

**Brahms's Sonata/Quintet Opus 34: Pianism as facilitating
concept in establishing the link between technique and
interpretation**

by

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Abstract

Primarily the writer was interested in the relationship between technique and interpretation in the concept of pianism, especially in the music of Brahms, because of the technical difficulties thereof. In this study the truism that technique = interpretation is the focus point. After giving many different opinions about this, the writer brings it into context with Brahmsian pianism specifically. It is made clear how Brahms used certain techniques for certain soundworlds that he wanted to create, in order to reach a certain interpretation, and that there are recurring technical procedures in opus 34, 35, 56b and the 51 exercises. As an interface to these Brahmsian techniques, the writer selects a mixture of generic technical aspects from a wide scope of other musical minds. There is a definite inter-reaction between all these generic aspects and those of Brahms.

The background and history of opus 34 is explained, plus a short section about Brahms aesthetics/ambiguity, and some philosophical opinions about the dimension of emotions and feelings in interpretation. However, the writer explains that this dimension is outside the scope of this thesis. A summary of schools of thought on technique and theories of interpretation is given to establish the links between them. Using available literature on quintets, ensembles, pianism, idiomaticism and timbre, the piano quintet specifically was explored for the uniqueness of its features. Brahms's individualistic approach to pianism, as exemplified by his chamber music and his unique contributions to virtuoso technical routines, is examined against the background of sonorities of the piano and underpinned by appropriate technical skills. Against a template of pianistic criteria, appropriate examples, rich in context, are analysed both technically (objectively) and interpretatively (subjectively) to educe outcomes that establish that the two approaches have a holistic relationship and are ultimately inseparable and interdependent. The score examples show how technical difficulties escalate in combinations of complex movements in the "marriage" of technique and interpretation, and how interpretation relies primarily and fundamentally on the craft of technique, which is also an art in itself.

Keywords

Aesthetics; Brahms; idiomaticism; interpretation; music analysis; pianism; piano quintet; piano technique; timbre.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the research

1.1 Motivation for the study

This research is aimed at the interface between academic (writing about or analysis of) and practical (performance of) music, explaining how musical results depend on technical means. The *modus operandi* of this mini-thesis is therefore, primarily, to establish the cognitive nature of pianism, seen as a marriage of technical and interpretative skills. This work seeks to establish that there is an irreducible interconnection between interpretation (seen as a subjective area), and technique (which is a practical consideration and therefore seen as an objective area).

The syllogism in music that music is inseparable from interpretation; music is inseparable from technique; therefore technique and interpretation are inseparable when making music, also helps to explain the above mentioned interface. As the title of this thesis suggests, the notion of pianism entails much more than just technique. Pianism also encompasses the sophisticated idea of idiomaticism moving hierarchically upwards to the stage of using the instrument in a unique way which drives it to the limits of its idiomatic capability and to the point where it is doing what only it can do, and doing it artistically. Another intrinsic aspect of pianism is that it is based on psychological imagery and imitation which may achieve a certain colouristic effect such as orchestral sounds or the human voice.

From the viewpoint of the pedagogue this thesis also inspires some keen attention. The material selected for chapters 4 and 5 presents many opportunities to explain certain piano technical procedures which could help students who are learning Opus 34, or any other Brahms work. The writer tries to analyse certain problems, based on practical/cerebral expertise, leading to satisfactory interpretation. Thus the technical methodology properly focused, suffused with analysis of the musical problems, leads to the largely subjective, communicative delivery of the interpretation.

In this study of the pianism of Johannes Brahms, one of the most important motivating issues, at first, was the question as to why Brahms's compositions are so technically demanding to play. Having listened critically to and performed the Quintet Opus 34a, the Sonata Opus 34b and also

Opus 56b (the Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn, known, too, as Variations on the St Anthony Chorale, which also exists in two versions, one for two pianos, Opus 56b, and the other for orchestra, Opus 56a) with certain technical criteria in mind, the researcher aims to arrive at an informed opinion as to how Brahms transferred his cumulative knowledge of virtuoso pianism (as in, for example, his Variations on a Theme by Paganini, Opus 35, for solo piano) into his use of the piano in chamber music, and in his Piano Quintet (Opus 34) in particular.

The development of romantic pianism (with the modern piano emerging as the premier multi-voiced instrument, provided that its colour is properly exploited by the pianist) and the acceptance, from the late 19th century onwards, of the powerful nine-foot concert grand as the standard for judgment in public performance, add significant motivation to this study. The myriad different touches and sounds (architectonics) available on these concert grands, at a technical and interpretative level, much enhance the colour of chamber-music ensembles. This examination of the interplay of colour, imitation, invocation and imagination, as part of interpretation, also constitutes aspects of the research.

After considering the above-mentioned aspects in the context of Opus 34, the main concerns which arose in the mind of the researcher, thinking both as a solo pianist and as a chamber musician, were to:

- Analyse the influence of certain features in Brahms's presentation of piano technique (so-called Brahmsian pianism) on interpretation, and the accruing advantages. The difficulties arising from these features can include large extensions of the hands, difficult leaps, veiled melodies and textural complexities, as well as special technically-laden devices that Brahms uses regularly, such as two-against-three rhythms, thick chords and triadic melodies (see Frisch 2001:189), all of which increase the technical challenge for the interpreter
- Show that the same or similar technical and virtuosic devices also feature in Opus 35, Opus 56b and in the *51 Übungen*, as germane examples of ultimate virtuosity, two-piano texture and formal technical layout respectively
- Show how aspects of technique and interpretation are intertwined/interconnected/linked
- Explain the underlying pedagogical angles.

1.2 Theoretical framework

In reviewing the subject matter of this research the writer identified interfaces with the philosophies/concepts of Aesthetics, Analysis and Interpretation. For further explanation of these terms see Definitions and Key Concepts at 1.13.

1.3 Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study are:

- The technical and interpretative difficulties in the pianism of Brahms's Opus 34 are interrelated and inseparably linked
- There are some differences, vis-à-vis one another, in the pianistic challenges for collaborative pianists performing (interpreting) either score of Opus 34
- There are certain pianistic devices in Opus 34 which are also found in Brahms's Opuses 35, 56b and in the *51 Übungen*, and the handling of which has a major influence on the interpretation
- There are generic technical criteria against which the Brahms devices can be classified and measured.

1.4 Background to the study

In his well-known book *The Piano Quartet and Quintet* (1994:51-98), the British musicologist Basil Smallman states that together with Dvořák's Opus 81 in A Major, the most renowned Piano Quintets of the second half of the nineteenth century are those of Brahms and César Franck, both in the key of F minor; the Schumann Piano Quintet of 1842 is nowadays recognized as the culmination of all previous explorations of the genre, and at the same time the foundation on which numerous later composers (including Brahms) were able to build. Brahms, who lived for a time in Schumann's home, and collaborated extensively with Clara Schumann, knew Schumann's masterpiece, the Piano Quintet Opus 44, very well; however, his Piano Quintet Opus 34 is perhaps more strongly influenced by Schubert's String Quintet in C major, D. 956. The influence is mainly evident in the famous *appoggiatura* Db-C, drawn from the end of the final movement of the Schubert String Quintet. Since it is arguable that Brahms surpassed

Schumann in the scale, scope and technical bravura of his Piano Quintet, the F minor Quintet has been chosen as the subject of this study, not only as a work in its own right, but because of the co-existence of two extant versions of the work and the compositional richness of two different workings of the same material in which the piano and its technical possibilities feature so significantly.

The Piano Quintet in F minor, Opus 34, was completed during the summer of 1864. It was dedicated to her Royal Highness the Princess Anna of Hesse, while she was on vacation in Baden-Baden, at the same time as Clara Schumann and Brahms. Clara and Brahms played the two-piano version of the Quintet for the royal listener, to whom it appealed so strongly that she gave her own autograph of the Mozart Symphony in G minor, K. 550 to Brahms as a present. Like most Piano Quintets, the Brahms Quintet was written for piano and string quartet (two violins, viola and cello). The work began as a String Quintet (completed in 1862; it was scored for two violins, viola and two cellos – a version which has not survived, indicating Brahms's concerns that the timbral instrumentation should be as precise as his mental image of the work). Brahms then transmuted the String Quintet into a Sonata for two pianos, before it took yet another published form as the Piano Quintet. It is known that he destroyed the original version for String Quintet, but published the Sonata as Opus 34 bis. While the Piano Quintet is recognized as one of the greatest chamber music compositions in music history, the Sonata for Two Pianos has also found its own place within the major two-piano repertoire.

The Brahms Piano Quintet thus existed in three forms, only two of which, however, have survived as published works. The first unpublished version, the above-mentioned String Quintet of 1862, was scored with two cellos, the same unusual combination of instruments that Schubert had chosen for his String Quintet in C major, D. 956. It then appeared as a Sonata for two pianos (1862) and subsequently in the version as Piano Quintet (1864).

Brahms often sought the opinion of his close friends on his music. Two important kindred spirits were Clara Schumann and the violinist, Joseph Joachim: he showed them the early version of 'Opus 34', scored for String Quintet. Clara was thrilled with the work, writing, "I do not know how to begin to tell you calmly the great delight your Quintet has given me," but Joachim's criticism (Moser 1974:332-3) of the scoring ("too much growling and grumbling") was enough for Brahms to withdraw the manuscript. Joachim suggested the advisability of using the piano, and it was then recast by Brahms as a Sonata for two pianos and played in this form by the composer and

Carl Tausig (Liszt's most famous student) in 1864. The two-piano arrangement of the Sonata received even higher praise from Clara Schumann, but she felt the work was so full of ideas that it "must have an orchestra for its interpretation." Her comments encouraged Brahms to work on a new version, which was completed in the autumn of 1864, for piano and strings: the Piano Quintet in F minor, Opus 34. The private première of the Piano Quintet took place, with Clara Schumann at the piano, in Karlsruhe, at the house of Hermann Levi, who was then the conductor of the Karlsruhe Opera, and a great friend of Brahms and Joachim.

This long struggle towards the final form of the Quintet shows Brahms as a self-critical composer who never presented his music to the public unless thoroughly satisfied with it. "Certainly none of the great composers was consistently more painstaking in the development of his material" (Erb 1934:107). Considering his high standards, it is particularly significant that Brahms permitted both Opus 34b and also Opus 56b, his other substantial work for two pianos, to survive in more than one form. The arguably definitive versions (the Quintet Opus 34 and the Variations on a Theme of Haydn Opus 56 for orchestra) are, in fact, better known than their counterparts, for the plausible reasons that chamber music and orchestral performance were more usual forms of music making, and the Quintet belongs to a genre which is so poorly served with repertoire by major composers that it was guaranteed a place in the pantheon anyway. Wein (2005, CD leaflet) explains that it is likely that Brahms envisioned the works as separate entities with somewhat different personalities, and states that the two-piano version brings a dramatic, even symphonic, aspect to the work. This aspect opened up the work to the challenge of matching technical virtuosity to the musical demands, which is a very valid aspect of the current study.

The very fact that the ever-imaginative Brahms could conceive Opus 34 (and Opus 56) as feasible in two versions is an indication of his greatness in writing music of such adaptability, bearing in mind what Alan Walker (1966:238) states, controversially, about composers in their predilection for a single medium. Walker emphasizes that composers such as Chopin, Liszt and Brahms possessed an unrivalled knowledge of the keyboard, accounting for their comfort when writing for piano and that Brahms's music discloses and affirms the creative principle of identity between idea and medium. This identity projected by a masterpiece between idea and medium is an integral part of its greatness.

In the genre of quintet-writing the problem of combining sounds, timbres and instruments of differing volume and intensity is summarized by Tovey (1956:3) who stresses that every part is to be necessary, and that the ensemble is to be complete in itself. Whatever the art employed in combining sounds on different planes of tone, the chamber music style does not encourage the use of an instrument which cannot be allowed to use its normal strength, or of one which cannot make itself heard without constant strain on its own part and constant repression of other instruments. Fenton (2001:696) summarizes this as follows: “The perennial challenge in the genre of the Piano Quintet was the relationship between piano and strings. In Brahms’s Opus 34 there is a constant exchange of material and roles, and the piano part has equal weight with that of the string-group. Extended solo passages are seldom found, either for strings (singly or as a ‘group’ vis-à-vis the piano) or for piano itself.” Van der Westhuizen (consultations 2008) experiences the Quintet Opuses 34 as having two contrasting, struggling identities: the piano and the strings. In the interpretation this struggle makes for the ultimate intensity of the work.

There are no easy pieces in Brahms’s output. Brahms was a virtuoso pianist himself, whose career started off by performing his own works in public; in the Händel Variations in B flat major Opus 24, the Paganini Variations Opus 35 (a minor), and the Piano Concerto in B flat Opus 83, the measure of that virtuosity is fully realized (these works are the *ne plus ultra* of their kind in mainstream piano repertoire). In studying, for example, Brahms’s *51 Übungen* for piano, one can find his personal solutions to many of the technical problems in Opus 34. It is arguable, and demonstrable, that Brahms’s pianism is the most challenging and advanced of its period since he consciously tried to expand the demands on and capability of technique to deal fully with the musical demands and heroic scope of some of his compositions. In fact, the two were mutually enriching, affording a perfect example of the inseparability of technique and interpretation in the great exemplars of the repertoire.

