

1 NYP 19-09: Brahms & Schoenberg

2 (BILLBOARD)

3 AB: ...and "this week."

4 (MUSIC EXCERPT)

5 AB: ...we hear *Transfigured Night* by Arnold Schoenberg.  
6 This is Alec Baldwin. Thanks very much for joining  
7 us on a program that will also feature excerpts  
8 from *Gurrelieder*. The Symphony No. 4 by Brahms and  
9 the *St. Anthony Variations* will fill out the  
10 program...as Kurt Masur, Lorin Maazel, Pierre Boulez,  
11 and Zubin Mehta all conduct...the New York  
12 Philharmonic This Week.

13 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

14 AB: "*Just like the good Lord, Brahms seems to know the*  
15 *trick of making something out of nothing.*"

16 So joked composer and critic Hugo Wolf about the  
17 first work on our program: The Symphony No. 4 by  
18 Brahms.

19 Brahms worked on this piece from 1884-1885. He had  
20 recently completed his fourth trip to Italy and was  
21 immersed in Roman antiquities and the Greek  
22 classics at the time.

23 AB: Some have equated the composer's affection for  
24 classical art to the rather austere and tragic  
25 quality of the fourth symphony. That indeed may  
26 have provided some framework. But the overall feel  
27 of the piece is probably due in larger part to his  
28 age at the time. Brahms was in his early fifties  
29 and gone was the self-doubt that plagued the  
30 completion of his first symphony. Instead, he was  
31 serene and secure. His newly-grown long, flowing  
32 beard seemed to be the emblem of his new-found  
33 peace; his friend Joseph Widmann [VIT-mahn] called  
34 it, *"a symbol of [the] perfect maturity of his*  
35 *powers."*

36 The Fourth symphony also demonstrates the "perfect  
37 maturity" of the composer's genius. Conductor Hans  
38 von Bülow [Hahns phone BOO-low] considered Brahms  
39 the true heir to Beethoven and lovingly called this  
40 piece the "Thirteenth Symphony." (He considered the  
41 nine symphonies of Beethoven plus the four that  
42 Brahms completed to be part of the same essential  
43 thread.)

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47 AB: But there were many who weren't quite ready for it-  
48 -not because Brahms did anything scandalous or  
49 wild. In fact, he did quite the opposite; the  
50 fourth symphony is a perfectly constructed  
51 classical machine. The composer's friend, Elizabeth  
52 von Herzogenberg [eh-LISS-ah-bet phone herz-OH-gen-  
53 gerg] said that it was, "*...more for the lens of a*  
54 *microscope,*" and, "*...for the erudite and the*  
55 *scientific rather than for an average music lover.*"

56 Brahms wasn't initially sure what he thought of it  
57 either. He called it the, "Waltz and Polka  
58 affair," but the piece eventually became his  
59 favorite.

60 The Symphony No 4 by Brahms was also a favorite of  
61 the Philharmonic's late Music Director Emeritus,  
62 Kurt Masur. We now hear him conduct...the New York  
63 Philharmonic.

64 (MUSIC)

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69 AB: **Symphony No. 4 in e-minor by Brahms. The New York**  
70 **Philharmonic was conducted by Kurt Masur. The**  
71 **Fourth symphony was the last of his own works that**  
72 **Brahms heard performed in public. This was at a**  
73 **concert in Vienna on March 7, 1897—not quite a**  
74 **month before his death. The experience, by all**  
75 **accounts was magical and emotional for both**  
76 **audience and public alike.**

77 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

78 AB: **Arnold Schönberg was eleven years old when the**  
79 **Brahms Fourth Symphony was premiered. While he is**  
80 **most often thought of as the father of the Second**  
81 **Viennese School, Schönberg's early works reflect a**  
82 **thoroughly Romantic aesthetic, albeit with some**  
83 **progressive flourishes.**

84 **One of the most outstanding examples of this period**  
85 **is the piece *Verklärte* [fair-CLAIRE-teh] *Nacht* or**  
86 **"*Transfigured Night*," which was written in 1899.**

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91 AB: The piece depicts the moonlight walk of two lovers  
92 through a forest. The woman confesses that she is  
93 soon to have a child by another man, but that she  
94 is still very much in love with the one by her  
95 side. He forgives her, saying that the baby soon to  
96 be born will be THEIR child. The lovers kiss, and  
97 then proceed walking through the dark and silent  
98 forest...in *Transfigured Night* by Arnold Schönberg.  
99 Pierre Boulez conducts...the New York Philharmonic.

100 (MUSIC)

101 AB: *Transfigured Night* by Arnold Schönberg. The New  
102 York Philharmonic was conducted by Pierre Boulez.  
103 I'm Alec Baldwin and you're listening to the New  
104 York Philharmonic This Week.

105 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

106 AB: We next hear an excerpt from Schönberg's cantata,  
107 *Gurrelieder: The Song of the Wood Dove*.

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114 AB: The composer began work on this piece just one year  
115 after completing the music we just heard. It was  
116 originally conceived as a a song cycle for soprano,  
117 tenor and piano. Schönberg was motivated to  
118 complete the piece for a composition context. But  
119 when he missed the deadline, the work took on a  
120 whole new life over the course of the next eleven  
121 years. In fact, one can trace a clear trajectory in  
122 Schönberg's art with this piece, from his Romantic  
123 beginnings...to his experiments in expressionism.  
124 Throughout the 90-plus minute score, once also  
125 hears the great influence of Wagner and Mahler.

