with other ideas). The importance of the Introduction sections cannot be underestimated as they are clearly functional, predicting clearly what is to follow. His intention to forge thematic links beyond a section and over much broader spans of the music is evident. In the symphony set for detailed study, the lengthy slow introduction sections to both movements I and IV both prepare for the quicker Allegro sections to follow, but also provide the main source of musical content for the subsequent thematic argument.

Brahms employed generally clear **harmonic** functions within these closed formal designs, carefully handling tensions and resolution, supported by regulated by strong bass lines. Chromaticism was contained for the most part, and he was fond of using a harmonic tonal scheme in which the keys of the successive movements depart from and return to the tonic by major 3rds: e.g. C-E-A flat-C. Even in the main body of his music, his reliance on 'mediant relationships' is one worthy of note. He seemed to embrace the conflict between respecting the traditions of the past while attempting to be creative, this being especially evident in his use of harmony: while recognised as being 'conservative' he certainly was not afraid of recreating tonal syntax to suit his compositional purpose and achieve subtlety and change of harmonic effect, through the rich harmonic substance (often dark in its sonority), use of remote and colourful modulations. Heavy and thick doublings are evident in the chord structure, and he often amplifies a line with parallel 3rds and 6ths, sometimes in octaves or in several octaves, or by doubling contrary motion in the same way. He also widened the harmonic range by concentrating on the dominant minor, more so than any previous composer. For a late 18<sup>th</sup> C composer, the dominant minor was an interesting chromatic alteration of the dominant major, but in Brahms' music it sometimes becomes a full

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secondary tonality in its own right within the exposition.

In this respect, he uses techniques of Romantic harmony to his utmost advantage; by utilising incomplete chords, he also manages to leave the tonality sounding ambiguous at times. Chord and key relationships are used for striking effects, including relatively remote modulations, sometimes used as an extension of the structure. Modulations are often produced by use of enharmonic and chromatic chords. In all, numerous harmonic possibilities are exploited by Brahms to achieve a colourful harmonic palette. (In his first symphony, he seemed to have been influenced by the chromatic progressions favoured by Schumann - and the passionate conflict between the opposing moods of C minor and C major cannot be ignored).

What is interesting about Brahms is that the harmony and the **melody** are sometimes out of phase, with the harmony moving to the next step before the melody gets there; such harmonic anticipation provides for an interesting effect. This is one example of how he loosens the fairly strict ties in Viennese classical style between melody and harmony; at times he employs melodic dissonance in daring ways....but through the accompanying harmonies, they sound acceptable.

Melodies are frequently built around triadic formations; arpeggio-type extensions and wide spacing of the broken harmony, and figuration based on broken octaves is also typical. Figuration was a focus for him, as he was determined to make its working both functional and characteristic – he succeeded, improving with experience. He achieved a compelling sense of melody, with a few striking tunes – this was a recipe which provided a firm basis for a symphonic style. If anything, he was perhaps occasionally mechanical in his melodic working, but demonstrated craftsmanship in the placing of his melodies (much in the manner of Haydn). In the same way that he was influenced by Beethoven in terms of form, it has been said that he was 'haunted by Schubert's lyricism'. He demonstrates a tendency to interweave the melodic ideas, which also produces interesting textures. His love and reverence for folk music can also be seen throughout his work.

Students of Brahms' music must acknowledge the **rhythmic subtlety** found in his works, and not underestimate his manipulation of musical time. He revitalised the rhythmic language of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, effectively using complex combinations of different rhythms and syncopations; polyrhythms were also typical of his style, and he often placed triplets against duplets, for example. He also syncopates whole measures and phrases, not just patterns. He notates passages which – while remaining true to the stated time-signature – sometimes include rhythmic ideas that suggest a subsidiary metric feel. The rhythmic conflict, metric displacement and the avoidance of regularity may be seen in many passages of his music, and this is achieved through a variety of means:

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- opposing rhythmic ideas
- augmentation and diminution of rhythmic cells, through sforzandi and accent displacement
- 'hocket' techniques which contribute to the broader musical line
- the use of hemiola
- irregular phrase lengths
- varying placement of notes
- conflicting types of rhythmic activity presented simultaneously in multiple layers

In his orchestral works Brahms displays an unmistakable and highly distinctive deployment of **tone colour**, especially in his use of woodwind and brass instruments and in his string writing. A close relationship between orchestration and structure often dominates these works, and the skilful orchestration contributes as much to the outcome as do the harmonies, tonalities and the changing nature of the themes. Scoring is often dense, and he favoured the doubling of melodic lines in 3rds and 6ths in orchestral work (and indeed, in his piano writing). If anything, he was sparing in his use of the bright colours of the solo instruments (though perhaps less so with the horn and clarinet). He found the perfect medium for his symphonic sound in an orchestra more classical than Romantic in make-up, including double woodwind.

In his style we have noted the lyricism and strength of melodic work, respect for tradition and craftsmanship, and in this respect, Brahms seemingly avoided empty displays of virtuosity. His approach to texture included counterpoint often with a network of interrelated musical lines heard in the music. It has been suggested that perhaps the sound of the orchestra was perhaps not his main object; he seemed more concerned with the lines of his melodic development. Compared to Berlioz and Wagner, his orchestration has been criticized by some as 'elementary'.

*“Brahms made orchestral composition harder for himself by rejecting the pictorial instrumentation prevalent in the works of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. The sensuous sound of the English horn, the swelling ripple of the harp and the full-bodied attack of a percussion section form no part of his orchestration. He could have written banally effective orchestral music without abstaining for so long from symphonic composition, but he set himself the task of inventing an instrumental formula suited to his own style of composition, including lucid scoring of the inner parts. He could not use a strongly coloured, compact sound for his polyphonically constructed type of movement, with its frequent switches of melodic weight from the outer to the inner parts, because it would have obliterated the finely drawn lines of his composition. In fact he found the*

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*right medium for his symphonic sound in the so-called Classical orchestra, with double woodwind. Concentration on essentials, absence of exuberant gestures and moderation in the choice of his medium define Brahms more as a renovator of tradition than as a reactionary symphonist”.*

(GROVES)

Brahms' symphonic achievement had a profound effect on any later composers; they have lasted through the centuries and are regarded as amongst the greatest in the symphonic repertoire. Like Bruckner, he incorporated his Romantic ideals into the Classical four-movement symphonic ideas: fast, slow, dance, finale. The works were classical in many respects:

- they were all examples of 'absolute' music
- all written in four movements with 'recognisable' sonata form outlines
- included motivic development
- included contrapuntal techniques
- did not use a programme as was the 'fashion' of the Romantic era

However, they were Romantic in spirit with their general features of the musical language, in the harmonic idioms and in the colourful writing for orchestra. He packed the traditional framework with new and interesting musical substance.