1.5 Aims of the study

The main aim of the study is to analyse the relationship between technique and interpretation in the Quintet and in the two-piano Sonata.

Sub-aims are to:

- evaluate the pianism in order to determine how technical aspects make greater or lesser demands in the Sonata vis-à-vis the Quintet;
- construct a generic table defining piano technique against which the Brahmsian difficulties could be measured;
- compare selected technical difficulties in the Quintet and Sonata with some of those in Brahms's other Opus numbers, in order to show their common sources in Brahmsian pianism;
- demonstrate the conceptual indivisibility of pianism, technique and interpretation in Opus 34;
- give pedagogical guidance concerning the methodology of the given examples.

1.6 Research questions

The primary research question investigated in this study was:

What, for a pianist, are the technical and interpretative challenges in Brahms's Opus 34a and Opus 34b, and to what extent are the different aspects of these two challenges interlinked?

Five related sub-questions arose:

- does a comparison of the scores of the Quintet and the Sonata for Two Pianos show appreciable or significant differences in the pianistic treatment?
- can the objectivity of traditional technical method be defined in a comprehensive matrix of the Quintet and Sonata?
- to what extent did Brahms add to the challenges of traditional technique and to what extent does he exploit these challenges in Opus 34?
- to what extent does the hybrid of pianism act as a portmanteau device to reconcile the objectivity of basic technical method (muscular coordination, skill and knowledge) with the subjectivity of finished interpretation (sound quality, imagination, communication and gesture)?
- to what extent can objective methodology and traditional pedagogic device be used to empower the technical means for successful interpretation?

1.7 The scope of this research

The two aspects of enquiry in this thesis are technique/interpretation and their interrelationship; the Quintet and two-piano versions of Brahms's Opus 34 will be critically examined, but almost exclusively in relation to these aspects. The study will, at first, focus on the redistribution of the music in the Quintet version (bearing the idiomaticism of the strings in mind) which integrates textures from both pianos of the two-piano version, making for a technically more challenging piano part in the Quintet. Secondly a comparison will be made between Opus 34 and some of Brahms's other significant works for piano. Thirdly, an eclectic choice will be offered of technical examples from the scores of Opus 34, to demonstrate the inseparability of technique and interpretation in the clearest way. In the course of the research the following four elements are also pin-pointed, and given some peripheral attention during Chapters 4 and 5: how Brahms transmutes some of the musical ideas (in motivic development) from two equal instruments in the two-piano Sonata version of the music, to mixed instruments in the piano plus string-quartet version; how the 'second' piano-part and the string-parts converge and diverge; how the piano-part of the Quintet version has a unique interpretative role in relation to the other four instruments (combined) in the ensemble, and how the pianism in Brahms's music (the Quintet and Sonata) can expand the spectrum of piano sounds into multiple timbres by using specific technical procedures (Chapters 4 and 5).

1.8 Delimitation of the study

Although not a formal analysis of motivic material, melodic/harmonic procedures or formal structure, elements of these aspects are relevant when style and interpretation are being discussed. This study does not address an exhaustive spectrum of Brahms's more challenging piano-technical procedures as found in the Quintet and Sonata; only a limited number of examples from the scores will be compared to examples from his other works, in order to draw comparisons in the matter of pure technique. It is also beyond the scope of this study to show in detail how successfully Brahms achieved idiomaticism in the stringed instruments, thereby both expanding and complementing the pianism of the piano-part, or how effective the instrumentation has been in maximizing the idiomatic potential of the components individually or collectively. Furthermore the study does not deal with interaction between the music itself, music theory, aesthetics and history.

1.9 Methodology

Under this heading three aspects are discussed:

1.9.1 Research design

According to Mouton's (2001) categories, the researcher classifies this study as belonging to the empirical design type (type 14), namely textual analysis, hermeneutics and textual criticism. At the same time there are elements of a non-empirical nature (type 19), such as in the typical conceptual analysis (determining the meaning of concepts and clarifying conceptual linkages).

1.9.2 Research methods

- The following methods were utilised:
- Conducting a literature search on:
 - Internet Index to Music Periodicals
 - Nexus (NOF) for current and completed research in South Africa
 - ProQuest for international theses and dissertations
 - Ebsco Host (academic search premier and ERIC)
 - SACat for books in South African libraries.
- Carrying out other literature studies (musicological from an acceptable range of available sources) and score-reading.
- Having informal discussions with my co-supervisor as an authority on technico-interpretative aspects of pianism.
- Searching the Internet to locate existing recordings, videos and compact discs.
- Listening extensively to performances (live or on CD) with a range of performers (i.e. vicarious performance).
- Performing both versions of Opus 34 as a private study leading to relevant critical analysis (see below). The author is an experienced chamber music player (and has already given successful public performances of the Sonata).
- Applying the technical criteria to be listed in the Appendix: Brahms, Cortot et al, Heneghan, Joseffy, Reimer and Taubman.

1.9.3 Delineation of the method of analysis

After giving definitions of the key concepts in this study, a literature review of technique and interpretation is presented, as well as lists of technical criteria, in Chapter 3 and in the Appendix. Then an appraisal of the interpretational and technical focal points in the scores of the Quintet and Sonata is systematically carried out in Chapters 4 and 5, from the viewpoint of the performer. Interpretational focal points include aspects such as tempo, style, dynamics, phrasing, ornamentation and texture. Focal points of technique span a wide range, such as musculature, three-dimensional movement, fingering, hand positions and distributions, and multiple notes such as octaves and chords (always a virtuoso demand in Brahms). The approach to these pianistic challenges was to:

- 1) identify important interpretational focal points in the scores
- 2) identify difficult or characteristic technical focal points in the scores, emphasising the interdependence of 1) and 2)
- relate the above aspects 1) and 2), especially where they coincide with the methodological lists of technical aspects to be shown in Chapter 3 and in the Appendix
- compare some of the above examples with similar aspects, where relevant, in Opus 35 (Paganini Variations), Opus Extra/WoO6 (*51 Übungen*) and Opus 56b (Haydn Variations for two pianos) to establish similar recurrent or repetitive features in Brahmsian pianism.

The outcomes of the mini-thesis thus evolve naturally from the analysis of the above-mentioned examples of technico-interpretative challenges to pianism in both versions of the chosen work.

1.10 Value of the study

This study yields some measure of useful working comparability, in relation to aspects of technical and interpretative demands (including their interdependence), for the guidance of collaborative pianists, chamber musicians and those in related interest groups, such as musicologists, repertoire researchers and, of course, teachers. The discussion of how to deal with technically problematic examples in the Quintet could be directly applied to similar examples in Brahms's other chamber music. Interpretational detail within the Classico-Romantic idiom in Opus 34 is applicable, not only to Brahms's chamber music, but also to his solo-*oeuvre*.

1.11 Structure of the mini-thesis

Chapter 1 forms an introduction to the topic of technique and interpretation, with some historical background to the circumstances surrounding the writing of the Sonata and the Quintet. In Chapter 2 the writer presents an extensive literature survey of inherited traditional and pre-Brahmsian views (including those of Chopin, Liszt and Leschetitsky) on the interdependence of technique and interpretation. Post-Brahmsian and contemporary (20th and 21st century) contributions are also discussed. For Chapter 3 the writer researches generic technical criteria which would be necessary as a first step in interpreting any Brahms piano music, and uses this as an interface/template to the technical difficulties found in Opus 34. In Chapter 4 an evaluation of the pianism in the two versions of Opus 34 is made and then compared to other Brahmsian pianistic procedures. Opus 34 is searched for technical features that are borne out in usage by comparison with Opuses 35, 56b and the *51 Übungen* (Opus Extra). Chapter 5 then demonstrates in detail how these technical aspects “marry” and “modify” the interpretative approaches in the Sonata and in the Quintet. Chapter 6 concludes this study with a summary of the findings about pianism in Opus 34, and pianism in Brahmsian chamber music in general.

1.12 Notes to the Reader

In Chapters 2 and 3 the writer deliberately included some older sources, such as Tobias Matthay (1903) and even Christian Schubart (1806), because they contain general truths which are still applicable nowadays, and which have not been proved wrong, challenged or replaced by other writings, even though technique is an ongoing, metamorphosing subject, evidenced today in the virtuoso technical prowess of younger and younger artists. The Carl Czerny technical method (early 19th century) and, indeed, the Bach Preludes and Fugues (1685-1750), are today just as valuable in the development of a holistic piano technique as in previous generations. At the other end of the scale one has, for example, the Taubman explanatory method of the first decade of the 21st century, which shows a progression from the old Czerny/Dohnanyi books of exercises, to the process of analytical method which is producing sixteen-year-old Chinese pianists such as the young Lang Lang and other technical virtuosi of the 21st century.

The sources listed, which are not directly referred to in the text, have been valuable in providing general information and numerous opinions about the chosen topic.

The co-supervisor's ongoing international research on the subject of technique, interpretation and pianism, has been a constant reminder that this topic is extremely open-ended and subjective.

1.13 Definitions and Key Concepts

Aesthetics is concerned with perception, how humans see and create art, read literature and listen to music. All these acts require interpretation; therefore it is possible to relate aesthetics to interpretation. Music's inability to articulate precise meaning can be conceived as a weakness, but it is equally possible to counter this idea with the perspective which poses music's suggestiveness and ambiguity as virtues, not flaws. In relation to this research, it is implied that, for instance, the textural suggestiveness of Brahms's music, and the fact that one of its strengths is its formal beauty (Brahms being an academically self-disciplined composer), relating it more to absolutism than to referentialism (and other discursive forms), could be experienced, aesthetically, in many ways which underline its ambiguity while celebrating its 'feelingfulness' and 'expressivity' in a fructifying relationship.

Analysis is closely bound up with acts of interpretation. British musicologist Arnold Whittall suggests that analysis is a performative act, so that when music is analysed a certain performance of it is executed: "We need as analysts, to perform the music in different ways in order to achieve an interpretation alive to all nuances of the text" (Whittall 1991:657). An "intellectual" performance suggests that interpretation is a process, not a fixed entity or outcome, and as such it enjoys a certain fluidity. Furthermore, Kerman (1994:15) claims that analysis is a sub-discipline within musicology that is concerned with a search for internal coherence within a musical work. Beard and Gloag (2005:13) describe analysis as the evaluation of abstract, conceptual levels in music; features not obvious in a score but arising from consideration of theoretical ideas that have been developed in specific historical and cultural contexts. "To go beyond mechanical conversions of musical notation into written words, analysis must uncover something beyond or behind the mere sonic surface" (Parker and Abbate 1989:1-2). Analysis is the result of an interaction between the music itself, music theory, aesthetics and history. In relation to this study, analysis of numerous pianistic technical devices, which, it is claimed, are closely interlinked with interpretation, will further demonstrate how such devices are bound up with acts of interpretation.

Idiomatism in general defines what is suitable for or playable/singable by a particular instrument or voice. Thus idiomatism in music can be explained as the exploiting of the particular capabilities of the instrument or voice for which the music is intended, using the characteristic capability of each instrument. Idiomatism is, arguably, a fairly coarse instrument of definition, whereas the more precise and focused mode of ‘idiomatism as pianism’ (see below) more closely fits the demands of this mini-thesis.

Idiomatism as pianism: there is a distinction between idiomatism and pianism (definition below). It is certain that the Brahms Quintet was written to exploit, as far as the composer could, the maximum capability of each instrument (in the case of the piano called pianism) both for musical effect and for virtuosity. The rise of virtuosos (both as singers and instrumentalists) in the 19th century is associated with increasingly idiomatic writing; the two are complementary. As a specifically dedicated form of idiomatism, pianism establishes that what is performed on the piano uses the instrument in a way that is uniquely characteristic of its mechanical and musical potential in any given context.

Interpretation could be defined as an act of performance where the performer’s judgement and personality necessarily have their share in the presentation and communication. Expression (within interpretation) in performance is that part of the music which the composer could not fully commit to writing (except by potentially futile over-prescription) and which the performer must therefore (indeed is expected to) supply out of his or her own creative musical sense and feelings. This is to give the interpreter a key role in the realization of any composition.

There must be a middleman between producer and consumer who returns to the mute notation on the printed page in order to recreate the creations of the composer. This re-creating is what is meant by interpretation. Its purpose is to convey the meaning and intentions of the composer, both intellectual and expressive. Interpretation (for a pianist) is really the intangible sum of everything that goes to make up piano playing; the sum of understanding, experience and talent (Newman 1984:139).

Typically, no two performers adopt exactly similar treatments of any given composition. There have been cases where a composer has admitted that a performer’s interpretation was not merely different from, but better than, the one he/she had in mind when composing. “This latitude of notation being implicit rather than explicit, which makes

possible the continual refreshment of music, is one main reason why art remains beautiful” (Newman 1984:140). The composer Richard Strauss liked to say that a musical score may have more or less than appears on the page, but that symbols for interpretation are not always necessarily apparent on the page, and that a printed page is an imperfect blueprint of a conception (Chasins 1961:72). Strongly constructed, vital music will indeed stimulate many ‘interpretations’.

