Johannes Brahms

The Un-Romantic

Brahms Introduces Himself

- The most famous recording of all time

- Brahms speaks with Thomas Edison and plays the piano

- The original cylinder was damaged to the point of being unplayable; the only useable copy dated from the early 78 rpm days.

Brahms Introduces Himself

- The cylinder is scanned three-dimensionally, using laser technology.

- The scan from the groove itself is interpreted by the software to create the sound.

Brahms Introduces Himself

- Although damage to the recording was severe, this technique has brought out more in the recording than has ever been heard before.

- Here it is...

About Brahms

- Bach's feeling for polyphony

- Beethoven's skill for form and development

- Schubert's inspiration in melody

About Brahms

- Can seem severe sometimes

- Within that rectitude lies the great lyric soul of the late 19th century.

- Consider the "Alto Rhapsody..."

The Great Classicist

- Symphony No. 1 in C Minor

  - Reminds one of Bach

  - Consciously re-invigorating the Symphony, which was nearly dormant by the 1870s.

  - Last movement is a clear homage to Beethoven

Brahms the Orchestrator

- Sometimes said to be indifferent to the orchestra

  - Brahms was indifferent to *gratuitous* effects

  - He was extremely sensitive to orchestral nuance

Brahms the Orchestrator

- Symphony No. 3: Slow Movement
  - Main theme in the Exposition
    - Uses only the strings

Brahms the Orchestrator

- Symphony No. 3: Slow Movement
  - Main theme in the Recapitulation
    - Oboes for the main section
    - Brings in the clarinet to finish the melody in a hauntingly beautiful manner.

Brahms the Lied Composer

- Generally sets love poetry
    - Songs about contentment
    - Songs about severe disillusionment
- Sometimes criticized for choice of texts
- Tends to focus entirely on mood.

Wie Melodien Zieht es Mir

Wie Melodien zieht es
Mir leise durch den Sinn
Wie Frühlingsblumen blüht es
Und schwebt wie Duft dahin.

Doch kommt das Wort und faβt es
Und führt es vor das Aug',
Wie Nebelgrau erblaβt es
Und schwindet wie ein Hauch.

Und demnoch ruht im Reime
Verborgen wohl ein Duft,
Den mild aus stillem keime
Ein feuchtes Auge ruft.

It seems as though melodies
pass softly through my mind;
as though spring flowers bloom
and there is fragrance in the air.

But when one would seize this in words
and make it visible,
it pales like grey mist
and vanishes like a breath

And yet there remains in poetry
a deeply hidden essence
that gently from some quiet inner source
brings tears to the eyes.

Chamber Music

- After Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann, Brahms is the next great writer of chamber works:

    - String Quartets
    - Piano Trios and Quartets
    - Piano Quintet
    - Quintets/Sextets for Winds and other instruments
    - Violin Sonatas
    - Cello Sonatas
    - Clarinet Sonatas

Piano Music

- A major piano composer
  - Sonatas (early)
  - Rhapsodies
  - Variations
  - Character pieces
    - Fast: Capriccio
    - Slow: Intermezzo
    - Longer: Rhapsody

Melodic Materials

- Main Theme
  - Characterized by *double stops* in the violin
    - Two strings played at the same time

Melodic Materials

- Episode 1 (B) Theme

    - Upwards scale motive

    - Often accompanied with its own inversion

Melodic materials

- Cadential Figures

  - Characterized by upwards thirds (taken from main melody)
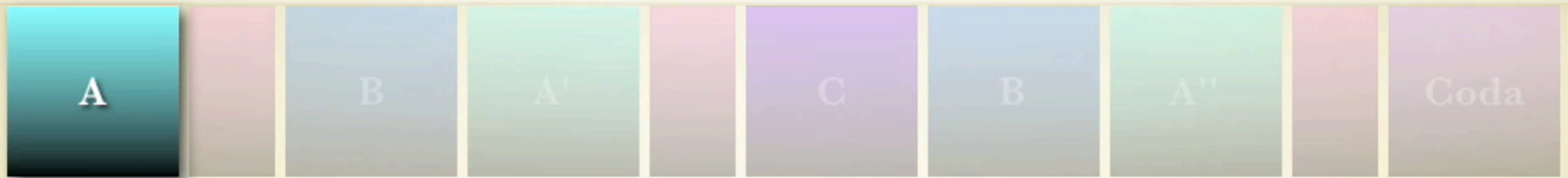
Melodic Materials

- Episode 2 (C)

  - Acts like a second, or lyrical theme

  - Characterized by descending thirds (main melody is ascending thirds)

Melodic Materials

- Coda

  - Transforms the main theme into 6/8 (compound duple) time

Johannes Brahms

Violin Concerto in D, Third Movement
Rondo Form

A (Tune)

a	**Solo violin, with double stops**
a	Orchestra
b	Solo violin
a'	Orchestra