*“Nothing is left to chance; each movement has its course determined from the very first note. Imaginative and original themes, individual harmonies, rhythms and phrases set in unusual metrical patterns, complete mastery over counterpoint, orchestration consistently serving the spirit of the music without flamboyant rhetoric, all are to be found within a classical framework controlling everything.”*

(Robert Simpson)

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#### BRAHMS – Symphony No.1, Movement IV Introductory Notes

It is a well-accepted fact that Brahms nursed along the early sketches and working of his first symphony for many years. He approached its composition with a great deal of trepidation, concerned by what he felt was a responsibility not to fall below Beethoven's achievement in the genre; he famously commented: "*I shall never compose a symphony! You have no idea how hard it is for our kind to hear the tramp of a giant like him behind us*". He was of course, referring to Beethoven. Throughout his career, as he had lived in Vienna, Brahms felt the shadow of Beethoven; but he wanted to be considered on his own merit and not compared to Beethoven.

In 1854, Brahms heard Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> symphony which inspired him to write his own. He started the work and told Joachim '*I have been trying my hand at writing a symphony and have even orchestrated the first movement and completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>*'.

Later, dissatisfied with the work, he turned the material into a sonata for two pianos; many of its ideas were also used in the first piano concerto. The spinning out of the composition was not due to any creative block, as he was writing music all this time - just not orchestral music.

He seems to have convinced himself that if he was to make his debut as a symphonist, it should be with nothing less than a masterpiece. In 1862, Clara Schumann wrote to the violinist Joseph Joachim:

*"What do you think Johannes sent me recently? The first movement of a symphony which begin like this.....(example)...This is rather severe, but I've got used to it. The movement is full of beauty and the themes are treated with a mastery which is more and more individual. The interweaving of material is most interesting, the music flows on and the listener doesn't notice the workmanship..."*

Whatever the reasons for the slowness of the composition, he was gradually reaching his goal, and little by little, his symphonic ideas were taking shape. By 1868, he had sent Clara Schumann the famous horn solo from the finale, an alpine tune to the words: 'High on the mountain, deep in the valley, I greet you many thousand times.'

His increasing experience as a conductor earned him the directorship of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in 1872. This gave him inside knowledge of the workings of the orchestra, and in 1873, he tested his orchestral technique on a more familiar form and wrote *Variations on a Theme* by Haydn. After this, he seemed sufficiently confident to complete the symphony, though made a number of cuts and revisions.

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The premiere was held in November, 1876, in Karlsruhe (arranged in Germany so as to avoid the inevitable comparisons with Beethoven). Expectations were high; Brahms remained sceptical. After he eventually scheduled a performance in Vienna, the music critic Eduard Hanslick compared his work with Beethoven and drew attention to the main theme of IV. Later, the famous German conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow famously tagged the symphony 'Beethoven's Tenth'. Not a criticism – surely a compliment! Nevertheless, the composition achieved high praise from the critics, and it remains popular with modern audiences.

## The First Symphony

### Orchestration:

2 flutes

2 oboes

2 clarinets

2 bassoons

Contrabassoon

4 horns

2 trumpets

3 trombones

Timpani

Violin solo; first and 2nd violins, violas cells and double basses.

### It is in 4 movements:

Movement 1: Un poco sostenuto – Allegro – Meno allegro (C minor ending in C major)

Movement 2: Andante sostenuto (E major)

Movement 3: Un poco allegretto e grazioso (A flat major)

Movement 4: Adagio – Più andante – Allegro non troppo, ma non brio – Più allegro (C minor – C major)

The 4<sup>th</sup> movement, the finale, has been designated as the work for A level study in the current A Level WJEC Music specification. The structure exhibits a noteworthy digression for the usual sonata form as the Recapitulation immediately follows the Exposition, though develops material in a masterly fashion – to sum up, the music seems to fuse the recap with the development. This entire symphony is different structurally; in most symphonies of this time, all the symphonies were weighted towards the opening movement with their structural tensions worked out in the first movement. This finale is the longest part of the symphony, and from the start the drama

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is intense. The alhorn theme forecasts the trajectory of the whole movement; and part of that journey involves the simplicity – and strength – of the main theme.

The opening of the last movement has an instant impact and is paramount as it clearly contains the germ of the thematic material to follow. This finale derives its entire thematic substance from what Tovey describes as '*a magnificent cloudy procession of ideas*' as presented in the Adagio, a two-part Introduction section.

This in itself is not a new idea, but possibly directly influenced by Schumann's fourth symphony in D minor, and also his second symphony (where the introduction contains all the ideas of the ensuing Allegro section).

Even in the early stages of this composition, Brahms admitted that he had "*laid much emphasis on thematic development*". We discover the transformation of the themes with an air of admiration for the ongoing craftsmanship; in the recap of the finale a more 'conventional' musician would have re-sated S1 in grandeur – but Brahms continues to develop the material and he uses it as no more than a starting point for continued invention. By the time we get to the coda, he alludes only to the rhythm without repeating the theme as such. The subtle – and sometimes not-so subtle – transformation of themes is quite incredible – and these also extend beyond the confines of a single movement. (Do the almost Impressionist passages of the finale have their source in the tied quaver – semiquaver motif from the second movement?). However, to quote every theme or phrase in its embryonic form is not possible within these notes; further and supportive in-depth analysis will demonstrate and support the realization of Brahms' skill in incorporating all the elements of the Introduction into a movement so different in character.

As Frisch writes: "*After the beginning of the recapitulation in m.186, which precedes the development, the main theme is never heard again in its original form.*"

[Though it is not the remit here, teachers may want to encourage discussion and research into the use of motives in the first movement and throughout the symphony, to fully appreciate the significance of the thematic transformation taking place in movement 4].

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## Brahms and the allusions.

There are many allusions in Brahms music in general, and this symphony is no exception. This is evident even with the 'stormy' opening first movement, with a tonality and 'fateful' rhythmic motif straight from Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> symphony. However, rarely has one been so obvious as the recollection of Beethoven's *Freudenthema* in this finale. It seemed that Brahms himself was rather embarrassed by it, once famously quipping "Every fool notices that...."

### Brahms: Symph no.1; IV; S1



Musical score for Brahms' Symphony No. 1, IV, S1. The score is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a *poco f* dynamic marking. The second staff continues the melodic line. The third staff ends with a *sfz* marking and a trill (*tr*) over the final note.

### Beethoven: Symph no.9; IV; 'Ode to Joy' theme



Musical score for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, IV, 'Ode to Joy' theme. The score is written in bass clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a *p* dynamic marking. The second staff continues the melodic line. The third staff begins with a *cresc.* marking and ends with a *p* dynamic marking.

Rather reticently, Brahms acknowledged the resemblance, and the similarities are there for all to see:

- Simple in style
- Quite 'religious', folk/hymn like, broad
- Use of opening dactylic rhythm (i.e. long-short-short; )
- Repeated melodic supersonic at the end of the first 4 bar phrase
- Similar harmonic profile
- Stepwise/conjunct movement
- Narrow range
- Distinctive and similar use of  pattern
- Both in the major key

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Beethoven's ostinato provides a thematic climax, Brahms' idea is part of a process that reaches its conclusion only in the final cadence of theme. It is also partly modelled on the alhorn theme.