Pianism: this is the technique of a pianist (or, indeed, the skill of a composer) which succeeds in evoking from the instrument music which obviously maximizes the outcomes possible from the technical means in achieving the musical ends. In an ideal exemplar, the presentation of the material would be such that it could scarcely be envisaged as physically suited to, or even possible on, another instrument. In general it means that the composer (Chopin, Liszt, Schumann and Ravel are particular instances) understands the workings of the instrument so well that the process of composition is itself influenced by an intimate knowledge of what the instrument can deliver; the progress of the composition and the instrument’s possibilities are so linked that means and end are indistinguishable. Pianism is thus the state of suitability of the music for the instrument, either to the exclusion of the same effect being created easily by other instruments, or the exploitation of the instrument’s resources to the point where composers, such as Brahms, were writing music which was influenced in its actual ‘placement’ by what the instrument could best do. There are countless examples which show the keyboard off in a way that is incomparable and could only ‘fit’ on a keyboard instrument of the piano family (some, indeed, being suitable only for the piano). Pianism, at a higher level, challenges the composer to compose with skill, and in the easiest possible way, what the instrument is capable of producing in the hands of an experienced pianist. It is therefore as applicable to children’s pieces as it is to bravura/virtuoso compositions.

Piano Quintet: A Piano Quintet is a composition for piano and four other instruments – usually, especially after 1800, a string quartet. It is a form that grew out of the accompanied keyboard Sonatas or Divertimenti during the second half of the 18th century, and is loosely related to the keyboard concerto. In the 1770s and 1780s Piano Quintets by J C Bach, Giordani, Pugnani, Wainwright, Storace and Tindal were

published in England and France, mainly for amateur players with relatively simple piano parts. Keyboard parts become more demanding after 1780; Boccherini's two sets of Quintets (late 1790) show a well integrated style and standard instrumentation. Some early concertos of Mozart (dating 1782-3) can be performed *a quattro*, which is usually taken to mean by piano and string quartet, but they have important formal differences from Quintets proper. It was not until the second half of the 19th century onwards that the scoring with string quartet came to eclipse all others, climaxing in the masterpieces of Brahms, Dvořák, Franck, Schumann and Shostakovich.

Quintet: Fr.Quintette, Ger.Quintett, It.Quintetto, Sp.Quinteto. 1) A composition for 5 solo performers, with or without accompaniment. 2) An ensemble of 5 solo performers. The String Quintet is less common than the String Quartet, but there are notable examples by Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner, Dvořák, Mozart and Schubert. These employ the usual ensemble of string quartet with extra viola. An extra cello appears in most of the Quintets of Boccherini, as well as in Schubert's great String Quintet in C major D 956, (which is referred to in this mini-thesis). Quintets for string quartet and a woodwind instrument were popular in the classical period. Brahms's Clarinet Quintet is the best-known later example. Mozart's Quintet in E flat major, K 452 for piano and winds, was the model for Beethoven's Opus 16 (same key and instruments) but had very few successors. Romantic composers Brahms, Dvořák, Fauré, Franck and Schumann produced important examples of quintets for string quartet and piano, though later ones are fewer (Bloch and Shostakovich).

Technique: this mechanical (or so it is perceived, though this is not quite correct in artistic terms) skill forms the foundation of the (physical) mastery of an instrument and the complete coordination of all the bodily movements required. Such coordination is not only a matter of the fingers, wrist, arm, etc., but also of the mental discipline which makes this possible. Perceived technical difficulty is chiefly a problem calling, in the first place, for mental coordination and preparation; most of the problems of advanced technique may be conquered by the precept of ensuring that mental concentration, the activity of the peripheral and central nervous system and the triggered muscular responses are so sequenced, by concentrated and repetitive practice, that they approach simultaneity, and the result is virtually synchronous and secure. Daily practice of routine material is necessary for the improvement and maintenance of

technique, even by the most advanced virtuoso. On the other hand, technique should not be overrated, because ultimately it is only the basis upon which to build interpretation. A pianist's technique means his or her suppleness and speed in the use of wrists, fingers, feet in pedalling, etc., used to a musical end, but there is also the technique of composition, meaning ability in harmony, counterpoint, orchestration and general craftsmanship, inter alia. A pianist might possess perfect technique yet be a poor interpreter, and a composer might have perfect technique and yet have little to express by its means. The concept of 'virtuosity' is also part of the matter of technique. A virtuoso is generally a person who excels in the technical skills of an art, especially in music. The term virtuoso may be used to describe popular performers who stress exhibitionism and showmanship in order to reach a wider audience. The greatest performers combine technical mastery with interpretative powers of the highest order to create virtuosity at an even higher aesthetic level. .

Timbre describes the tonal quality of a sound, a more complex attribute than pitch or loudness, which can each be represented by a one-dimensional scale. On the other hand, the perception of timbre is a synthesis of several factors; the frequency spectrum of a sound, and, in particular, the ways in which different partials grow in amplitude during the starting transient, are of great importance in determining the timbre.

Chapter 2

Literature survey of the intimate relationship between technique and interpretation

Introduction

In the survey of literature the writer will attempt to highlight and explain the following: interpretation and technique are intimately and inextricably bound together; technique has its subjective side as interpretation has its objective side, and the acquisition and use of perfect technique are cognitive activities, not just skills. Technique requires understanding of the musculature and functions of the body and does not consist only of natural, mindless muscular agility and/or constant reinforcement by practice. “Perfect technique deserves and demands academic respectability as a process” (Heneghan interviews 2007). A question that might be considered is: which of these two aspects comes first into the mind of a performer, interpretation or technique? These two aspects are in fact just as interdependent as melody and harmony. Ernst Toch (1977:102) points out that, among the shaping forces in music, melody and harmony are the most closely related, and that their mutual impregnation is at work at all times.

This chapter consists of six parts, namely:

- Inherited traditional and pre-Brahmsian views about technique and interpretation. A short biographical background of the lives and teachings of Chopin, Liszt and Leschetitsky and their important historic influence on technique and interpretation
- Twentieth century trends in piano technique
- Other pre-focus on technique and interpretation leading to contemporary views
- Current views
- The unexplainable factor
- Epilogue.

2.1 The teachings of Chopin, Liszt and Leschetitsky

One cannot discuss the concept of modern pianism, including aspects of the teaching of technique and interpretation, without referring to Chopin, Liszt and Leschetitsky. Chopin himself

said that his chosen universe would be the soul and heart of man. He was the “original who was instantly comprehensible, the poignant romantic whose structural precision was of classic calibre” (Chasins 1961:221).

Chasins further explains a fallacy in musical mythology, namely that a great Liszt interpretation is primarily a feat of virtuosity, whereas a great Brahms interpretation is entirely a triumph of musicianship, but he emphasizes that the reverse is closer to the truth and that nothing is more inartistic than the sacrifice of one element wholly for another. Where many elements are present, artistry begins when they are indissolubly blended. Liszt’s compositions indeed require virtuosity, but of that high order which is entirely subordinate to supreme refinement and expressive power. Conversely, the “thorny mechanics of Brahms’s music require a technician of the first order to bring charm and lucidity to the graceful works, and vitality and momentum to the larger ones” (Chasins 1961:221).

About the legendary teaching of Leschetitsky, Paderewski said that it stressed: tone! tone! tone! He stated that Leschetitsky’s method was very simple; his pupils learnt to evoke a fine tone from the instrument and to make music, not noise (Schonberg 1966:279).

2.1.1 Chopin (1810-1849)

Gerig (1975:160) states that Chopin’s life and performance career points up the integration of Chopin the intensely human, suffering man, with the musician and unrivalled keyboard poet, and that he was a man whose performance style and technique were completely dedicated to the most genuine musical ideals. “Chopin the performer perfectly interpreted Chopin the composer in a most original manner” (Gerig 1975:160). “His expressivity emerged victorious even when it exceeded his capacity to solve all its artistic problems: it triumphed over every conflict between inspiration and technique” (Chasins 1961:221).

Chopin had a precise mind and precise manners and was ultra-conservative in his aesthetic tastes. He considered Liszt’s music vapid and empty, said that Schumann’s *Carnaval* was not music at all, and ignored the work of Mendelssohn. The only two great composers who meant anything to him were Bach and Mozart. He also adored the operas of Bellini and was a romantic who hated romanticism (Schonberg 1966:135). Chopin and Liszt became acquainted shortly after the Pole arrived in Paris in 1831. Chopin envied Liszt’s strength and knew that he would have to use finesse rather than power to conquer the world at the keyboard. He is known to

have said that he would like to steal from Liszt the way he played his (Chopin's) études. The works of literature agree on the fact that they had a love-hate relationship, respecting and admiring each other, but always with some jealousy and spite on Chopin's part (Schonberg 1966:141).

When Chopin first went to Paris in 1831, the influence of the pianist Friedrich Kalkbrenner was very great. Kalkbrenner proposed that Chopin must become his student for three years, but Chopin's former teacher in Warsaw, Joseph Elsner, was against it; he said that Kalkbrenner wanted to speculate with Chopin's talent. Elsner did not want Chopin to imitate anybody, because he believed that a pianist then ceases to be original. Elsner also remarked that one cannot advise a pupil to devote too much attention to a single method or manner or national taste, and that "what is true and beautiful must not be imitated, but experienced according to its own individual and superior laws" (Gerig 1975:145). Fortunately Chopin did not succumb to Kalkbrenner's influence; Elsner, with all his skill as teacher, clearly understood "what poetry there was in this pale young dreamer, and that he would be the founder of a new school of piano music" (Gerig 1975:147). Chopin's playing was described by different critics of the time, as follows:

He plays very quietly without the *elan* which generally at once distinguishes the artist from the amateur. His style of playing and writing differs greatly from that of other virtuosos; and indeed chiefly in this, that the desire to make good music predominates noticeably in his case over the desire to please. Chopin's intensely musical nature, his incredible control of an infinite number of subtle dynamic shadings and rhythmic nuances always had a stronger appeal for the musically discerning than for the populace (Gerig 1975:149).

Both Mendelssohn and Liszt heard Chopin in his recitals in Paris in 1832, and were enchanted with the demonstration of his talent and poetic feeling. Mendelssohn considered Chopin's piano playing as entirely original and so masterly that he might be called a perfect virtuoso and one of the very first of all. He developed these new effects on his own, because his teacher in Warsaw, Joseph Elsner, was a musician of the old school. In 1831 nobody in Europe could have taught Chopin anything, or could have succeeded in anything but destroying his natural talent. He was one of the fantastic geniuses in history (Schonberg 1966:138). Chopin's pupil, Mathias, described his method as 'absolutely of the old legato school, of the school of Clementi and Cramer' (Gerig 1975:161). Some of the first-hand observations by those who heard Chopin play, and the comments from his many biographers, make it easy to construct a clear picture of

his keyboard style: his technical dexterity was complete; his physical coordination and freedom were of the highest quality; his touch was smooth and even, perfectly articulated with the greatest of refinement and elegance, somewhat in the Hummel tradition; his control over the most subtle shades of dynamics probably has never been surpassed; his meagre physical means made it imperative for him to exploit the *pianissimo* range of the piano; he was most conscious of a legato, cantabile melody line and took great pains to teach it; he strongly advocated that his pupils study both singing and Italian Opera.

Notable advances in piano technique for which Chopin was responsible, stem directly from his individual style of writing. His Nocturnes emphasize strongly the validity of a singing piano technique; numerous of his Etudes call for the extension of the hand to the interval of at least a tenth or more (Chopin's hand possessed spatulate fingers and could open up to a startling degree); Stephen Heller (Schonberg 1966:135) spoke of Chopin's slim hands which could suddenly expand, and said that his hand looked like the mouth of a serpent about to swallow a whole rabbit!; and yet in these Etudes the technique is absolutely subservient to the music. Chopin was also famous for his special kind of *rubato*. Methuen-Campbell (1981:14) says that one of the most important elements in a performance of Chopin is the pianist's use of *rubato*. His pupils Mikuli and Mathias described it as meaning that the left-hand accompaniment should keep strict time, allowing the right-hand freedom in shaping the melodic line, along with all its ornamentation, above this. Liszt described the Chopin *rubato* to one of his students in the following way: "Look at the trees! The wind plays in the leaves, stirs up life among them, but the tree remains the same; that is Chopinesque *rubato*" (Gerig 1975:161).

