

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Trio in E flat, Op. 40 (1865) (31:29)

- 1 *Andante* (8:53)
- 2 *Scherzo. Allegro* (7:28)
- 3 *Adagio mesto* (8:32)
- 4 *Finale. Allegro con brio* (6:16)

Daniel Phillips, violin; William Purvis, horn; Richard Goode, piano

György Ligeti (b.1923)

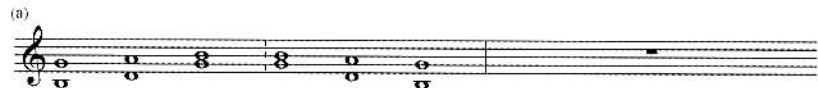
Trio (1982) Hommage à Brahms (24:29)

- 5 *Andantino con tenerezza* (6:46)
- 6 *Vivacissimo molto ritmico* (4:51)
- 7 *Alla Marcia* (3:14)
- 8 *Lamento Adagio* (9:25)

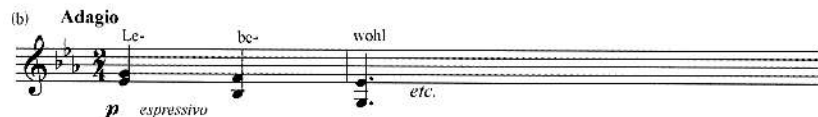
Rolf Schulte, violin; William Purvis, horn; Alan Feinberg, piano

Notes by Bayan Northcott

One could write an entire history of music around the way that basic technical elements of composition have acquired specific expressive charges at certain periods and lost them again at others. In the early days of the classical orchestra, rank-and-file horn players spent much of the time pumping out a tonic-dominant-tonic figure on the most reliable notes of their pre-valve instruments, traditionally known as



'horn fifths'. Yet by the end of the eighteenth century, the falling version of the figure had somehow taken on the additional signification of departure, distance, loss: "Lebewohl" (farewell) writes Beethoven over the descending 'horn fifths' opening of his Piano Sonata, Op 81a *Les Adieux* on the departure of his pupil,

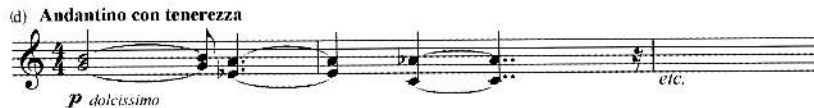


Archduke Rudolph.

Fifty-six years later, composing an *Adagio mesto* for horn trio in the aftermath of his mother's death, Brahms apparently feels it too blatant to base the whole movement on a musical symbol already almost a cliché. But towards the end, he insinuates a distant pre-echo of the main theme of his finale comprising both rising and falling 'horn fifths'. A hundred and seventeen years further on again,



Ligeti does begin a horn trio subtitled "Hommage à Brahms" with the "Lebewohl" figure—but in a strangely distorted version, implying a still more oblique attitude to a once directly expressive device.



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It is, of course, often argued that Brahms's entire output enshrines a sense of loss; that he made music out of his openly expressed regret that he was born too late," as Charles Rosen has put it. Yet Brahms's dominant attitude to the achievements of the classical, baroque and renaissance periods was no mere nostalgia—on the contrary, it was strikingly proto-modern. By diligently analysing-out the compositional principles behind the masterpieces of the past, he seems to say that by juxtaposing our realizations of these in fresh contexts, we may yet create something new—an attitude that was to be furthered, in very different ways, by Schoenberg and Stravinsky.