Other allusions in the fourth movement have referred to Brahms pre-occupation with the ground bass structure of the Baroque (cf. the ostinato of S2 with Bach's Cantata No.150 "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich" and to a ground bass in a chorus from Cantata No.106 "Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit". Links have been made also with Schubert's slow introduction to his 'Great' C major Symphony, as well as Schumann's 2nd Symphony in C major.

### Schubert –opening of intro to Symphony in C

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### Bach: Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit (II, bar 48)

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For further in-depth explanation of structure and meaning in the last movement of this symphony, teachers are advised to consider the relevant chapter 'Structure and meaning in the last movement' explained by David Brodbeck in his book 'Brahms – Symphony No.1' (Cambridge Music Handbooks).

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#### Brahms I / IV Analysis Introduction

C minor; Common time; Adagio. The rather gloomy opening of this movement is full of drama, recalling the mood of the first movement of this symphony, in key, and in the use of chromaticism and instrumentation.

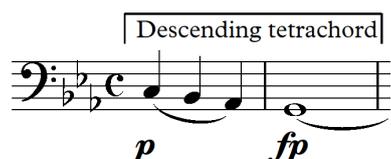
**Part 1, bars 1 – 29.** This is in three segments:

A (1 – 5) [on the dominant], B (6-12)

A1 (12-15), B1 (16-19)

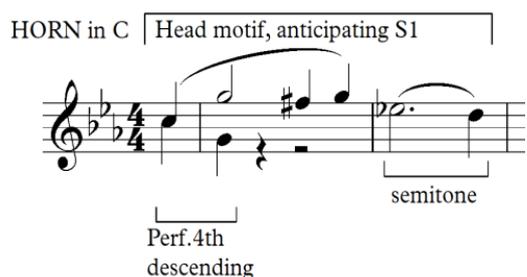
A2 (20-21), B2 (22-29)

The movement opens with the violas and lower strings playing a four-note descending motif (tetrachord) played *piano*:

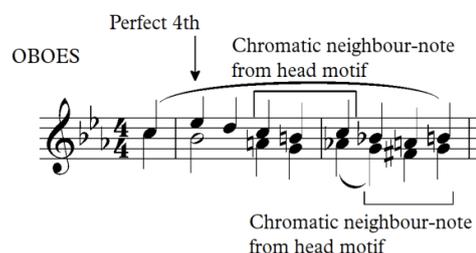


For ease of reference, this will be labelled figure 'x'.

As the low notes reach the dominant note, where they remain as a pedal for the next 4 bars, the violins and horns enter in anticipation of the main theme:



The descending chromatic crotchets in winds (minus clarinets) recall the opening of the first movement, also anticipating the idea of a descending tetrachord that underpins the material of S2:

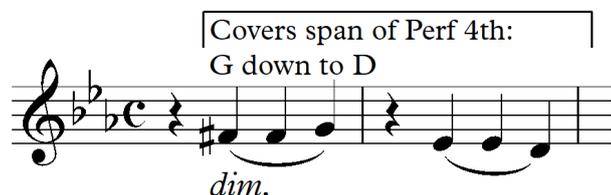


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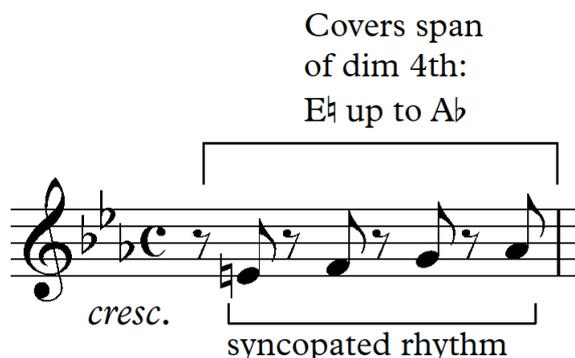
Violas and bassoons echo the motif in parallel thirds at a much lower pitch as violins emphasize the semitone idea (2 octaves lower):



Covers span of Perf 4th:  
G down to D

*dim.*

Bar 6: Now we hear an attempt to break the ominous mood as strings are heard (pizzicato), passing the 2-note figure between the instruments; this is an idea to be found later in development work, and the change in texture quickly gains momentum in tempo, pitch and dynamic, marked stringendo. The harmonic content moves through the dominant minor, with the idea ascending in a reversal of fig 'x', with the brief nod to the chord of the flattened dominant major (Gb) in bar 8 (possibility the Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup> of / hinting at the following F minor?) and the move through F min in bars 10-11, where the four-step motif now spans a diminished 4<sup>th</sup>:



Covers span  
of dim 4th:  
Eb up to Ab

*cresc.*

syncopated rhythm

Bar 12: There is a sudden stop with an *ff* chord in the strings. This is a Neapolitan sixth chord (in first inversion) in C minor. The tempo reverts to the opening adagio as the winds with the opening tetrachord of fig 'x' descending, this time back to the tonic, bringing a further string statement of the main theme: this is now heard arco after the pizzicato interruption, and is condensed from the initial phrase of the opening (3 bars instead of 4). In bar 12, the descending Ab – G in the clarinets and horns echo the movement's opening Eb-D motion on the G minor chord, with the Eb and Ab being an appoggiatura / accented upper note respectively. However, bar 13 is approached by a strong G – A flat major harmony (bar12) - it certainly 'sounds' dramatic and feels like an 'interruption' of the harmonic progression. Brahms also re-orchestrates bar 12 (compared to bar 1), and this highlights the G → C leap in the upper strings which helps emphasise the progression. A lovely moment of harmonic ambiguity here. (Note some interesting harmonic touches in bar 15, as the Neapolitan chord gives way to diminished 7<sup>th</sup> harmony resolving on a quiet C major chord

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on the last beat of the bar.

Bar 16: Now follows the second pizzicato passage, again in strings. It is shorter and the bass descends:

CELLO *pizz.*



Sequential idea as bass moves down by step

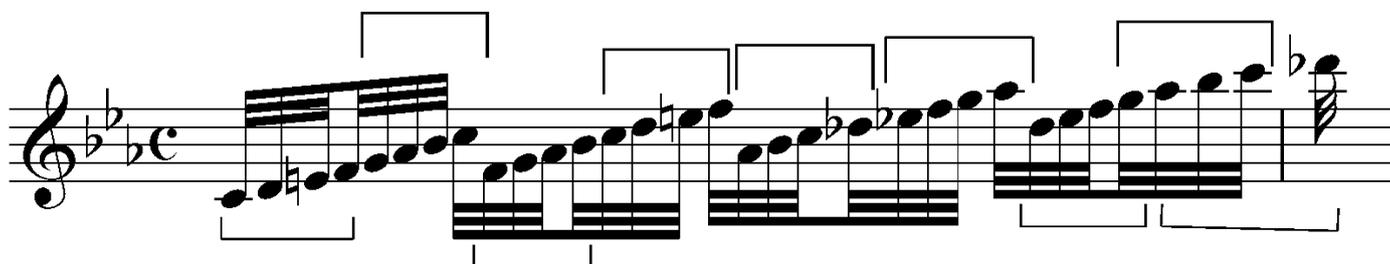
Ab - Eb: diminished 4th

Bars 18-19: F flat major harmony which then enharmonically becomes E major harmony in bar 20 in preparation for the tonicisation of A minor.