Two other areas of radical changes called for in Chopin's piano music were the use of pedal and new innovations in fingering. Chopin was called the master poet of the pedal, and his use of the thumb on the black keys and the unorthodox passing of certain fingers over others are essential in the performance of his music. Gerig (1975:163) states that from many indications in history Chopin must have been a superb teacher, but he never developed a pupil who was a truly outstanding pianist, while Liszt had so many; one of the reasons could be that Chopin was so frail that he was little seen by the general public and a large share of his students was comprised of female aristocracy with varying degrees of talent; also Liszt's teaching career was a much longer one than Chopin's, and came largely after Chopin's death. Chopin's students respected him for his perfectionism and disciplined teaching, even through his many periods of infirmity. His student Mikuli said that single lessons often lasted for hours at a stretch, till

exhaustion overcame master and pupil, and that every word from his lips was incentive and inspiring (Gerig, 1975:161). He repeated without ceasing during the lesson: *facilement, facilement* (easy, easy) because stiffness exasperated him. What concerned him the most at the commencement of his instruction, was to free the pupil from every stiffness and convulsive, cramped movements of the hand, to give him/her thus the first condition of a beautiful style of playing (suppleness), and with it the independence of the fingers.

As a teacher Chopin treated the different kinds of touch very thoroughly, especially the full-toned legato; he recommended gymnastic bending inward and outward of the wrist to accommodate fingering, and the continuous extending of fingers; he made his pupils play scales with a full tone, as connectedly as possible, very slowly and only gradually advancing to a quicker tempo; and trills had not so much to be played quickly as with great evenness. He told one of his students that when he was about to give a concert, he closed his doors and played only Bach. He advocated that there are as many different sounds as there are fingers, and that everything hangs on knowing how to finger correctly. Since each finger is formed differently, it is far better to develop their special characteristics rather than attempt to destroy their individuality. Technique was never a dry, mechanical process for him, and he could never separate it from a cantabile approach. Gerig's (1975:168) summing up of Chopin's approach, taught to his student Mikuli, is that the musical pianist has to sing, and with his singing there must be the most natural phrasing, otherwise it struck him (Chopin) as if someone were reciting in a language not understood by the speaker, giving a speech carefully learned by rote, in the course of which the speaker not only neglected the natural quantity of the syllables, but even stopped in the middle of words!

Methuen-Campbell (1981:14) sums up what Chopin taught:

I do not believe that there is any one way of playing Chopin that is definitely 'right' or 'wrong', but there are particular traits which are the hallmark of good Chopin-playing. These include the most subtle legato, the ability to sustain the purity of the melodic lines, contrasts in mood, textures and the balance between the parts, highly developed contrapuntal playing (Bach was his idol), and rhythmic flexibility. The phrasing must never sound stiff or fragmentary, and the musicality of the performer should always outweigh his pianism.

2.1.2 Liszt (1811-1886)

Liszt was the undisputed monarch of the piano for sixty years. As a boy his father took him to Carl Czerny in Vienna (Hummel's fees were too high) for a good foundation. Czerny (Beethoven's pupil) taught Liszt to *think* about his playing. A relatively short period with Czerny (more or less eighteen months) was sufficient for Liszt to develop his hands and brain along the right lines, and what he acquired in those months remained with him for the rest of his life.

Alan Walker (1970:24) states that Liszt's fingers became and stayed obedient to his slightest volition, and his sight-reading powers were extended until they reached a miraculous comprehensiveness. Walker describes his hands as capable of producing electrifying effects of power alternating with delicacy, together with a veritable orchestration of the music he was performing, several strands of tone-colour being evoked simultaneously, and that he stroked the keys and seemed to coax the tone out of them.

Between 1830 and 1840 Liszt was creating for himself (with Chopin in the background) a new keyboard technique which overshadowed everything that had gone before. He could publicly perform two of Chopin's most difficult études half an hour after the composer had finished writing them down. His technical attributes are described by Walker (1970:25) in the following way:

Liszt can make the strings whisper with an aerial delicacy or utter voices as clear and as tiny as the very finest harp notes. Sometimes the piano becomes a trumpet and a sound is extracted from the unwilling strings as piercing and as nasal as the tone of a clarion. He has rapidity and evenness of fingers, great self-controlling power of stopping or retarding a passage to introduce some freak of ornament, grasp of the most harassing and difficult intervals, interweaving of the richest and most fantastic accompaniments with a steadily moving melody, fire in flights of octaves, bafflingly rapid repeated notes, and all of these under command of the moment's poetical imagining, in other words never technique for its own sake.

Neuhaus (1973:133) reminds one of what Liszt said about the position of the hands: *Die Hände müssen mehr schweben, als an den tasten kleben* (the hands should hover over the keyboard, rather than stick to the keys). This advice should be remembered when dealing with leaps and jumps. Other technical advice is how to, for instance, imitate bells (in "Funerailles"): use a large wrist movement and full-arm, which is equal to pure technique; or how to imitate galloping horses (in "Grande Gallope Chromatique"): use bravura staccato octave passages, which is again equal to pure technique (Van der Westhuizen interviews 2008). (The previous of course

being a prescriptive and neither analytical nor pedagogic view, this is where the twentieth century teachers take it further, by applying method.)

The significance of Liszt's achievements as a composer has sometimes been underrated, even questioned, but his talents as a pianist and his importance in the history of piano technique have never been challenged.

His own phenomenal talent made him the greatest pianist of his, possibly any, generation, but more important was the influence which his teaching and the practice of his pupils had on the development of the technique of the instrument. He enlarged the conventional range of the piano, and developed such techniques as the double trill, tremolos with crossing hands and glissandos. To this he added a cantabile style of playing derived from the example of Chopin, and in short made the piano the equal of the orchestra (Larousse 1974: 321).

Like a king he never took a cent from his pupils. At his classes, described by his American student Amy Fay (Schonberg 1966:156), the students would gather and restlessly wait, talking in whispers. Around four p.m. everybody would begin to murmur: *Der meister kommt!* and Liszt would grandly tell all to be seated. Fay continues that he would look over the pile of music on the piano and if a piece interested him the pianist who had prepared it would come forward at the royal summons and play. "Liszt listens and comments. Sometimes he impatiently sweeps the miserable wretch from the piano and plays the piece as it should be played, producing from the battered piano, music such as no one could form any idea of without hearing it" (Schonberg 1966:156).

"As a pianist Liszt was not content just to please – he wanted to startle, to frighten, and to move people deeply by his playing" (Methuen-Campbell 1981:34). Only one musician ever topped the impact Liszt made on audiences – that was Paganini, who turned out to be one of the decisive influences in his life. The other great influence was Chopin himself, from whom he learnt that the piano could be a means of delicate expression as well as a bravura instrument. More than any pianist who ever lived, Liszt combined technique, showmanship and poetry. In his youth he was also breathtakingly good-looking, and physically exceptionally strong. Even his contemporaries such as Mendelssohn, Moscheles, Clara Wieck (Schumann), Hallé and Schumann were overcome with awe.

All literature agrees that technical difficulties did not exist for Liszt. He was no theorist of technique and must have played without thinking twice about how he accomplished his effects.

It seems clear that he employed a weight technique, playing with loose shoulders and a fairly high position of hands and fingers. The important things for him were effect, sonority, excitement and *diablerie*, boldness of attack, orchestration on the piano (improvising on Beethoven symphonies) and the overall exploitation of the instrument. He was also notably the greatest bravura pianist of all time (bravura in the sense of transcendental technique).

As a teacher Liszt had no system or *méthode*. After 1845 he took only advanced pupils and did not concentrate on technique; he told them to “wash their dirty linen at home” (Schonberg 1966:171). When a pupil proved stupid he could be violent and cutting, at other times he would demonstrate profusely, or days could go by before he touched the piano. But his best pupils managed to come away with much from the man who had been kissed by Beethoven, whose great career virtually spanned the century.

2.1.3 Leschetitsky (1830-1915)

The teaching career of Theodor Leschetitsky has never been equalled. Born in Poland in 1830, he began teaching when he was fifteen, and continued until his death at the age of eighty-five. Methuen-Campbell (1981:58) writes that a list of Leschetitsky’s outstanding pupils reads like a roll call of the leading pianists of the first half of the twentieth century. Their names – Brailowski, Essipov, Friedman, Gabrilowitsch, Horszowski, Moiseiwitsch, Elly Ney, Paderewski, Schnabel and Sliwinsky – sufficiently indicate his success in producing first-class artists. A conservative estimate of 1,800 pupils passed through his hands.

Schonberg (1966:274-283) relates that the latter half of the nineteenth, as well as the first quarter of the twentieth century, was dominated by the pupils of Liszt and Leschetitsky. It was his student Ignace Paderewski (1860-1941) who put Leschetitsky securely on the map as a teacher. Nearly all of the pianists in this grandiose roster of Liszt (there is no Liszt list) and Leschetitsky pupils were romantic pianists (Schnabel and Horszowski being exceptions). The question at this time was: “is there a system of muscular mechanics that would lead to a relaxed and infallible production of tone and technique?” Deppe (see 2.2) thought so, and in the period after 1870 some of his theories were adopted by Leschetitsky. There was a complete revolution against the old fixed-hand position, and the new words were weight, relaxation and suppleness of the wrist. Leschetitsky said that he himself practised incessantly while he was developing his

technique, sometimes even on the table-top, striving to attain firm finger-tips and a light wrist (Gerig 1975:272).

Leschetitsky was a romantic who had little interest in music before Beethoven. Unlike Liszt he was a despot as a teacher.

He could be quixotic, generous, kind, choleric, sweet, sarcastic and explosive: a dangerous package! If a prospective student had less than what Leschetitsky considered a minimum of preparation (technically), the student would have to work a year or more with a *Vorbereiter*, an assistant who would prepare the pupil in Leschetitsky basics. The basics included a good deal of technical drill, a curved hand position and a relaxation of muscles. One of his students came to the conclusion that the secret of his success was authority. Because of the position of authority which the adulation of hundreds has enabled him to assume, he could insist on an amount of technical drudgery that would appall the average student (Schonberg 1966:278).

One of his students wrote that Leschetitsky would discuss the hand from every point of view; what this sort of hand could do and why another kind of hand should be held differently and should be required to do otherwise. That is why he often said that he had no method. Later in his life he said that “if I had a method, it would be based upon the mental delineation of a chord, the principle being that one should not strike a note or a chord without thinking of, and visualizing, or sometimes even saying, the next one.” He called it the ‘physiognomy’ of the hand (Gerig 1975:273). Like every good teacher, he studied the individuality of each pupil and taught him/her according to that individuality; it might almost be said that he had a different method for each pupil. (Already one can see the Leschetitsky terminology of forward thinking, hand position and individuality prefiguring the writings and method of the twentieth century analysts).

Arthur Shattuck contrasts Leschetitsky with Liszt (Schonberg 1966:279), who was primarily a coach and an inspirational force. Leschetitsky did not merely tell a pupil to do this or that, or suggest a sunset (like Liszt); he showed the student clearly how to produce the effects which the composition demanded. This marriage of basic knowledge and effective pedagogy again anticipates the more recent approaches to teaching. He discovered the student’s physical handicaps and found a remedy for them. He explained generously and specifically the art of obtaining a beautiful, singing tone, to produce a big tone without hardness, a *pianissimo* tone that would carry to the last row of the top gallery.

Paderewski said that Leschetitsky’s method was very simple: his pupils learnt to evoke a fine tone from the instrument and to make music and not noise, by using the principles of breadth,

softness of touch and precision in rhythm (Gerig 1975:274). For the rest, Paderewski said, every individual was treated according to the nature of his talent. Schnabel said of Leschetitsky's teaching:

it was a current which activated or released all the latent vitality in a student's nature. It was addressed to the imagination, to taste, and to personal responsibility. It was not a blueprint or a short cut to success. It did not give the student a prescription, but a task. What he arrived at was truthfulness of expression, and he would not tolerate any violation or deviation from what he felt to be true (Schonberg 1966:279).

About relaxation Leschetitsky taught his students to "devitalize" the muscles not called into play, again pre-empting twentieth century verbal articulation of ideas. His own motto was that with a very good teacher no printed method will be effective, and "only he is a good teacher who can practically demonstrate every possibility to his pupils" (Gerig 1975:275). He believed in freedom of delivery. As a student of Czerny, he had a direct link with Beethoven, and Czerny had taught him that Beethoven's piano music was not to be played with strictness. Pedantic, inelastic interpretations of Mozart or Beethoven drove him wild with fury. He liked strong hands and muscles, and all of his pupils were agreed that in his teaching he concentrated more on tone than on anything else (compare to what Clara Schumann said at 2.2.3). He believed that pianists with fat (fleshy) hands (like Anton Rubinstein) had the most beautiful tone, and that for brilliance and lightness, the thin, agile hands of Liszt were best. Schonberg (1966) believes that the secret of Leschetitsky's teaching was his ability to make his students hear themselves and the tone they produced.

Leschetitsky used to tell his pupils that when he was young, he heard the pianist Julius Schulhoff, who appeared in the public eye in about 1850 and had been an intimate of Chopin in Paris. He (Schulhoff) had opened up a new world of tonal beauty for him, and taught him that a pianist must be able to play a melodic line with the same expressiveness as that of the human voice. He said that if one could imagine and hear inside oneself that the melodic line was being sung, then the right component of the performance had been grasped. (Here the connection between technical method and the imagined end result is being predicated, anticipated and foreshadowed.)

