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an illuminating new biography of one of the most beloved of all composers published on the hundredth anniversary of his death brilliantly written by a finalist for the 1996 national book

critics circle award johannes brahms has consistently eluded his biographers throughout his life he attempted to erase traces of himself wanting his music to be his sole legacy now in this masterful book jan swafford critically acclaimed as both biographer and composer takes a fresh look at brahms giving us for the first time a fully realized portrait of the man who created the magnificent music brahms was a man with many friends and no intimates who experienced triumphs few artists achieve in their lifetime yet he lived with a relentless loneliness and a growing fatalism about the future of music and the world the brahms that emerges from these pages is not the bearded eminence of previous biographies but rather a fascinating assemblage of contradictions brought up in poverty he was forced to play the piano in the brothels of hamburg where he met with both mental and physical abuse at the same time he was the golden boy of his teachers who found themselves in awe of a stupendous talent a miraculous young composer and pianist poised between the emotionalism of the romantics and the rigors of the composers he worshipped bach mozart beethoven in 1853 robert schumann proclaimed the twenty year old brahms the savior of german music brahms spent the rest of his days trying to live up to that prophecy ever fearful of proving unworthy of his musical inheritance we find here more of brahms s words his daily life and joys and sorrows than in any other biography with novelistic grace swafford shows us a warm blooded but guarded genius who hid behind jokes and prickliness rudeness and intractability with his friends as well as his enemies but who was also a witty drinking companion and a consummate careerist skillfully courting the powerful this is a book rich in secondary characters as well including robert schumann declining into madness as he hailed the advent of a new genius clara schumann the towering pianist tormented personality and great love of brahms s life josef joachim the brilliant self lacerating violinist the extraordinary musical amateur elisabet von herzenberg on whose exacting criticism brahms relied brahms s rival and shadow the malevolent genius richard wagner and eduard hanslick enemy of wagner and apostle of brahms at once the most powerful and most wrongheaded music critic of his time among the characters in the book are two great cities the stolid north german harbor town of hamburg where johannes grew up which later spurned him and glittering fickle music mad vienna where brahms the self proclaimed vagabond finally settled to find his sweetest triumphs and his most bitter failures unique to this book is the way in which musical scholarship and biography are combined in a style refreshingly free of pretentiousness jan swafford takes us deep into the music from the grandeur of the first symphony and the intricacies of the chamber work to the sorrow of the german requiem allowing us to hear these familiar works in new and often surprising ways this is a clear eyed study of a remarkable man and a vivid portrait of an era in transition ultimately johannes brahms is the story of a great backward looking artist who inspired musical revolutionaries of the following generations yet who was no less a prophet of the darkness and violence of our century a biographical masterpiece at once wholly original and definitive

a 1997 examination of the genesis background and extra compositional allusions of this controversial work

since its first publication in 1990 brahms and his world has become a key text for listeners performers and scholars interested in the life work and times of one of the nineteenth century s most celebrated composers in this substantially revised and enlarged edition the editors remain close to the vision behind the original book while updating its contents to reflect new perspectives on brahms that have developed over the past two decades to this end the original essays by leading experts are retained and revised and supplemented by contributions from a new generation of brahms scholars together they consider such topics as brahms s relationship with clara and robert schumann his musical interactions with the new german school of wagner and liszt his influence upon arnold schoenberg and other young composers his approach to performing his own music and his productive interactions with visual artists the essays are complemented by a new selection of criticism and analyses of brahms s works published by the composer s contemporaries documenting the ways in which brahms s music was understood by nineteenth and early twentieth century audiences in europe and north america a new selection of memoirs by brahms s friends students and early admirers provides intimate glimpses into the composer s working methods and personality and a catalog of the music literature and visual arts dedicated to brahms documents the breadth of influence exerted by the composer upon his contemporaries

german lieder in the nineteenth century provides a detailed introduction to the german lied beginning with its origin in the literary and musical culture of germany in the nineteenth century the book covers individual composers including shubert schumann brahms strauss mahler and wolf the literary sources of lieder the historical and conceptual issues of song cycles and issues of musical technique and style in performance practice written by eminent music scholars in the field each chapter includes detailed musical examples and analysis the second edition has been revised and updated to include the most recent research of each composer and additional musical examples

to perform a musical score implies the transformation of a symbolically coded text into vibrant sound in performing by the book a carefully selected cadre of artist researchers dissects this delicate act in critical ways offering first hand insights into the notational structural and interpretative challenges faced by musicians in dealing with texts of all kinds the chapters traverse the spectrum between the middle ages and the age of stockhausen in a harmonious blend of scholarly allure and individual artistry free from academic obfuscation the contributors keep a keen eye on the limits of interpretation both in terms of the interpretative process itself and of the balance between textual faithfulness and artistic autonomy this comprehensive volume is an indispensable guide for everyone interested in

the relationship between musical performance and texts

the new oxford history of music is complete this latest and last volume completes the set of the new oxford history of music in 10 volumes includes the whole span of western instrumental music and opera in the greater part of the nineteenth century is edited by one of the most respected scholars of nineteenth century music in march 1830 goethe complained to eckermann that everybody talks now about classicism and romanticism which no one thought of fifty years ago romanticism a concept more easily recognized than defined was the prevailing spirit of the vast outpouring of music in the sixty years chronicled in this volume the list of major composers treated either wholly or in part will serve as an indication of its scope chopin schumann mendelssohn liszt brahms berlioz donizetti verdi wagner gounod bizet borodin mussorgsky tchaikovsky rimsky korsakov dvorák smetana fauré wolf puccini bruckner mahler strauss César Franck Debussy contributors gerald abraham john horton david charlton david kimbell siegfried goslich nicholas temperly willi kahl arnold whittall julian budden robert pascall leslie orrey david tunley edward garden rosemary hunt and john clapham

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