This again builds, *crescendo molto*, though after 4 bars as the music reaches *ff*, the idea is cut off.

Bar 20: The oboe attempts a 3<sup>rd</sup> statement of the descending tetrachord (E-D-C, a forecast of the alphon theme yet to be heard). However, it is interrupted by lower strings, as above the semibreve E♯ in double bass, the cellos and violas move off with ascending scales, built around a tonicisation of A minor (bar 20) and F minor (bar 21). These scalic ideas are much like those found later in the transition section (bar 106→). In bar 22, the winds join in (C minor). This idea, reminiscent of earlier work in the first and second movements of this symphony, will be also heard later in the closing section (Bar 148→). Note the rhythmic interplay of scalic patterns here, all with the interval of a 4<sup>th</sup> / fig 'x' / tetrachord clearly firmly in the mix, heard in diminution (this also comes later in the movement).

Some tetrachords in this scale which travels from C-upper D $\flat$ :



Bar 23, above F minor harmony:

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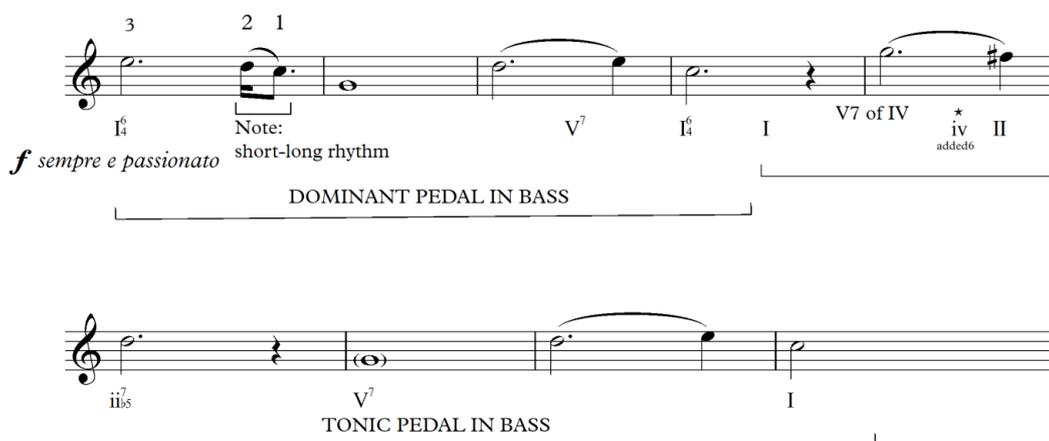
Following rapid ascending scales in violins, the full orchestral texture erupts in a series of diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords, the last of which is heard above a chromatic ascending bass line in lower strings and bassoon. Also note the 3-note woodwind 'sighs', leading us back to C minor; these also anticipate the alpine horn figure which dominates the second part of the introduction. The music is cut off with a *ff* timp roll on the tonic, below which is heard on the A§ of the bassoon and lower strings; this minor 3<sup>rd</sup> interval soon moves to a major third as the bass descends chromatically to an Ab in preparation for the second part of the introduction.

- Describe the writing for orchestra in Part 1 of the Introduction section.

### Part 2, bars 30 – 60

C major; Common time, Più Andante. Continuing with the sectional lettering from Part 1, this may be organised as a small rounded binary form in itself:

Section C (30 – 37); Section C (38 – 46); Section D (47 – 51); Section C1 (52-61<sup>4</sup>)



*f sempre e passionato*

3 2 1

Note: short-long rhythm

I<sub>4</sub> V<sup>7</sup> I<sub>4</sub> I V<sup>7</sup> of IV iv<sup>\*</sup> added6 II

DOMINANT PEDAL IN BASS

ii<sub>7</sub><sup>5</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I

TONIC PEDAL IN BASS

\* or Dm7b5 (i.e., ii7 - half-diminished 7th-in C min. Bar 34 (beats 3-4) - chromatic dim7 interpolated between here. The D on beat 4 seems to be in anticipation of the D in the next chord.

Bar 30-37: The bass and timps descend onto a G, which now is heard as a dominant pedal, and with a quiet timp roll and the entry of the trombones, the bright key of C major brings with it the 'alhorn' theme. This is an 8 bar phrase, played by the horns and accompanied by muted tremolando strings.

{Note: In the 2<sup>nd</sup> bar of this theme, the 1<sup>st</sup> horn, which has the theme, has a dotted minim, but is joined by a second horn on the same note which lasts for a semibreve. Maybe this was to allow for



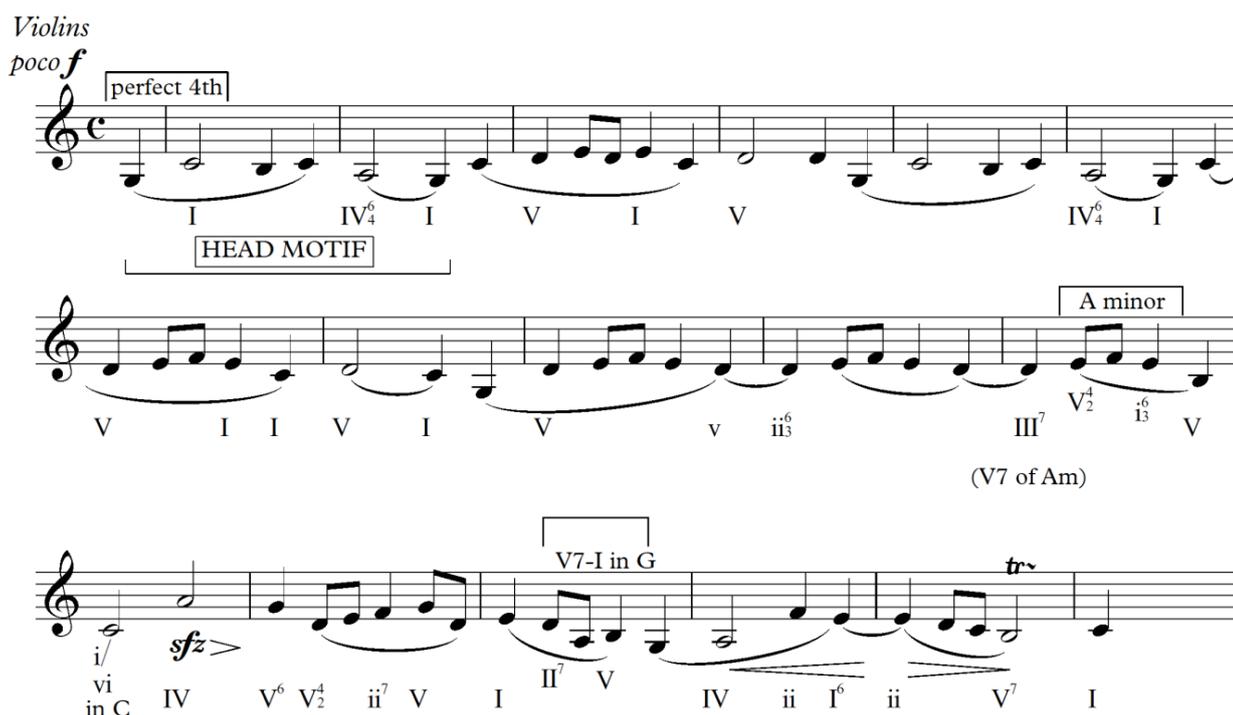
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- Comment on Brahms' use of melody and texture in the second part of this Introduction section
- Outline and explain all the noteworthy motivic ideas presented by Brahms in the Introduction section of this movement.