If Leschetitsky's teaching inculcated anything into his pupils, it was an overall order in which musical expression was accorded priority over pianistic display (Methuen-Campbell 1981:71). He conveyed to his pupils some of Czerny's ideas, which he said had derived from Beethoven

himself. His ideas about the way Chopin should be played were formed in a close musical relationship with the composer's circle.

He repeated many times: "there is more rhythm between the notes than in the notes themselves" and also "concentrated thought is the basis of all, the brain must guide the fingers, not the fingers the brain" (Gerig 1975:274). (The notion that all beauty or all damage is contained in the silences between sounds is part and parcel of modern technique, which concentrates on the mental preparation of and for each sound while the previous one is in the ear.)

In 1902 Leschetitsky's assistant, Frau Malwine Brée, published a book named *The Groundwork of the Leschetitsky Method* (1902). She lists many of his teaching aphorisms which he used in his phenomenal success with his students. Some of them are:

"To make an effective *accelerando* you must glide into rapidity as steadily as a train increases its speed when steaming out of a station."

"Teach yourself to make a *rallentando* evenly by watching the drops of water cease as you turn off a tap."

"A player with an unbalanced rhythm reminds me of an intoxicated man who cannot walk straight."

"If you are going to play a scale, place your hand in readiness on the keyboard in the same position as you would if you were going to write a letter, or to take a pinch of snuff."

"If your wrists are weak, go and roll the grass in the garden."

"The bystander ought to know by the attitude of your hand what chord you are going to play *before* you play it."

If you want to develop strength and sensitiveness in the tips of your fingers, use them in every-day life. For instance, when you go out for a walk, hold your umbrella with the tips of your fingers instead of in the palm of your hand."

"Your fingers are like capering horses, spirited and willing, but ignorant of where to go without a guide. Put on your bridle and curb them in till they learn to obey you, or they will not serve you well."

"If you play wrong notes, either you do not know *where* the note is or *what* the note is."

For all their aptness these aphorisms are in the nature of useful imagery to stimulate the correct actions. However, they are but the beginnings of the much more clearly articulated analytical and demonstrable method of the late twentieth century. They nevertheless place Leschetitsky, who had the crowning and inestimable advantage of very talented and intuitive students, in the forefront of nineteenth century pedagogues who laid the foundations for the more thoughtfully focused ideas of his musical descendants.

To sum up: “Leschetitsky’s vital emphasis on tone and an intensely live musical expression surely established him as one of the finest inspirational piano-teachers ever” (Gerig 1975:285).

2.2 An overview of trends in piano technique after Chopin, Liszt and Leschetitsky

Kochevitsky (1967:14) states that at the beginning of the twentieth century there were three main trends in piano pedagogy. In the first trend the followers of the old finger-school (see Chapter 3 at 3.1.2), originally started by Clementi, Czerny, Hummel and others, saw some teachers trying to add something new, such as giving more freedom to the hand and arm and not raising fingers too high. The second trend in piano teaching was the anatomic physiological school busying themselves with weight and relaxation (originally started by Deppe, Matthay, Breithaupt and others), searching for the most natural, correct movement forms. The third trend is the psycho-technical school (Neuhaus, Godowsky, Schnabel and others), looking for the solution of pianistic problems (technique) in the realm of intellect and psychology, in other words, technical training from the “inside” not the “outside”.

Concerning the first of these schools “it is now realized that if Mozart was the first of the great pianists, Clementi was the first of the great virtuosos” (Schonberg 1966:54). Clementi’s *Gradus ad Parnassum* (see Appendix) originally consisted of a hundred studies covering every aspect of piano technique, and the modern art of piano playing rests on it. Not until the Chopin etudes was anything really significant added. By the time Clementi died, Liszt was startling the music world. Beethoven and Clara Schumann had great respect for Clementi, but Mozart said of him: “Clementi is a charlatan, like all Italians. What he really does well are his passages in thirds, but he sweated over them day and night in London. Apart from this he can do nothing, absolutely nothing; for he has not the slightest expression or taste, much less feeling” (Schonberg 1966:48). This already shows an attempt to separate mechanical technique (simple

agility/virtuosity) from interpretation (expression and musical touch) as subjects for separate scrutiny without disproving their inseparability and complementarity in artistic performance.

Another representative of the finger school was Carl Czerny (see Chapter 3.1.2) who was born in Vienna in 1791, the year that Mozart died. He became a student of Beethoven who said that he made the most extraordinary progress on the pianoforte, far beyond what might be expected of a boy at the age of fourteen, and that he considered him deserving of all possible assistance, also because of his astonishing memory. Schonberg (1966:95) states that

The full story of Czerny's place in the history of piano playing, through his pupils Liszt and Leschetitsky, remains to be told. Was the instruction of both those two great teachers a reflection of Czerny? If so, Czerny was the fountainhead of modern piano playing. And as he had studied with Beethoven, it seems reasonable to assume that Liszt and Leschetitsky were closer to the Beethoven way of playing than modern pianists.

Kullak described Czerny's methods as "practical empiricism", meaning that, instead of having preconceived notions about piano technique, as Hummel did, Czerny decided that in actual practice there could be no such thing as a method applicable to all, and that even fingerings had to be changed because hands differed in shape and size.

In the 1830s there were (within the old finger school) two distinct schools of piano playing: the German and the French; the Viennese tended to favour the French school, and the English the German. Great emphasis was laid on finger technique; however, keyboard technique was then still in its infancy compared with the heights later reached (in the first half of the nineteenth century) by Liszt and Tausig and their successors. In the first decade of the twentieth century piano methodology burst into its fullest bloom, the most influential works being Malwine Brée's exposition of the Leschetitsky method (1902), Breithaupt's *Natural Piano Technique* (1905) and Matthay's *The Act of Touch* (1903), which are representative of the second school.

Gerig (1975:393) writes:

The contribution which Tobias Matthay made to piano technique literature is a very significant one. We observe a keen musical mind at work, constantly stressing the importance of listening. Sensitive listening throughout is coupled with sensitivity in the touch. Matthay knew the physical sensation of fine piano playing. His technical thought, with its penetrating desire to get to the invisible conditions of good muscular coordination and relaxation, was an advance over any before him. Like Godowsky, he objected to the idea that there was a 'method of playing'; he admitted that there was a 'Matthay method

of teaching,' which implies that the true causes of all good and all bad playing are disclosed and made plain to everyone.

Apart from other twentieth century writers, Otto Ortmann's (1929) investigations of piano technique were much more objective than those of his predecessors such as Deppe, Reif, Breithaupt and Steinhausen. Ortmann, who was a trained musician but also a trained scientist, and who did individual work with anatomists and physiologists at hospitals and medical schools, limited himself in his book *The Physiological Mechanics of Piano Technique* to the laws of mechanics and the rules of physiology (muscular action), with only occasional excursions into the psychological field. He writes that if the separate investigation of the instrument's mechanics is quite possible, the separation of the physiological (activity of bone-muscle apparatus) from the psychological (neural and cortical activity) is hardly so. "The acquisition of pianistic movements is primarily a psychological process" (Kochevitsky 1967:15).

Heinrich Neuhaus (1973:82-6), the teacher of Richter and Gilels, and a representative of the third trend of pianists of the twentieth century, namely the psycho-technical school, firmly believes in Michelangelo's words: *la mano che ubbidisce al intelletto* (the hand which obeys the intellect). Furthermore he explains that when producing a sound on the piano, the energy of the hand (finger, forearm and whole arm) is transformed into the energy of the sound. The energy of the blow which the key receives is determined by the force (f) which we apply to the hand, and the height (h) to which the hand is raised before being lowered onto the key. The speed of the hand at the moment when it strikes the key (s) varies depending on the value of (f) and (h). It is precisely this figure (s) and the mass (m) of the body (finger, hand and arm) striking the key that determines the energy which acts on the key.

Neuhaus says that technique is all about the more clearly *what* is to be done, the more clearly it is *how* it should be done. In a performance there are three elements: the work performed (the music), the performer (pianist) and thirdly the instrument. The better a pianist knows these three components, the greater the guarantee that he/she will be a master of his/her art, and not an amateur. "The greater his ability to formulate his knowledge with precision in statements even remotely akin to mathematics, and then have the force of law, the more profound, sound and fruitful will his knowledge be" (Neuhaus 1973:87). He also mentions, in retrospect, that he much rather teaches by using metaphors, similes, comparisons and symbolism, than by trying to apply "metaphysics" to each and every practical action, and that "the mystery of art remains unfathomed, retaining all its force and scope, just as in life" (Neuhaus 1973:87).

Although Schnabel (a Leschetitsky product) did not live to know the more recent piano methodology works by Gát, Neuhaus and others, there are remarkable similarities between the views of Schnabel and Neuhaus. For example, Schnabel also firmly believed that “the complete awareness of the musical goal, intensely clear in every detail, provides every performer with the necessary means to get there” (Wolff 1972:173).

James Ching expresses exactly the same opinion as Schnabel and Neuhaus by saying: “it has long been my profound conviction that any really prolonged effort to achieve a certain end, nearly always implies not only the obvious emotional need to achieve that end, but also the inherent capacity to do so” (Ching 1950:iii). Ching reminds us also that Rachmaninoff declared that “without technique there is no interpretation.” Or in the words of Hans von Bülow: “there are three things necessary for the pianist: the first is technique, the second is *technique* and the third is TECHNIQUE” (Ching 1950:6). “In the ideal performance technical and artistic processes function as an apparently indivisible whole, but we must realize that problems of technique can and often must be considered separately from problems of interpretation, at least in the preparation for the ideal performance” (Ching 1950:6).

Otto Ortmann (1929) also stresses the idea that if one is going to think about technique at all, one must think about it objectively and boldly. He states that the fact remains that the units of the body with which we play the piano are essentially levers of the third class, and obey the laws of the lever; the muscles are complex engines that move the levers according to certain laws pertaining to their structure and their attachments to the skeletal parts; and the interaction of the bodily movements with the resistance of the piano keys proceeds according to strict mechanical laws. “The study of this data hardly implies a permanent abdication of our subjectivity; indeed, the study would be utterly pointless for the pianist unless it modified his subjectively intended behaviour” (Ortmann 1929: xviii). Here is more confirmation of the unbreakable link between objectivity and subjectivity, between technique and interpretation, in pianistically-aware artistic performance.

Neuhaus puts the previous statement into another perspective by saying that the considerations connected with concepts borrowed from physics and mechanics can help an intelligent person to understand the role and purpose of the elbow, upper arm and whole body better, with the ultimate purpose of good and correct piano playing, but furthermore he says that “as long as I can embody my ‘idea’ in my performance, it is a matter of utter indifference to me to know how

my elbow behaved at that time, what my good friends the supinators and pronators are doing, or whether my pancreas has a part in my work or not!" (Neuhaus 1973:98). This perhaps out-of-context, rather glib tongue-in-cheek comment seems to take little account of the fact that when starting from an understanding of felt muscular action and proceeding to its operation in a kind of automatic pilot routine, guided by the ever-alert ear and artistic sensibility, the interpretative process is facilitated. Thus it *does* matter how the 'elbow behaves' since if it didn't behave correctly, through painstaking guidance from an experienced and informed teacher, applied conscientiously, the musical result would be impaired. It seems uncharacteristic of the thoughtful Neuhaus, whose whole *modus operandi* took into account the control of the mind over muscular action, leading to musically and aurally satisfying sounds.

Arnold Schultz (1949) advances a possible solution in the preface to Ortmann (1929:xxii) by saying that it is a mistake to solve nervous co-ordination factors (of the central nervous system) in terms of mechanico-muscular terms. The talk about weight and relaxation (as in Matthey in the second trend of schools) must be received by the student as a set of psychological meanings. According to Schultz, nervous states cannot be interpreted in muscular terms. The question that might be asked here, is: is it not plausible to claim that nervous disorders, and their negative manifestations, can be diminished by confident muscular actions resulting from the mental control and concentration which produce them over a lengthy period of technical maturation?

Two other books worth mentioning from the second half of the twentieth century, are books by Max W. Camp and Seymour Fink. In the book *Developing Piano Performance: A Teaching Philosophy* (1981) by Camp, he emphasizes the importance of developing musical understanding and independent learning processes, rather than attempting to imitate models of performance. Like Abby Whiteside, Camp regards physical response to underlying rhythmic units and phrase groups as the driving force behind both musical and technical achievement (Uszler 1991:329). Camp eschews discussion of much that is traditional in piano study: the role of the component body units, hand position and finger action, as well as technical regimens such as practicing scales and arpeggios.

Fink offers a comprehensive approach to technique in his book *Mastering Piano Technique* (1993). He first defines the role of physical movement at the keyboard vis-à-vis musical and

expressive goals, then analyzes the various physical movements employed at the keyboard, and offers appropriate exercises designed to isolate and perfect each (Uszler 1991:331).