The *Trio in E flat major* for piano, violin and horn, Op 40 (1865), is a fascinating instance of facing both ways. Doubtless mindful of the beauty and virtuosity of the best pre-valve playing in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Brahms prescribed the use of the old *Waldhorn* (which he had played a bit in his youth)

rather than the as yet less-than-perfected valve horn; the entire key scheme of the work's four movements is carefully adjusted around the E flat instrument's natural pitches—though in the event the part proved more difficult to realize without valves than he had anticipated. Yet the horn trio line-up itself seems to have been Brahms's invention (nor was this the only instance in his output: his establishment of orchestral variations as an autonomous concert genre has had momentous consequences in our own century). The Trio is also unique in Brahms's chamber music in beginning not with a sonata movement but with an *Andante* in a compound ABABA rondo form in which the initial A section and both the minor key B episodes are ternary structures in themselves. However, Brahms deploys sonata form in his bucolic 'hunting' finale and in the outer sections of his scherzo second movement, a generous late Schubert-type structure but in a mode of gallumphing force that seems to have entered music with the young Brahms himself. The slow third movement is a dark cradle song with a swelling canonic middle section initiated by the horn.

Ligeti's Trio for violin, horn and piano (1982) follows a very different trajectory to the Brahms, but there are other apparent connections besides the common "Lebewohl" allusion. Though the valve horn is required, Ligeti frequently asks for natural harmonics, including the out of tune higher ones Brahms would have expected his player to correct by hand positions in the instrument's bell. The piano writing makes a feature of Brahmsian octave-doubled thirds and the forms of the first three movements are more nearly traditional than anything in Ligeti's music of the 1960s and '70s. The opening *Andantino con tenerezza* is in ternary form, notated in common time though actually evolving in three simultaneous tempi coming together only briefly in the central episode. The *Vivacissimo molto ritmico* second movement is apparently more of a through-composed scherzo, if

based upon a frenetic rising-scale ostinato which inhibits any real sense of harmonic progression. There follows another character-piece in the guise of a ferociously dislocated *Alla Marcia* with a more evenly flowing trio.

But the final *Lamento Adagio* is sui generis. Registrally it follows a gradual widening of range; gesturally and harmonically, everything moves downward by extension of the falling scale fragment of the "Lebewohl" motif. At the climax, the piano seems to crash through the floor leaving the violin and horn in their highest and lowest registers to initiate a coda of glacial calm. In retrospect, the surreal timelessness of these final bars epitomizes the entire work, in which—so one discovers on further acquaintance—any impression of traditional thematicism is largely an illusion created by distorted schemes of overlapping ostinati, and even the most vehement passages have a quality of expression that Ligeti himself has described as "deep frozen". Brahms could still believe in a continuity with the past, in a living tradition. After the cultural dislocations of a catastrophic century, Ligeti seems to say, the past can only be evoked as an aural mirage, a kind of musical life-in-death. It is a disturbing implication.

Daniel Phillips

Since winning the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 1976, violinist Daniel Phillips has appeared at New York's Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., Meany Theater in Seattle, and at halls throughout the world. Mr. Phillips has performed as soloist with orchestras including the Houston, San Antonio, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Bern (Switzerland) Symphony Orchestras. He was a featured soloist in BBC-TV broadcast of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* with the English Chamber Orchestra under Sir Yehudi Menuhin.



Daniel Phillips has recently formed the Orion String Quartet, and he has also toured and recorded in quartet with Gidon Kremer, Kim Kashkashian, and Yo-Yo Ma. Mr. Phillips appears regularly at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He is the violin soloist of the Bach Aria Group. Mr. Phillips has recorded for the Musical Heritage Society, Nonesuch, CBS and MCA labels.

Richard Goode

Pianist **Richard Goode** has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic. He has appeared at the Edinburgh and Spoleto Festivals and toured the Far East, Australia, Canada and South America. A winner of the 1982 Grammy Award, Mr. Goode is a founding member of Young Concert Artists and the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society.



Richard Goode was a student of Rudolf Serkin and Nadia Reisenberg and won First Prize in the Clara Haskil Competition (1973) and the Avery Fisher Prize (1980). He has made more than two dozen records, including works with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, Mozart Piano Concerti with Orpheus and solo recordings of Brahms, Schumann, Schubert, and the complete Beethoven piano sonatas for the Book-of-the-Month Club.