### EXPOSITION - C major, Allegro non troppo ma con brio

*Violins*  
*poco f*



perfect 4th

HEAD MOTIF

A minor

V7-I in G

tr~

*sfz*

*i/vi in C*

I IV<sup>4</sup> I V I V IV<sup>4</sup> I

V I I V I V v ii<sup>3</sup> III<sup>7</sup> V<sup>2</sup> i<sup>3</sup> V

(V7 of Am)

i/vi in C IV V<sup>6</sup> V<sup>2</sup> ii<sup>7</sup> V I II<sup>7</sup> V IV ii I<sup>6</sup> ii V<sup>7</sup> I

### S1, bars 62 – 78

We finally arrive at the primary theme – the very broad and distinctive first subject which has been so often compared with the ‘Joy’ theme of Beethoven’s 9th symphony. (See notes). S1 is played by the violins in their low register accompanied by violas, and pizzicato string bass, with additional support in the horns (homophonic texture).

This subject is based on 4 musical phrases, though the conclusion in bar 78 has been delayed by a bar with the entry of the oboes. As the music approaches the cadence at this point, it is overlapped by a counterstatement of the primary theme.

### Counterstatement of S1, bars 78 – 93

This counterstatement of S1 is heard in the woodwind (though no clarinets at first after the opening two bars), against light pizzicato in the strings, and timps, with shorter rolls. The working and presentation is still quite straightforward both in melodic and harmonic terms. The musical

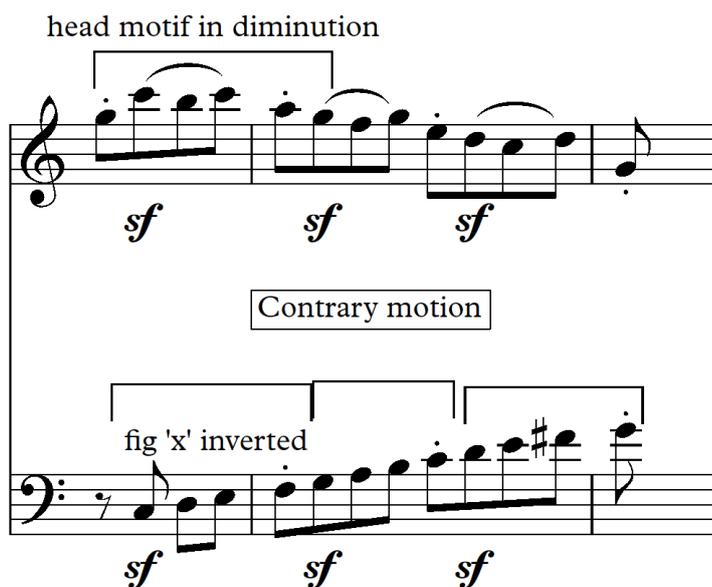
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statement concludes with a *crescendo* as the strings revert back to *arco*, and a perfect cadence in the tonic of C major.

- Describe the musical content of the first subject section, giving an outline of the bar numbers, and explanation of the thematic material.



head motif in diminution

*sf* *sf* *sf*

Contrary motion

fig 'x' inverted

*sf* *sf* *sf*

### Transition, bars 94 – 117

This section begins a third statement of the theme, heard *ff* by the whole orchestra and labelled *animato*; however, it fragments and develops quickly. The opening of the head motif has been isolated and is captured in diminution by the upper strings / violas, while the ascending scalic idea in contrabassoon and string bass reminds us of fig 'x' in inversion, taking us briefly to G major:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase begins in bar 97, and note the passing modulation to E minor in bar 99; bars 98 – 101 repeat the earlier idea noted in bars 95-97, again with the opening of S1 heard in diminution but ascending this time.

In bar 102, the music moves through D minor as we hear two noticeable violin descents (spanning two octaves) over the chords of D minor and A minor (bar 104), counterbalanced again in contrary motion with the dramatically rising bass lines. At bar 106, the material is reminiscent of bar 20 from the introduction, as the semiquaver figuration of fig 'x' (the tetrachord idea) is heard in inversion (bar 106) and imitation (bar 108). Winds, brass and low strings offer staccato punctuation against the scalic movement.

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### Alphorn Theme, bars 114 – 117

The first four bars of the 'alphorn' theme from the introduction are played by the original instruments i.e. flute and horn, with the horn imitating the flute line. This short reminder is accompanied by violins in descending semiquaver arpeggio figuration, with the cellos and basses adding pizzicato support. The diminished harmonies of bars 115/116 lead to D7 in bar 117, which is chord V7 of G major, dominant preparation for the key of S2.

- Explain the function of the Transition section, outlining all features of particular musical interest



### S2, bars 118 – 141

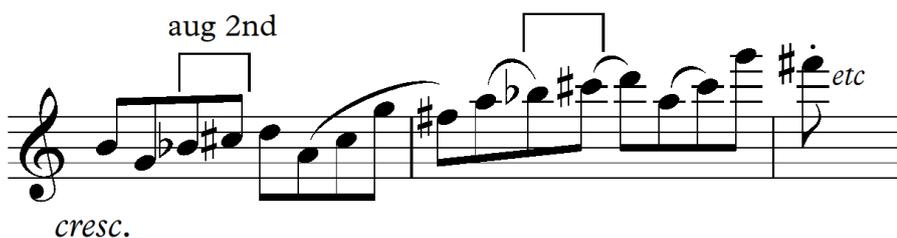
This is in the dominant key of G major.

Of interest here is the use of fig 'x', the descending figure from the very start of the movement, (also implied within the 'alphorn' theme). This is clearly used as an underlying ostinato pattern to proceedings.

The new theme is introduced by Violin 1:

This is disjunct in nature, in contrast to the lower ostinato. It is delivered by the string section, labelled *dolce* and *piano*.

Note: Although it is disjunct, it is also an arrangement of the notes of fig 'x' – E-D-F#-G – G-F#-E-D. The rest of the melodic material of this theme is a decorated version of this initial disjunct figure, so both the ostinato and the melody are built from the same material.