Since 1980 the medium of videotape has become significant in piano pedagogy. The teachings of Dorothy Taubman (see chapter 3) have been recorded on five videotapes and were issued by the Taubman Institute of Piano in 1995. The tapes document classes by Edna Golandsky with inserted segments of commentary and master classes by Taubman herself. Her approach to piano playing is derived from continual focusing on those physiological movements that place minimal stress on the body. An important concept in these presentations is that of forearm rotation. “Like Matthay, however, Taubman and Golandsky regard rotation as fundamental to all finger technique, not just to those passages, such as tremolos, in which its use is obvious” (Uszler 1991:335). Adjustments for different lengths of fingers in playing passage work are to be made through a series of small forward and backward motions of the hand. These are called “in and out” movements (see chapter 3).

Nowadays in the twenty-first century the books and video-tapes on piano playing provide a never-ending panorama, “but no overview can touch upon every volume of value or mention every worthwhile idea” (Uszler 1991:337).

2.3 Other pre-focus on technique and interpretation leading to contemporary views

In the discussion to follow, the writer uses opinions and statements from many different viewpoints and approaches (old and new) to technique and interpretation. In the different views/trends that are represented, the majority, by far, agree on the fact that technique is the means to an end, and inseparable from interpretation. In the following paragraphs the writer demonstrates that technique and interpretation are inextricably bound together, by creating links between the statements made, and technical matters listed in Chapter 3. The technical criteria in Chapter 3 and in the appendix are chosen eclectically from different spectra of the whole technical range, including the old finger school, the anatomic-physiological school, the psycho-technical school, combinations of these schools, and also the most recent Taubman piano-technical method.

2.3.1 About the understanding of music

The first material that was selected is about the understanding (intellectuality) of music, the performance thereof, and how these two aspects work together in a symbiotic relationship.

Music, to be consummated, must be performed, but before one can perform/interpret music, one has to understand it; art aims at being understood. “Interpretation in music is the refinement of performance to empower shared meanings about humanity and its world” (Heneghan 1994:1).

Victor Zuckerkandl, very much a formalist, believes that the meaning of music comes from within, not from without. On the matter of understanding music, a quotation from Victor Zuckerkandl’s book *Sound and Symbol* is enlightening:

To be sure, music is a miracle; what miracle wants of us is not that we, as thinking beings, shall capitulate to it, but rather that we shall do justice to it in our thinking. Precisely because music is a miracle, incomprehensible in the framework of the dominant mode of contemporary thinking, impossible to fit into the current conception of the world - a miracle not only in its greatest and most splendid, its most exceptional manifestations, but in its plain fundamentals, precisely because of all this it is our duty to think about it. The purpose is not a rationalization, a setting aside of the miraculous. Thought that is true to its subject does not annul miracles. It penetrates the fog around them; it brings them out of darkness into the light (Zuckerkandl 1956:6).

Also suggesting this cognitive (objective) aspect of interpretation, the writer uses a quotation of the Swabian poet, journalist and musician Christian Friedrich Schubart in *Ideen einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (published in Vienna in 1806) from the book by the two Badura-Skodas on the interpretation of Mozart:

One of the most important qualities in good musical performance is clarity. What one cannot understand cannot go to one’s heart. Thus one must give a sharp contour to every musical comma, indeed to every single note; practice detaching the notes, for nothing is clearer than staccato playing; never murmur when one ought to speak out; and in playing, be particularly diligent in attaining a rounded tone (Badura-Skoda and Badura-Skoda 1957:157).

Hand in hand with the previous follows the idea that “music in its greatest manifestations is created for contemplation, but beauty cannot be determined by intellect alone” (Heneghan 1994:7). Surely the following confirms the previous statement and also rings true: “Brahms was eminently the logician among musicians; a theme was useful to him only so far as it could

become the basis of a logically thought-out work of art. No composer wrote and thought habitually on a higher plane” (Erb 1934:115).

The quotation of Robert Louis Stevenson contained in Victor Booth’s *We Piano Teachers* also seems appropriate: “The motive and end of every art is the making of a web or pattern.” From this definition can be recognised the need to unravel the musical web (Booth 1971:60). The means by which the web is unraveled is interpretation, with an implied technical route.

As a basis for interpretation, fruitful analysis (unraveling the web) is the result of spontaneous reaction to some musical detail which puzzles the musician so that he/she investigates what happens here in particular. “True analysis is but a clarification and intensification of musical sensitivity, an additional push in the right direction as established by musical instinct” (Wolff 1972:19). (See ‘analysis’ in theoretical framework – Chapter 1).

On the subject of analysis, Walker (1966:230) writes provocatively:

Musical understanding is essentially intuitive, essentially non-conceptual. Whether or not we understand music has nothing whatever to do with how closely we analyse it. If it had, nobody would have any excuse for misunderstanding anything: all music is analysable. We understand despite, not because of, analysis. Music is something which is caught rather than taught; music either communicates or it does not. Where it does, analysis is unnecessary; where it does not, analysis is helpless. The role of analysis is to explain what, on an intuitive level, we already know to be true. It rationalises musical experience. It helps one to understand one’s musical understanding.

Alfred Brendel (1976:145) says that it is interesting to note that composers have rarely spoken at all about musical analysis. They have avoided the subject to an extent which seems revealing. One seems, on the other hand, to find a lot of comment about atmosphere, character, and poetic ideas. Brendel (1976:145) further states that performers who nourish poetic ideas are excused by the composers themselves, and that analysis should never be taken for the key to the sort of insight which enables a great performance. But such a statement surely demands a definition of what analysis really means. If analysis is, in the first place, sensitive to musical ideas and ideals, it need not be so ostracized or misinterpreted in its goal or its actions. “If we for instance know that there is an extremely important harmonic progression and we do not feel, while we are playing it, the exact amount of tension, the way atmosphere changes at this point, the balance of all the elements involved, then our knowledge will help us not at all” (Brendel 1976:145). Arnold Schoenberg said that formal analysis is often overrated because it shows

how something is done, not *what* is done. It appears from Schoenberg's claim that structural analysis is being discussed, whereas analysis can also mean the deconstructive breakdown of technical difficulties to facilitate the flow of purely (felt) musical ideas, an unchallengeable *modus operandi* for any interpretative result.

Stravinsky writes in his *Poetics of Music* (1993:179) that "a work of art cannot stand alone. Once he has completed his work, the creator necessarily feels the need to share his joy". The concept of sharing and the use of the emotive term *joy* are revealing in this quotation, both confirming the interdependence of composer and interpreter, the latter the first co-participant in a feelingful sharing process (Heneghan 2001:Doc 608, 5.3.04).

Furthermore, from the same source come the words:

We have stressed the importance of education in musical matters; this presupposes that the listener's musical instruction and education are sufficiently extensive that he may not only grasp the main features of the work but, to some degree the changing aspects of its unfolding, giving him the illusion of identifying himself with the creator. This is the meaning of Raphael's famous adage: *to understand is to equal*.

Roger Sessions (Heneghan 2001: Doc 608, 5.3.05), in *Performing Music*, also takes up the idea of the primacy of understanding – art aiming at being understood. Interpretation is a search for the meaning which pure description (simple execution) fails to yield. There is no such thing as a "definitive" performance of any work whatever. This is true even of performances by a composer him/herself. Blacking (1989:48) is in agreement with this view: "performances of written music reveal subtle differences between various interpretations to such an extent that people are often less interested in the original score than in the ways in which it is remade by the performers." These are strong statements in defining the interpretative act to which technique ministers as a necessary and indispensable means.

On the question of what an interpreter should try to do, Brendel (1976:25) answered that it is our moral duty to make music in as visionary, moving, mysterious, thoughtful, amusing, graceful a manner as we are able to; but this raises the question "what is it that will move, shatter, edify or amuse our contemporaries?" There results the paradox that a consummate musical interpretation in which time and occasion seem to have been transcended, in which the "shackles of historicism" appear to have been broken and thrown off, can only be achieved in concord with our own age. "The musical master-work is a power-house of multiple energies. To

release those that will strike the noblest, the most elemental resonance in modern man it is the task that raises the Urtext interpreter above the status of museum curator” (Brendel 1976:25).

Sergei Rachmaninoff, when asked about music analysis and understanding, made the following statement (Rink 2002:232):

The crucial shaping of any music at the point of climax, depending on the actual piece, may be at the end or in the middle, it may be loud or soft; but the performer must know how to approach it with absolute calculation, absolute precision, because if it slips by, then the whole construction crumbles, the piece becomes disjointed and scrappy and does not convey to the listener what must be conveyed.

Abram Chasins (1961:71) contributes the following interesting point with a fine ethical edge:

Strange to say, the greater the performer’s imaginative force, the stronger his personality, the more he must face the most troublesome of interpretative problems: in what way and to what degree is he privileged to bestow his hard-won individuality upon the music he plays? Although it is still being heatedly debated in certain metaphysical quarters, most of us recognize that the personality of the interpreter is an ineradicable fact, and therefore undebatable. The real problem – an eternal problem in art – remains one of proportion.

Krenek concurs, going further in comparing the potential limitlessness of possibilities in great music to the limitlessness of imagination in a great artist, when he says that although a musical score is infinitely more exact than a literary text, there is still a wide margin left for interpretation. He would even go so far as to maintain that the number of possibilities in which a work of art may be interpreted convincingly, is an indication of its greatness. “Only small and insignificant things have only one aspect, allowing only a single interpretation” (Heneghan 2001: Doc 608, 5.3.02).

Kirkpatrick’s viewpoint is that:

Melody, harmony and rhythm are constantly influencing and qualifying each other. This is why, within the limits of correct syntax and of inherent character, there are always several possible valid interpretations for any piece of music. No piece of music that has any life in it can be subjected to any one ‘definitive’ interpretation. Its life is dependent on the conflict, cooperation, and constantly fluid equilibrium of its component forces (Kirkpatrick 1949:xvii).

Heneghan (conversations 2007) states that there are limitations of notation in offering an unambiguous statement of technical and interpretative expectation, especially and even in

modern music where prescription is the norm. Correctness in following the printed sign (symbol) is only the beginning of interpretation, which implies finding the appropriate tone, shading, mood, character and historical background of a musical composition. The interpreter must also know how to use the mechanical (technical) means of expression in such a way as to interpret the work in the proper style. When one considers the pianist as the interpreter/instrumentalist, a list of possible mechanical means of expression would include such devices as loud and soft, fast and slow, accent, legato and staccato, phrasing including phrase-line and shape, part playing, balance between hands, and the use of pedals, all with technical connotations.

Ahrens and Atkinson (1973:84-7) state that each of these devices has its own effect upon the emotional tone. Accent and loud or fast playing will raise the emotional tone, while diminuendo or ritardando will do the opposite. Balance, use of the pedals, legato and staccato will all help to provide a multitude of varying effects, and will also help to arouse and maintain interest. The inseparability of technique from interpretation becomes axiomatic.

2.3.2 About the interfacing of technique and interpretation

Wolfgang Wagenhäuser makes the following statement about the interfacing between these two aspects: “technique is controlled by equality, but music interpretation is controlled inequality!” (Wagenhäuser interviews 2008), a fine point, since the latter can only result from the former. In his book *The Pianist's Problems* William Newman (1974:139) describes interpretation as “the sum of understanding, experience and talent.” Among the more advanced aspects of understanding is the understanding of form, and form includes whatever binds the music into a unified structure (also see the technical criteria in Chapter 3), whether it be tonality, rhythm, melody or a combination of the three. The interpretative factors that most help to illuminate form (structure) subjectively include dynamics, phrasing and articulation (as will be shown in Chapter 5).

Schnabel (Wolff 1972: 22) powerfully defined the musical bondage between interpretation (the spiritual) and technique (the physical) when he claimed that in moments of great intensity, the spiritual and physical aspects of making music can become so completely unified that it is no longer possible to tell where one stops and the other begins.

The mature performer works for those rare inspirations when his conception of a score becomes one with its physical realization in performance. What we work for is the

elimination of mental-physical gaps, by patient and disciplined training of all faculties, mental and physical, together. When there are gaps, the physical realization slips away from the mental image. Piano technique is the faculty to establish channels between the sound heard inwardly and its realization in all individualized subtlety, or, as one might say, channels between the ‘soul’ and ‘body’ of the interpretation of a score (Wolff 1972: 22).

Schnabel considered famous methods such as those of Deppe and Breithaupt as more dangerous than helpful, because they built their technical training on just one facet of body activity, such as spreading elbows, dropping wrists, and turning hands in and out depending on the direction of the arm. The authors rarely discussed technical problems such as proportion of sonorities in chord playing, differences between articulated fast scales and glissando-like scales, differences in trill and octave playing between right-hand and left-hand, etc. Schnabel always emphasized relaxation, especially of the neck and shoulders, and said that in all general physical piano training a concentration on relaxation was most essential. He said that tension was only in the forehead. This rather old-fashioned wisdom may have suffered in translation; it might be replaced by substituting ‘muscular coordination’ for ‘relaxation’ and ‘intensity’ for ‘tension’.

