

# BRAHMS' OPUS 39, No. 15

Johannes Brahms, 1867

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Johannes Brahms (7 May 1833 – 3 April 1897) was a German composer and pianist. Born in Hamburg into a Lutheran family, Brahms spent much of his professional life in Vienna, Austria. In his lifetime, Brahms's popularity and influence were considerable. He is considered one of the greatest composers in history, and is sometimes grouped with Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven as one of the "Three Bs", a comment originally made by the nineteenth-century conductor, Hans von Bülow.

Brahms composed for piano, organ, chamber ensembles, symphony orchestra, and for voice and chorus. A virtuoso pianist, he premiered many of his own works. He worked with some of the leading performers of his time, including the pianist Clara Schumann and the violinist Joseph Joachim (the three were close friends). Many of his works have become staples of the modern concert repertoire. Brahms, an uncompromising perfectionist, destroyed some of his works and left others unpublished.

Brahms is often considered both a traditionalist and an innovator. His music is firmly rooted in the structures and compositional techniques of the Baroque and Classical masters. He was a master of counterpoint, the complex and highly disciplined art for which Johann Sebastian Bach is famous. Brahms aimed to honor the "purity" of these venerable 'German' structures and advance them into a Romantic idiom, in the process creating bold new approaches to harmony and melody. While many contemporaries found his music too academic, his contribution and craftsmanship have been admired for centuries.

In music and friendship,

~ Tull