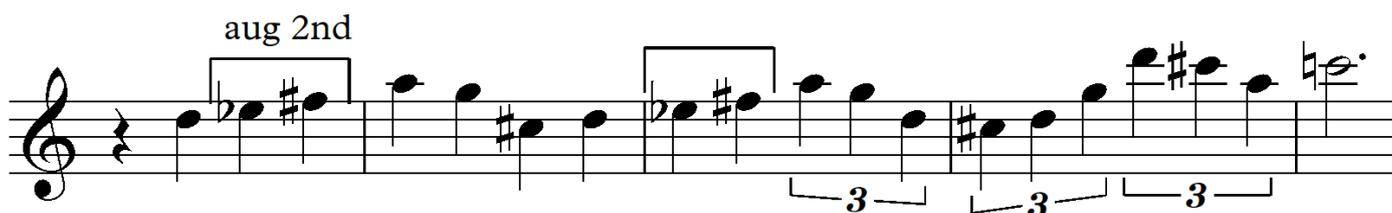


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As the dynamic grows, the music hints at E minor from bar 122 (the relative minor of G). In bar 124 the woodwind enter with a continuation of S2, followed by violin 1 recovering the subject material in bar 126 as they repeat bar 119-20 (with slight adjustment). In bar 128, begins a passage of much interest as fig 'x' is taken up by winds. The descending 4-note motif has moved up a 5<sup>th</sup> in the bass. These 2 bars include ideas which are chromatically altered, and the first violins ascend with increasing purpose and intent:



Note the use of the augmented 2<sup>nd</sup> interval, evident also in the bass descending tetrachord in bar 129 (i.e. G –F# - Eb –D). [The Eb and the F# were two notes also found embedded in the opening presentation of the head motif at the start of the movement.]

At bar 130, the build-up reaches a high syncopated climax in violins, supported by the quirky rhythms taken up by the violins. These include use of a long-short rhythmic pattern which feels like an accelerated version of the dactylic rhythms of S1. In a short space of time here, we have seen use of chromaticism, inversion, contrapuntal working, contrary motion and diminution. Harmonically, the phrases move to the chord of D major, dominant of G major, with imperfect cadences at 130 and 132.

Bar 132: Now the oboe begins what appears to be a second section in the 2<sup>nd</sup> subject group. At this point, the material appears to have 'developed into a real tune' (**Brodbeck**) which is quiet and gentle, and includes triplet rhythms as it moves upwards:

This is supported by strings with the viola part adding a distinctive syncopated rhythm, the string bass with a repeated dotted minim – crotchet (long – short) rhythm pattern, and clarinets and bassoons in slower moving chords. Note the further thematic transformation above which involves

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another chromatically coloured passage, shifting slowly downwards from 136. This begins by transforming the melody above into a type of dialogue between the two oboes.

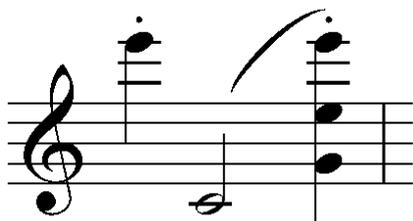
### Closing section, bars 142 – 185

S2 is now heard with another transformation of its material, in diminution in the strings, beginning in the violas and quickly followed by 2<sup>nd</sup>, then 1<sup>st</sup> violins. The key of E minor is firmly established once more. Horns punctuate this movement (*cresc*) as the texture builds. In bar 146, the strings join in a strong descending, then ascending unison movement. This leads to a passage which begins *ff* (and emerges as yet another thematic version of material taken from the introduction, bars 22-24). The full orchestra joins in loud cadential figuration in bars 150/1, with the material briefly suggesting D major. As a second similar 4 bar phrase descends, however, the music quickly returns to E minor and two imperfect cadences in that key in bar 154/5.

Bar 156, is the start of a new phrase in E minor. The orchestra then subsides to leave the thematic material rather more subdued in the oboe. Gradually, the triplet accompaniment in the violas grows and is heard throughout the strings (and bassoon), again briefly suggesting D major (158/9). In bar 160, the music arrives on V9 (with C in oboe) of E minor. As the flute takes over this 'sighing' transformation of S2, note the suggested of G major (bar 162 – but some minor inflections also here). The next four bars consist of staccato triplets (with some imitation) in strings, and rhythmic (long –short) patterns lead to the final passage of the Exposition section. At bar 168, with some emphasis on C major, the triplet rhythms, harmonized in thirds now dominate the texture. Note the continued reliance on fig 'x', the four-note motif from the introduction (bars 170/1).

Also noticeable in the texture is the syncopated leap in violins, lower strings and bassoon:

#### Violins



With a final accented version of S2, the exposition finally ends conclusively in E minor in bar 183. As the viola notes are sustained, the horn significantly (though quietly) plays a rising 4<sup>th</sup> (opening interval of S1, and the interval upon which much motivic material has been based in this movement). This rises further, joined by woodwind with ascending figures to build a chord of G7, in preparation for the return of the principal theme.

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- How does Brahms achieve contrast in the second subject section?
- Describe features of motivic and rhythmic interest in bars 118-183.

There is no separate development section in this 'modified' sonata form movement. The music moves straight into the Recapitulation, which itself contains a tremendous amount of developmental working.

## RECAPITULATION

### S1, bars 186 – 203

Bars 186 -200 is based on bars 61 -76.

This begins, as expected, back in the key of C major. S1, the 'hymn-like' theme, is restated, orchestrated more fully than previously in the Exposition section. The strings still hold the *largamente* theme, supported by the horns, along with staccato punctuations in woodwind, and trombones, with timpani emphasis on tonic and dominant notes. Apart from the slightly fuller scoring, this follows the original statement quite closely; however, when the oboe joins to support the final cadence, there is a twist and a new harmonic direction taken to the key of E flat, which is firmly established by bar 204.

### Counterstatement of S1, bars 204 – 219

Bars 204-6 are based on the phrase heard in bars 78-80.

The counterstatement of the theme begins as before, but now in Eb major on woodwind, accompanied by pizzicato strings. Then there is an interruption as the music begins to divert and develop further.

Bar 207: the horn interrupts by echoing the previous bar, now shifting to the minor mode – E flat minor. The passage proceeds rather unexpectedly with the pizzicato idea from part 1 of the introduction (cf. bars 6 -11 and 16 - 19), now with bassoon and horns in accented minim chords adding emphasis to the strings, and as it grows, trumpets are added in bar 210. Now ideas merge into a transition passage that is longer than previously and one which contains a good deal of development.

Bar 212: The music moves abruptly to B major (down the interval of a major 3<sup>rd</sup> from the E flat if

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considered as D# - not an uncommon intervallic shift -with the F#s in the woodwind acting as the dominant in preparation for the move).

Note: Brahms' reliance on 'mediant relationships', both in this work (and indeed, in his music in general) is noteworthy. The keys of the movements of this symphony move up in major thirds – i.e., C → E → Ab → C – and this '3<sup>rd</sup>' relationship is 'exploited' throughout the work, as here.