On this matter Neuhaus (1973:105) agrees with Schnabel and remembers it in the following way, edging more closely to, if not anticipating, more modern thinking:

I derived great benefit in my youth from watching my teacher Leopold Godowsky play. He was fond of playing at home his own most difficult arrangements of the Chopin études. It was a delight to watch those small hands that seemed chiselled out of marble and were incredibly beautiful, and see with what simplicity, lightness, ease, logic and wisdom they performed their super-acrobatic task. The main impression was that everything is terribly simple, beautiful and effortless. But turn your gaze from his hands to his face, and you see the incredible concentration. Then you see what this apparent lightness and ease costs; what enormous spiritual energy is required to create it. This is where real technique comes from.

One of Matthay’s students, Denise Lassimonne, felt that his true greatness lay in his teaching of the interpretation of music and not in the technical approach to piano playing, as one is led to believe. However, his concept of the term ‘technique’ takes on another meaning “in that it reveals to us the impossibility of separating technique from music, which union forms a perfect marriage never to be dissolved” (Gerig 1975:394). This is another unambiguously-stated stance of one of the twentieth century’s most distinguished teachers.

Along the same line of thought, Neuhaus (1973:140) also explains that in talking about artistic imagery and tone, he has constantly to refer to technical problems, for in art as in life, everything is one, “and all the aspects which we designate by different names are inextricably bound together.”

In the journey from the objectivity of technique to the subjectivity of interpretation and vice versa, Heneghan explains that we have to use intellect together with musicality. The subjective/objective duality is thus applicable to both technique, which has its subjective side, and to interpretation, which has its objective side. The making of a sound on the piano requires pressure downwards on the key (purely psycho-motoric, mechanical and objective), as opposed to making a loud or soft sound (which takes more control of key speed), and to making a quality sound (including the interpretative act of blending, texturizing, balancing, control of different qualities of sound in the hands separately and even within the hand in double note and part playing), which requires the ear and mind acting objectively and subjectively with Imagination, Communication and Knowledge (from the STICK mnemonic shown in the appendix); subjectivity thus intervenes.

The previous paragraph enhances the importance of the imagination aspect, which usually results in the thoughtline of interpretation = imagination = imitation = technique (Van der Westhuizen conversations 2008), which will be further taken up in Chapters 4 and 5.

The imagination that responds to music is personal and associative and logical, tinged with affect, tinged with bodily rhythm, tinged with dream, but concerned with a wealth of formulations for its wealth of wordless knowledge, its whole knowledge of emotional and organic experience, of vital impulse, balance, conflict, the ways of living and dying and feeling ... not communication but insight is the gift of music; in very naïve phrase, a knowledge of how feelings go (Heneghan 1998:2).

Walker (1966:253) asks if it is really necessary in this day and age to stress that, far from being exclusively conscious, artistic creation has deeply unconscious roots? What is unconscious is, by definition, dynamic and far-reaching in its creative consequences. In musical creation, brain-working and ‘sleep-walking’ (instinct), conscious effort and unconscious inspiration, go hand in hand. This, of course, points to the desirability of a technique so thoroughly normalized in the body that it becomes intuitive in its ability to respond to musical (interpretative) demands.

Chasins (1961:71) sums up the matter as follows: “Precise planning, conscious knowledge, and refined skills are all required to elevate muscular facility into technique, taste into judgement, perception into culture, and vision into conviction and communication.”

2.3.3 About technique and tone

Nadia Boulanger boldly states: “Music is technique. It is the only aspect of music we can control. One can only be free if the essential technique of one’s art has been completely mastered” (Boulanger in Gerig 1975:1). Neuhaus (1973: 82) relates how Alexander Blok described artistic technique in the shortest, most sensible way: “In order to create a work of art, one must know how to.” This ‘how-to’ or ‘know-how’ is the basis of all piano technique.

Ashkenazy (Mach 1981:18,19) feels on the matter of technique, though in a somewhat elitist view, that:

Of course some technique is developed from scratch; even a dummy can generate some kind of technique, but only a born pianist will have a technique that is almost his second nature. Even when I was just playing around on the piano, I thought that I had facility or dexterity at the keyboard. It’s a matter of natural coordination, an action of the brain and a reaction of the nerves to the brain impulses. You’re either born with this or you aren’t. But the body generally must be in good shape too, otherwise the impulses won’t move the arm, wrist, and finger muscles as rapidly or as strongly as they should be moved. I was instructed as a child to play with strong fingers to develop them to receive the commands of the brain.

Clara Schumann, who originally asked Brahms to write the Quintet version of Opus 34 after the two-piano version, was known to always, first and foremost, demand a beautiful tone (sound) from her pupils (Elder 1992:13). It is generally known that she (who was Brahms’s ideal example of an excellent pianist at that time) told her students: “Be truthful to the composer’s meaning. Remember the importance of tone, rhythm and phrasing. Speed is a menace” (Chasins1961:229). The writer shares this view that a beautiful sound (tone) is a *sine qua non* but that it is also definitely a technical consideration. Schumann said of Brahms: “His playing and his music belong together; such original tone-effects I do not remember ever to have heard” (Erb 1934:20). “Could this be because of his unique unconscious imitation of other sound worlds?” (Van der Westhuizen interviews 2008).

Schnabel conceived technique strictly as a means to a musical end; whatever was necessary to achieve the desired musical result became part of technique. This is surely axiomatic. He said

that musical masterpieces (such as the Brahms Quintet and Sonata) are distinguished from academic compositions by not adhering to the rules all the time and that it is impossible to anticipate and solve all the problems, including all the technical ones, arising in the interpretation of the great works in advance, by following technical school rules. Schnabel (as well as Chopin) used inflections of the voice (in speech and in singing) for the declamation of melodic passages. Of the various ways of articulating, it was mainly the melodic articulation, 'the eloquent declamation' which became important for his technical approach and the focal point of his practising. "He advocated letting the hand move in all three dimensions (see Chapter 3) and in all possible directions around the keyboard, wherever it would feel most natural, using naturally curved as well as naturally stretched fingers, depending on the technical and musical demands of the moment" (Wolff 1972:178). This is fully concordant with modern method.

Rosina Lhevinne claims that "the technique is the sound, and the sound is the interpretation." Technique has to be taught with interpretation in mind. Technique is the knowledge of 'how to'? But one has to always bear in mind that there are many ways of 'how to'. The more control you have over your technical facilities, the bigger your palette of tone colours will be.

The player can actually think moods and emotions into his arm and fingers. His mental attitude means a great deal in the quality of his playing. Just as the voice immediately reflects in its quality the emotions of great joy, pain, sorrow, scorn, meanness and horror, so do the fingers and arm in somewhat similar fashion respond to these emotions (and represent them in playing) for those who have mastered the technique of playing so that they are not concerned with details which should become automatic (Lhevinne1924:26).

Joan Last agrees that interpretation is more concerned with sounds than it is with notes; thus the first aim in giving a performance is to produce the kind of sound that the musical context demands. "In assessing quality and quantity of tone, one must always consider the note that has gone before and that which is to follow" (Last 1970:xi).

On the subject of technique being sometimes isolated as sole consideration, C.P.E. Bach (1974 edition) makes the statement in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* that keyboardists whose chief asset is mere technique are clearly at a disadvantage; a performer may have the most agile fingers, be competent at single and double trills, master the art of fingering, read skilfully at sight regardless of the key, play tenths, even twelfths, or runs, cross the hands in every conceivable manner, and excel in other related matters, and yet he or she may be something less than a clear, pleasing, or stirring keyboardist.

Brahms, himself possessed of a most remarkable technique, makes demands upon his pianists that frequently none but a virtuoso of the highest rank can satisfy. The left-hand particularly plays a much more important part with him than with most other composers. There are no easy Brahms piano pieces; none for dilettanti. He demands the best efforts of earnest musicians for adequate comprehension and interpretation of his works (Erb 1934:122). (It is the writer's view that comprehension represents objectivity, and interpretation represents subjectivity, respectively).

Alfred Cortot (1930:1) states that technique can be divided into a psychological factor from which arises taste, imagination, reasoning, the feeling for shading and tone (style), and into a physiological factor which is dexterity of the hands and fingers, absolute submission of the muscles and nerves to the material exigencies of execution. Aspects which come to mind regarding this physiological factor are agility, so-called finger 'strength' and independence, passing of the thumb in scalar passages, arpeggios, extensions, wrist-technique, chords, double-notes, octaves, power and beauty of sound, and many more (see Chapter 3). One can never have enough technique to be totally free from it. Rosinna Lhevinne (1924:39) says that, what cannot be done comfortably, will not sound beautiful. The aim must always be to make the fingers the servants of the mind, but never forgetting that the mind is the controlling factor, as it is in interpretation. The more the fingers become the servants of the mind, the more immediate the subconscious response, and the better the enjoyment of it (Booth 1971:46).

Josef Gát (1965:79) makes the following enlightening statement about technique, stressing key contact:

As there must be a close interrelation between musical imagination and physical motion, it is a prerequisite of good technique that the variations of the movements should exactly follow the modifications of the musical concept (see Chapter 5). To produce a stronger sound, the motion must be executed either with a larger mass or with a greater speed (see also Neuhaus's description at 2.2): in the same way, a shorter or longer tone requires a corresponding change in the movement. It is evident that the commands directing the complicated work of the muscles have to precede the movements. If we have resolved to hold a chord intensively throughout its full value, we have to prepare for movements which will produce a long tone and thus these movements will exactly execute everything to ensure a noise-free sound, thereby arousing the impression of a long note. The correct muscle-work will become proportionately more and more differentiated with the increase in intensity of the musical concept. The different tone volumes and colours of the tones of a melody require different muscle work, and as a melody must be imagined as continuous, the muscle activity too must be continuous.

The constant feeling of the keys as elongations of the fingers requires a constant active muscle work.

Relating to the above mentioned opinions, Rebecca Penneys (1992:17), renowned American performer and teacher, says that:

Liszt is said to have told his students that the hand starts at the shoulder, a wonderful image even if the anecdote is apocryphal. Although a finger is the connection between pianist and piano, it is the end and not the beginning of motion involving the rest of the body. A pianist playing forte uses the muscles of the upper arms, back and legs; playing triple forte adds body weight and the muscles of the lower torso. The vast majority of gradations in piano sound depend on an efficient operation of the arm supported by the back and lower limbs, and a pianist's expressive capabilities hinge on his precise knowledge and control of these physical operations. Like dance, playing combines motions of the entire body to express the emotions of music.

Booth expresses his views as follows: Freedom in technique means sympathetic action of finger, hand and arm. Certain terms are in constant use when discussing technique (touch): condition and movement; exertion and relaxation; momentary and continuous; action and reaction. It is necessary to think of these in pairs if their significance is to be understood. It is also important to know whether they are unseen and merely felt as a 'condition' or whether they are obvious as 'movements' (Booth 1971:48), and also see Chapter 3.

When a pianist has ultimate control over technique, everything will sound 'simple' and that is the main purpose of technique: to sound relaxed and in control of all aspects of piano playing and to make everything sound easy to do. Mozart, for example, was a child prodigy, a born pianist and composer for the piano, and therefore his piano works 'lie well' under the fingers. (See also the definition of pianism in Chapter 1.) "The hardest thing is to be simple" is a saying particularly applicable to Mozart's music. His melodic lines should 'flow like oil' and his 'con brio' passages should be played with well curved fingers, which is one way of aiding articulation. Lhevinne (1924:15) instructed her pupils in the following way: "the smaller the surface of the first joint of the finger touching the key, the harder and blunter the tone; the larger the surface, the more ringing and singing the tone. If you find a passage requiring a very brilliant, brittle tone you employ a small striking surface, using only the tips of the fingers".

These are technical instructions for the purpose of interpretation, with the correct sound image (interpretation) in mind. Applicable to Brahms, the writer would say that his melodic lines need ultimate control of the top part of the right-hand (fourth and fifth fingers), and his bravura

passages need the stamina and strength of a well-developed hand, forearm and upper arm (this is especially true of the left arm). Lhevinne (1924:35) expresses this as follows: “Brilliance is as important as ‘*bel canto*’ in piano playing. The left hand gives quality and character to playing. One general principle, however, is that of always striking key-bottom” (see also Chopin’s views on *bel canto* at 2.1.1).

William Newman (1984) contradicts the previous by saying that a “nice touch” is an illusion, that the renowned singing tone of Hofmann and others means only that one hears each tone of a melodic line sounding over the accompaniment and right into the next tone, especially each long-lasting tone. According to him there are five factors that influence the illusion of touch or tone production (which is always seen as a very important aspect of technique). First comes the degree of legato; secondly the use of the pedals which can affect the structure of the tone; thirdly the sense of direction imparted by intelligent phrasing, rhythmic grouping and harmonic inflections; the fourth factor is the negative one of any external noise that may be present; finally the primary factor that affects the actual quality of tone is its relative intensity, or volume. “Although a pianist cannot affect the tone by his manner of striking the key, he does affect it when he changes its intensity” (Newman 1984:119). Newman’s words are controversial and would have many challengers wishing to rewrite the thoughts to give a clearer image.