Rolf Schulte

Rolf Schulte, a native of West Germany, came to the U.S. in 1969 after winning top prize in the 1968 Munich Radio Competition. Since his debut with the Philharmonia Hungarica in Cologne (1965), he has performed with the Berlin Philharmonic, München Philharmonic, Stuttgart State Orchestra, The Bamberg Symphony, Orchestra del Teatro Fenice in Venice, and the radio orchestras of Berlin, Stuttgart and Cologne under Christoph von Dohnányi, György Lehel, Dennis R. Davies, Max Rudolf, John Nelson and Hiroshi Wakasugi.



Mr. Schulte has recently premiered Tobias Picker's *Violin Concerto* with the American Composers Orchestra, (recorded on CRI), Milton Babbitt's *Joy of More Sextets*, (recorded on New World Records), and Mario Davidovsky's *Synchronisms No. 9* for violin and tape. He has recorded for all West German radio stations and the BBC London, as well as for Nonesuch.

Alan Feinberg

Pianist Alan Feinberg has been featured in many leading festivals, including those at Edinburgh, Santa Fe, Bath, Geneva, and New York International. He has performed on the contemporary series of the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic, and presented recitals at the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, the 92nd Street Y, and the Kennedy Center, as well as throughout Europe. In 1987 Feinberg became the first American pianist to be invited by the Union of Soviet Composers to give Soviet premieres of American Music.

Alan Feinberg has premiered numerous works by such well-known composers as John Adams, Milton Babbitt, Steve Reich, Joseph Schwantner, Ralph Shapey, and Charles Wuorinen. His recording include the Grammy-nominated Milton Babbitt *Piano Concerto* with the American Composers Orchestra, as well as discs for Angel, Nonesuch, New World and CRI.



Producers: Judy Sherman (Brahms)

David Starobin (Ligeti)

Engineers: Judy Sherman (Brahms)

David B. Hancock (Ligeti)

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David Starobin, and MacDonald Moore

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Princeton University

Ligeti recorded October 6 and 7, 1986 at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church,

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Instruments

Violin (Brahms): Antonio Stradivarius (1702) Cremona

French horn: Lawson, Double Horn, Boonsboro, Maryland

Piano (Brahms): Steinway D (Hamburg)

Violin (Ligeti): Lorenzo Storioni (1780) Cremona

Piano (Ligeti): Steinway D

Bridge Records, Inc · 200 Clinton Avenue · New Rochelle, NY · 10801

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Robert Starobin, webmaster

William Purvis

William Purvis, horn virtuoso, conductor, and educator is highly regarded for his work both in the United States and abroad. Mr. Purvis's solo performances and recordings range from period instrument performances of early music through the latest compositions of the vanguard composers of our time. Currently on the faculties of Juilliard, Yale, and The State University of New York at Stony Brook, Mr. Purvis has taught master classes throughout the USA, Europe and Asia. William Purvis is a member of the New York Woodwind Quintet, Orpheus, the Orchestra of St. Luke's and Mozzafiato—a period instrument ensemble. He is a frequent guest with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center



and has collaborated with ensembles including the Tokyo, Juilliard, Orion, Brentano, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, and Fine Arts String Quartets. William Purvis is also a regular conductor of the ensemble Speculum Musicae, a group for whom he has led many world premiere performances and recordings. Mr. Purvis's recordings include work for more than a dozen labels, including Bridge, Sony, DG/Polygram and Nonesuch. His upcoming recordings on Bridge include Peter Lieberman's "Horn Concerto" and a CD of music for horn and piano by Robert and Clara Schumann, performed with his wife, pianist Mihae Lee. The peripatetic Purvis's numerous festival appearances include Norfolk, Tanglewood, Chamber Music Northwest, Mostly Mozart, Aston Magna, Salzburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Kuhmo, Båstad, Hong Kong, and Kitakyushu.