126 Gurrelieder was inspired by a collection of poetry  
127 by the Danish poet, Jens Peter Jacobsen. The poetry  
128 is, in turn, steeped in medieval legends and lore.

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135 AB: The 'songs of Gurre' or Gurrelieder tell the tale  
136 of two lovers—King Waldemar [VALL-duh-mar] and  
137 Tove. [TOH-vuh] When their love is discovered by  
138 Waldemar's wife, Queen Helwig [HELL-vig], she has  
139 Tove killed. Waldemar never recovers. He rails  
140 against God, calling Him a tyrant. As punishment  
141 for this blasphemy, Waldemar is compelled to ride  
142 every night on a wild hunt with the ghostly figures  
143 of his dead servants. This never-ending cycle,  
144 however, is broken by the return of Spring. As new  
145 life blossoms throughout the world, the souls of  
146 Waldemar and Tove find release in the renewal of  
147 Nature, and are rejoined for eternity.

148 An orchestral interlude leads to the excerpt we're  
149 about to hear, the '*Song of the Wood Dove*.' (which  
150 narrates the aftermath of what I just described.

151 With mounting grief, the Wood Dove describes Tove's  
152 death and burial. At the conclusion of her account,  
153 she tell us how Tove died on the orders of  
154 Waldemar's jealous Queen. '*It was Helwig's falcon*  
155 *who cruelly tore apart Gurre's dove.*'

156 Here, now, is the *Song of the Wood Dove* from  
157 Gurrelieder by Arnold Schönberg. Florence Quivar is  
158 the soloist and Zubin Mehta conducts...the New York  
159 Philharmonic.

160 (MUSIC)

161 AB: We just heard the *Song of the Wood Dove* from  
162 Gurrelieder by Arnold Schönberg. The New York  
163 Philharmonic was conducted by one of the composer's  
164 greatest champions, Zubin Mehta.

165 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

166 AB: Like his musical idols Beethoven and Mozart,  
167 Johannes Brahms was extremely fond of the  
168 "variation" model. This should come as little  
169 surprise since it was through this channel that he  
170 could perhaps best demonstrate his skills in  
171 contrapuntal form. It is important to note, however  
172 that Brahms believed that variations should be  
173 transfigurations of a theme-not aberrations from  
174 it. And though he certainly embellished any theme  
175 with which he worked... in his capable hands, the  
176 original motif remained recognizable underneath the  
177 ornamental dressings of appoggiaturas and scale  
178 passages.

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AB: Brahms completed the final work on our program, the *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*, in 1873. Some years earlier, Haydn's biographer, Carl Ferdinand Pohl, had shown Brahms a number of Haydn's then-unpublished compositions. Brahms copied the theme from one of these--a Divertimento for wind instruments labeled "St. Anthony's Chorale." Brahms then composed 8 Variations upon it--each reflecting distinctive moods and colors. According to another Brahms biographer, Max Kalbeck, these variations were intended to serve as musical illustrations of the temptations of St. Anthony--a frequent subject in Western Art.

Modern scholarship suggests that the original work, "St. Anthony's Chorale" was likely written by someone other than Franz Joseph Haydn. This has led to this piece being more commonly called, "The St. Anthony Variations" rather than "Variations on a Theme by Haydn." In the end, the title seems to matter very little. Brahms himself, who was often his own worst critic, remarked to Clara Schuman that quote, "I have always had a special weakness for this score and I think of it with great satisfaction."

208 AB: **Here, now are the *Variations on a Theme by Haydn*—or**  
209 ***The St. Anthony Variations*, if you prefer, by**  
210 **Brahms. Lorin Maazel conducts...the New York**  
211 **Philharmonic.**

212 (MUSIC)

213 AB: **Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56A by Johannes**  
214 **Brahms. The New York Philharmonic was conducted by**  
215 **Lorin Maazel.**

216 **I'm Alec Baldwin and you're listening to the New**  
217 **York Philharmonic This Week.**

218 (INSERT FILLERS/PROMOS)

219 PROMO for THIS PROGRAM:

220 AB: **On our next New York Philharmonic broadcast:**

221 **We hear works by Schönberg and Brahms. This is Alec**  
222 **Baldwin. Please join me as we feature performances**  
223 **of Transfigured Night and the Brahms Symphony No. 4**  
224 **as Pierre Boulez, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, and**  
225 **Kurt Masur all conduct...the New York Philharmonic**  
226 **This Week.**

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229 PROMO for NYP 19-11

230 AB: Reri Grist is the soloist in the Symphony No. 4 by  
231 Mahler next time, on the New York Philharmonic This  
232 Week. This is Alec Baldwin, hoping you'll join me  
233 for a broadcast that will also feature Mahler's  
234 Symphony No. 1. Zubin Mehta and Alan Gilbert will  
235 conduct...the New York Philharmonic This Week.

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