The pizzicato ideas are combined with S1 in the woodwind, who attempt another restatement of the theme. Note the syncopation in violins 2 and violas, and the hint of the theme echoed by bassoons in bar 215. A move to the minor mode is also noted here, and the writing for violins and low strings is reversed as ideas build to *forte* by bar 219.

- Compare the re-statement of S1 in bar 186 with its first appearance in the Exposition section.

### Transition with development, bars 220 - 284

Bars 220-232 are based on bars 94-106.

The key of C major is re-established, and this repeat is one which includes some slight re-arrangement of the material. An additional two bars at 232-233 of heavily accented notes in strings function as the harmonic motion of B → E → A (cycle 5ths) which prepares us for D minor.

Bar 234: This scalic material corresponds with the second transition theme from bar 106 ff. (originally established as the 3<sup>rd</sup> segment of Introduction, Part 1 bars 20 ff.) The scalic ideas are heard descending rather than ascending, and the harmony is modulatory (and again following a cycle of 5ths pattern) as we note D min leading to G min (bar 237), C major (238), F major (239).

Describe Brahms' use of harmony, bars 240 – 249.

Note: Most of the material in bars 232-242 is built on the intervals of a falling 3<sup>rd</sup>, or its inversion, a rising 6<sup>th</sup>. Again, this is typical Brahms (cf the opening of his 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony). Here, the melody traces an underlying descending pattern of 3rds starting F#-D#-B-G# etc. If you consider the semiquaver figuration as itself being a decorated form of these 3rds (with a passing and auxiliary note – e.g., bar 234 outlining F-D-Bb), this continues right up until bar 242 – and possibly beyond. (Does this imply that that the 3<sup>rd</sup> interval; is itself based on 'x'?).

The scales continue with the descending motion to arrive on the chord of A major (dominant of D

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minor) in bar 243. All this scalic movement reflects the opening 4 note fig 'x' - heard throughout this passage in diminution.

Bar 244: The transition material continues its developmental route, now bringing a new version of the head motif – a diminution of the opening of S1. This is heard in dialogue between the oboe and the flute over the continuing (if now subdued) imitative scalic passages in strings. The movement in flute also is a subtle reference to the start of the 'alphorn' theme ( i.e. E→D→C, bar 246 ff).

Bar 249: Development of the head motif continues, and though there is a brief turn back to C major, this section continues to explore harmonic colours. Neapolitan flavours alternate with C at the start of this passage ( Db /C), then C#→F#m (bar 253), with the chords of E6/4→B leading us to perhaps expect E major in bar 254, only to find an interrupted cadence taking us back to C major and a repeat of the material from bars 246-248. Quite possibly, the C#m and F#m are no more than very brief enharmonic changes / tonicisation enabling the change of keys. (Also note the 'mediant relationships' here – C-E-C).

Note the use of suspensions in this passage, noticeable particularly in the woodwind.

- Describe how Brahms further develops the thematic material in bars 232 – 256.

Bar 257: This is a strong passage heard *forte* played by strings and bassoons, delivering figuration that recalls the end of the transition passage. More descending 3rds (with clear outline notes in oboe then flute) - a variant of the earlier section as noted, but with an element of invertible counterpoint, as the top and bottom parts are switched. The descending scales (such a concentration of fig 'x' here) – dominate the texture, with a harmonic substance that moves between C minor and F minor. Note the more imitative textures from 264 (all based on the 3rds/6ths figures), continued in woodwind at 265 while upper and lower strings echo widely disjunct ideas (the inversion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> interval).

Bar 268: The anacrusis to bar 268 brings yet another version of the head motif of S1, heard *ff* in winds (unison). It is a one bar idea, repeated (=2 bars), then heard a tone higher (i.e. in sequence). This is supported by timp rolls and brass chords, while strings continue to play the scalic descents between the repeats of the head motif. This is all presented above the timpani notes of G and C (dominant and tonic in C), but there is much chromatic inflection in this passage. The long-short rhythmic idea is also prevalent in the texture.

In bar 272, the violins and violas share the head motif, and flute join with the scalic descents.

Bar 274: Now begins a passage where the opening notes of S1 / head motif (i.e. the semitone

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oscillation/neighbour note figure) are heard in this non-fugal passage):



The image shows a musical score for two parts: 'Upper wwind' (Upper Wind) and 'Cellos /DBass'. The upper part is written on a treble clef staff, and the lower part is written on a bass clef staff. Both parts feature a chromatic, syncopated rhythmic figure. The upper part starts with a G4 note, followed by a chromatic descent: F#4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The lower part starts with a G2 note, followed by a chromatic ascent: A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The rhythm is syncopated, with notes often starting on the off-beat.

Ideas begin to ascend; note the chromatic movement upward all over the timp note of G, and the syncopated rhythmic movement. Violins also repeat this figure on the note of G. Bar 276/277 – wwind and violin parts swap in the texture.

Bar 279: A *ff* climax is reached here with a chromatic variant of the alphorn theme in diminution, and inverted in low strings and contrabassoon. The *marcato* ideas are now spread out over the orchestra, with the descending figures passed between the winds and the strings, with full *tutti* support. Note the use of syncopation as these begin off the beat, and heard in C minor. (Only the semitone interval from the head motif is used here). Loud rolls on the timps support, and the trombones re-join the orchestral mix (first time since the end of the exposition). Descending chromatic movement – the semitone ‘sigh’ from the head motif is heard in the bass moving downwards.

### Alphorn theme, bars 285 – 300

After a crotchet rest in anticipation of one of the most powerful moments of the entire symphony, the ‘alphorn’ theme is played *ff* by the violins heard against fierce diminished 7<sup>th</sup> harmony. In terms of motivic transformation here, the content – quite remarkably - seems to fuse the head motif and the descending tetrachord (fig ‘x’) to be as one with the alphorn theme. The initially ‘gentle’ theme now assumes a darker quality reminiscent of the opening introduction. This is again supported by full brass and *ff* timp rolls. In the space of just 2 bars, however, the dynamic quickly falls and the mood relents as the bass descends to an E♯ above which the alphorn theme is repeated by violins in the more peaceful and reassuring major key.

Bar 289: the alphorn theme is taken back by the horns, and though differently orchestrated, is treated in the manner of the section heard in bar 52, in the opening introduction. Note the inversion of ‘x’ used as accompaniment in bars 289-292. This time violins join in imitation of the theme, supported by gently moving chords in clarinets /bassoons and violas/cellos. This is heard above a

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dominant pedal of G until its resolution to C in bar 292<sup>3</sup>. The music gradually decreases in intensity above the extended tonic pedal (292-299); the strings descend gently (marked *Calando* – ‘dying’ – a decrease in both tempo and volume, *rit e dim*). Note the chromatic interest in the descending string line. Timps once again feature quite prominently in this passage.

### **S2, bars 301 – 325**

Now marked *animato*, and preceded by a chordal rendition of fig ‘x’ heard piano and in parallel movement in strings and contrabassoon, the music leads seamlessly into a continuation of the recapitulation as we now hear S2 in the tonic key. Otherwise, the various sections of the second subject follow the pattern of that noted in the exposition section, though there are changes of scoring in its presentation, notably:

- addition of the winds with fig ‘x’ on alternate bars, echoing the ostinato figure
- the continuation of the theme previously heard in winds is now taken by the upper strings
- Bar 316 – thematic material previously in the oboe is taken up by the violins, whose material is transferred to bassoons
- Bar 320 – horn now joins in with the oboe

### **Closing group, bars 326 – 367**

As expected, the necessary adjustments have been made harmonically to allow the music to remain in the tonic key – however, this now shifts to the minor mode of the tonic – C minor. This passage corresponds with 142 -183.

This is repeated with some further changes in scoring, and overall in the key of C minor. The cadential figures in bars 334/5 suggest B flat major.

### **CODA, bars 367 – end**

Key is C minor. Above tremolo strings in violas, gentle ascending arpeggio movement is heard in horns, joined by violins (just emphasising the minor 3<sup>rd</sup> interval), then clarinets. As the arpeggio ideas are inverted in winds from 371 (subdominant major harmony), trombones also add to the texture supported now by tremolo in violins added to the viola part. The quiet move to the chord of the flattened supertonic minor (Db/Neapolitan) in bar 373 leads to -

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Bar 375: Here, S1 is heard played by trombone, contrabassoon and cellos /double bass which give a depth and feeling again reminiscent of the opening of the movement. The long timp roll (a dominant pedal of the home key, supported in horns) underpins this passage. Above this, the content appears to be modulatory, as the music begins in E flat major, and passes quickly through a colourful and chromatically flavoured chordal progression as the ideas ascend sequentially, as it ascends. From 381, the strings play ascending arpeggio-like figures reminiscent of the 'closing' material and falling 'sighs' in woodwind echoed by the contrabassoon and low strings colour the texture further. Dynamics continue to increase and the tempo is marked *stringendo*. Syncopation is increasingly pronounced as the final, heavily accented chords (in all parts excepting trombones) thunder out the dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord.

Note: The passage from 367-390 is quite a remarkable passage harmonically, one that focuses on the mediant(s) of C major / minor – relating to what has already been said in the course of this analysis. From the starting point of a C minor chord, the progression of Ebm → C half-diminished 7<sup>th</sup> → F (suggesting a type of ii-V progression) is repeated in sequence a tone lower as Dbm→Bb half-diminished 7<sup>th</sup>→Eb, so initially plunging the music into even more gloomy tonal/harmonic regions. The more prolonged Eb major chord (375-7) brightens things a little, but chromatic Cbs in the bass (376 (a chromatic appoggiatura) and 378) still hint at darker (minor) regions. An enharmonic change of Cb to B in bar 378 (suggesting a B augmented (dominant) triad – a very Brahmsian use of this chord) effects a change to (a brighter) Em chord in bar 377, the mediant of the tonic major, which then leads to a C major chord in bar 380. Bars 381<sup>4</sup>-390 consist of a V7 chord with chromatically moving 3rds in the inner voices (till 387), preparing for the Coda in the tonic major key. So, in this passage, the mediant has appeared in three different, ever "brighter", forms – (Cm)→Ebm→Eb major→Em→(C major).]

\*\*This information has been presented as an example of Brahmsian harmony for the benefit of teachers. Harmonic understanding of this level would not be expected as the norm for students – though obviously would be credited in a question if any candidate showed such depth of understanding!

Bar 391: Più Allegro, cut common time and a triumphant move to C major. Notes 2, 3 and 4 from S1 are heard by the strings in diminution, as the brass and woodwind punctuate the music using diminished chords (the 'melody of which – A and G – are notes 5 and 6 from S1) that speedily resolve. Above a 3 step ascending figure (alphorn idea in inversion) the woodwind and strings present the melodic ideas antiphonally, while lower strings and timps maintain a steady crotchet rhythm. In bar 403, the staccato / accented melodic figuration is heard in winds and Horns in C, with quiet sustained semibreves in Horns in F and trumpets, below falling intervals in strings. Bar 407: the sublime interruption at this point of the religious-like 'chorale' phrase from bar 47,

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heard in augmentation and supported by the strings in a powerful *ff* delivery is a defining and significant moment.

#### David Brodbeck explains:

*'But how, in this view, do we explain the apotheosis of the trombone chorale that comes in the coda, with all the explicit religious connotations that it leaves as the symphony's final word? This "incongruous" passage.....seems to have troubled Clara Schumann, who wrote: "If I may say something now about the last movement, or rather, the very end (Presto),.....in my opinion, musically speaking, the Presto drops off from the highest inspiration just before. To me, the climax in the Presto lies more in outer than inner motion; the Presto appears not as an outgrowth of the whole, but a brilliant finish added on".'*

- What is the significance of the passage heard in bars 407-413? Explain the harmonic content of this phrase.

Bar 417: the animated mood returns, and the music regains its previous momentum. Whether the melodic figures are linked to ideas from the chorale or a variant of previous motifs (from S1 and the alhorn theme), ideas press forward rhythmically, with triplet movement, syncopation and exuberance. The descending unison statement from bar 431<sup>2</sup> falls twice to the dominant G (via chromatic decoration), which in turn brings the final cadential progression

Notes 2-4 of S1 (and the head motif) are used to bring the movement to an end, reiterating the ideas with which it began, but now in powerful and triumphant setting. As the melodic ideas work upwards in octaves, timpani rolls, and a rising arpeggio in trombone, bassoons and low strings accentuate the texture.

The symphony ends with a plagal cadence (which is a feature of Brahms' music), to conclude on five tonic chords, the last of which is extended and supported by another timpani roll. The perfect cadence occurs in bars 444-447: bar 444 is I in 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion i.e., a cadential 6/4, moving to V in bar 445 with a suspended 4<sup>th</sup>, followed by chord V in bar 446 and I in bar 447. The remainder of the movement consolidates this strong C major cadence with a plagal progression: IV in 448 to I in 449, then repeating this plagal progression with a slower harmonic rhythm, bars 450-452 being IV and 453 to end being I. Brahms thus has both perfect and plagal cadences to fully confirm his C major resolution.

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[Note: Both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> movements also end with a plagal cadence – or at least with a nod to “plagal harmony”. As in the last movement (bars 444-47), the first movement first reaches a perfect cadence in bars 492-95, before appending a further final plagal “cadence” (perhaps not ‘quite’ a cadence, because of the underlying tonic pedal. The 2<sup>nd</sup> movement ends with a iv6 (added 6<sup>th</sup>)→I progression 6 bars before the end – a real cadence this time.]

- Discuss Brahms’ manipulation of motivic material in this movement.
- Comment on Brahms’ approach to sonata form in this movement. Describe the overall structure, including an explanation of the key structure (in terms of tonality).