In contrast with the previous statement, Neuhaus explicitly states that, just as an actor can pronounce one word using twenty different varieties of feeling, a pianist with imagination can express a variety of shades of feeling in the repetitions of one single note, such as tenderness, daring, anger, Scriabin’s *estatico* and loneliness, emptiness and much more, by also imagining that that sound had a past and has a future (Neuhaus 1973:116).

In considering tone quality, Arnold Schultz (1949) was very conscious of the psychological reaction the listener undergoes. He says that he has no doubt that, measured by an objective instrument, the upper partials giving the tone its characteristic quality change only as the intensity changes, but that we react to a sound also with our nervous systems, which are quite different from objective instruments. Also different modes of nervous reaction cause us to hear different qualities of sound, and even by empathy the quality of sound that a given performer hears as he produces it (Gerig 1975:466).

Wolff (1972:21) explains how Schnabel once formulated this idea that the performer does not underline anything that the composer has already made obvious. He has to take care of whatever the composer left for him to take care of. The pianist must for example hold a top voice tune together when the rhythmic-harmonic structure underneath, as sometimes in Brahms, threatens to destroy the unity of the piece.

From the writer's viewpoint this underlines the dependence of interpretation on technique, because what Schnabel is pointing to here, is this very fact. The 'holding of a top voice' (knowing, in fact how to make a sound which is sustainable rather than relying on the physical/mechanical holding down of a note) so that it overcomes the threat from underlying rhythm and texture is a technical matter.

To sum up: for good interpretation (subjective) one needs a singing tone (often in the bass or in a middle part; crescendo and diminuendo capability (tonal control); power and delicacy; agility and fluency; legato lines; touch variation; independence of the hands; aural/technical skills in effective pedalling; contrapuntal skills; evenness of touch; virtuosity in leaps, octaves, chords, complex textures; tune and accompaniment in one hand; gesture and body language (see Chapter 3). All of these essential elements can be reduced to a technical approach (objective). Even Imagination and Knowledge must be applied through technique according to the STICK mnemonic as explained in the appendix (Heneghan interviews 2006).

2.3.4 About the ear and listening

For me the working out of a musical interpretation or the solving of a technical problem is inseparable from the necessary life-long process of training the ear. No ear is so dull that it cannot be trained; no ear is so sensitive that it cannot be taught or teach itself to hear more; no emotional capacities or sensory perceptions are so complete that they cannot be further developed. In every piece of worthwhile music there is always something that can still be discovered, always something that will have escaped its most experienced and most sensitive performer (Kirkpatrick 1949:vi).

The writer's view is that interpretation is very much about using the ear, as is technique, so the connection is again established.

The performer concentrates at every point on the phrase which is coming up and is to follow directly, in order that it may be heard and shaped in the vivid imagination of listening with the so-called inner ear. Simultaneously, however, the performer also concentrates on what he/she

has just played, checking especially sonorities. Thus the performer's inner ear hears everything twice: each little bit is mentally anticipated as well as checked out by later control. If all goes well these two mental perceptions are blended into one or, as Schnabel phrased it: "the conception materializes and the materialization redissolves into conception" (Wolff 1972:20).

Gerig (1975:467) underscores the above-mentioned facts by saying that artists who are as constantly sensitive to the endings of their tones as to their beginnings, who in passage work are as intent upon the evenness of the hammers' attack, form (for him) the limited aristocracy of pianism. Horowitz, Schnabel, Kapell, Hess, Giesecking and Glenn Gould are some of the names that come to his mind.

On the subject of training the ear, Heneghan explains that "the creativity characteristic of engagement with the art-symbol transmutes interpretation into vicarious composition and listening into subconscious interpretation, for proactive listening is a kind of vicarious performance" (Heneghan 1994:2). And performance has as one of its primary requirements a serviceable technique (see the STICK mnemonic in the appendix).

The use of the pianist's inner ear is further highlighted in this extract from Koornhof's (2001:5) article:

Musicians deal in excellence, communication and change, working with a richness of subjective experience unsurpassed in any other field of human endeavour. They make very fine distinctions, construct abstract complexities, generate metaphorical meanings, use their muscles in incredibly refined and controlled ways (technique) and infuse it all with a vast richness and diversity of emotion (interpretation).

Ahrens and Atkinson (1973:4) agree that beauty of execution will depend not only on technical facility but also on the urge of a sensitive musical feeling. It can readily be seen that feeling, or emotion (which is a pronounced degree of feeling), is present in all stages of musical experience: it is present in creation, performance and appreciation.

2.3.5 About practising

It seems strange to the layman that a master of the keyboard should be the slave of his instrument, but this is nevertheless a fact that is demonstrated again and again. Gerald Moore (1962: 50) remembers the working hours of his mentor, the great English pianist Solomon, and writes:

His working hours (and by working I mean intense mental concentration and physical effort that piano practising involves) would have struck terror into the heart of a manual worker. An inveterate sufferer of insomnia, finding himself at four in the morning unable to sleep, he would practise until his maid brought him a cup of tea which constituted his breakfast. And, of course, during the day he would practise eight or nine hours, rehearsals with orchestras and journeys permitting. Being a perfectionist his conscientiousness forbade him ever to slacken or take things easily.

Many pianists agree that the art of good practising could also be seen as technique. As William S. Newman (1974:116) describes it in his well-known book *The Pianist's Problems*, finger nervousness could be counteracted by practising “correct uses of the touch mechanisms, finding athletically graceful solutions to technical problems, and covering as many of the coming keys as possible in position technique (practising in clusters)”.

The writer's view is that in practising some new piece of music one first receives all the visual information, then it gets drilled into one's mind by repetition, and lastly it becomes automatic; this automatic phase can be divided into auto-technico and auto-interpretative phases. When sensation and response are secure and simultaneous, there will be the automatic progression from what is only technical skill to what is mature performance with interpretative felicities at many levels.

On the matter of the initial stages of practising, Ching (1950:315) states that the efficient process of acquiring proficiency in all motor skills is dependent (among other factors) on what might be described as relevantly selective insight plus foresight. (Neuhaus also expressed the same idea about a pianist's foresight.) Ching refers to McDougall's book *The Energies of Man* (1932), where he explained the matter thus:

Foresight is the necessary insight, the perceiving of relations, and the organisation of the whole procedure. We ourselves commonly achieve insight and solve a problem only when we are trying to solve it; when we have set the solution of the problem as our goal; when we have the goal in view or have foresight of the goal; the solution is the goal to which we look forward; and such looking forward, such desireful foresight of the goal and the attainment of it, governs or guides or steers the selective activity which picks out the relevant relations (Ching 1950:316).

Also on the matter of practising, Rosina and Josef Lhevinne say that a beautiful touch and a beautiful legato will not come by merely wishing for it; that it will not come by hours of inattentive playing at the keyboard and that it is very largely a matter of developing the tonal sense and aesthetic ideals, and mixing them with hours of practice. “Try practicing for beauty as well as

practicing for technique. Technique is worthless in your playing if it means nothing more to you than making machines of your hands”. But Josef also warns that to arrive at the “end”, namely Beauty (see 2.4), the “means” are needed. “You must travel just so many scale miles and arpeggio miles and octave miles before you arrive at the musical dreamland of interesting execution and interpretation” (Lhevinne 1924:44). “This is an unambiguous case for technique-acquisition as the prelude to successful interpretation, as much as it stresses its ubiquity and indispensability in the ongoing process of interpretation at all levels including, of course, its ultimate efflorescence on the concert platform” (Heneghan conversations 2007).

2.3.6 Other conclusive facts

Another natural way to explain the technique/tone matter is to say that when the visual, kinaesthetic, tactile and auditory senses are all aligned to optimal usability, the pianist’s technique will be a vehicle for satisfactory or even transcendental interpretation (Ahrens and Atkinson 1973:4). Ching (1950:7) says that a useful practical definition of technique can be expressed as the ability to play the right notes in the right time, at the right tempo, with the right tonal values and with the right *rubato* effects, in the most efficient ways in which the pianist can do it. The whole aim and purpose of piano technique is to produce that effect called ‘Art’. Abby Whiteside (1955) felt that the aural image of the music and a fundamental rhythm should completely control and define one’s physical technique at the piano and also the musical elements of a fine interpretation. She firmly believed that the music student must begin by playing by ear, obviously learning to read, but being an aural learner rather than a visual learner. She writes:

Observe the ease and accuracy of pupils who have learnt to play by ear. Their skill is never attained by those who learnt the notes first and then built up a coordination that is dependent on the eye. Notes are simply symbols for sounds. The pupil who has learnt music by the way it sounds, hears the tone when he looks at the symbol. The movement that makes this imagined tone audible is directed by his ear. They are as fluid, as efficient, as co-ordinated as his movements when playing without notes (Gerig 1975:472).

In the writer’s opinion technique merges naturally with interpretation when the physical fact of playing can metamorphose into, and be applied to any and all phrases in the music. On the interpretation of aspects of phrasing, Booth (1971:69) says: “That which gives distinctive character to an artist’s interpretation of familiar music is his phrasing of it, and what the artist perceives are perpetually varying and minute differences of tonal force and speed.” For

example: a special cantabile touch (which is an objectively-situated technical concern) can transform a simple melody into something transcendental; passages of difficult octaves in fast-moving sixteenth notes can simulate undulating waves of sound; double forte chordal work can resemble a full orchestra, and the softest progression in major double thirds in the second movement of the Brahms Quintet (see Chapter 5) can suggest a lullaby of superlative beauty; all when the relevant technical training preceded the immediate challenge.

There exists also the well-known, many-times-tested truth that the study of polyphony (and polyphonic listening) is not only the best method of developing the spiritual qualities of the pianist, but also the purely instrumental, technical qualities, “since nothing can teach cantabile playing on the piano as thoroughly as the multi-part texture of a slow polyphonic work” (Neuhaus 1973:136).

On the technical matter of fluency and high speeds, Ching (1950: 310) suggests the method of thinking in groups of notes, of thinking in terms of “chains” of physiological processes instead of in terms of separated isolated bodily actions. This is the most important of all the psychological factors involved in speed and fluency. Ching explains, with impressive and pertinent eloquence, that the last stage in the learning process is the stage which is concerned with the solution of interpretative problems.

The subtleties of interpretation, those small inflections of tone and time which correspond to the inflections of the voice in spontaneous speech, can result only from the direct uninhibited outflow of the unconscious artistic self. Even if the personality of the pianist is sufficiently uninhibited to allow the full and free expression of his unconscious artistic impulses, these can be expressed through the instrument only if the technical processes necessary for the playing of any particular piece, are sufficiently automatic or reflex to enable the artistic impulses to come to the surface as it were. This stage in the learning processes consists in part of ‘overlearning’ the technique, in eliminating conscious processes altogether, and in this, giving to the unconscious the only conditions whereby it can reveal any of its deep and most mysterious secrets (Ching 1950:312).

The mystery of music performance correlates directly to facts mentioned in Timothy Gallwey’s book *The Inner Game of Tennis*, where he explains that self one (the teller) and self two (the doer) are two separate identities. Self two, which includes the unconscious mind and nervous system, hears everything, never forgets anything, and is anything but stupid. In performance of music, as in tennis, self one has to trust self two because the unconscious, automatic self is extremely competent. Self one has to allow relaxation, because relaxation happens only when

allowed, never as a result of “trying” or “making.” When a player experiences what it means to “let go” and allow self to play the game, not only do the shots tend to gain accuracy and power, but he/she feels an exhilarating sense of relaxation even during rapid movements (Gallwey 1975:85).

Also in relation to what Ching previously said about the secrets of music, Ernst Bacon points out in his book *Notes on the Piano* (1963) that music is full of secrets and that he does not in his writings divulge secrets, but rather talks about his working habits, listening habits and playing habits; he emphasizes that pianists are, in a sense, dancers at the keyboard and must exhibit grace in all their movements. There is no object in attempting a full equalization of the fingers in their innate strength. The illusion, if not indeed the reality of equalization, is achieved by the careful, technically acquired and aurally guided, process of balancing sounds; if this is a *sine qua non* of interpretation then technique is its agent.

From the beginning the hand should study how to achieve a balance between its members. It must move enough to help the fingers, yet not so much as to impair their close tactility. The kind and degree of movement is determined, apart from the hand’s accommodation, by the music – its tempo, its dynamics and its phrasings. “By and large, the hand and the arm come into use in proportion, as the musical pattern is opened and extended. It is the limp hand that feels its way best into the keyboard, extends and retracts most easily, tries the least, plays the softest, leaps the highest, looks the best, maintains a silent orientation with the least watching, and is capable of instantaneous resort to power” (Gerig 1975:480). It is assumed here that by the ‘limp hand’ is meant a hand which is so coordinated that it is not the visible or invisible transmitter of dual muscular tensions between the fingers and/or the arm.

Abby Whiteside in *Indispensables of Piano Playing* (1955) shares the idea of a pianist having the grace of a dancer. She was a musician and student of anatomy and body mechanics and observed carefully the graceful, skilled movements of athletes in many fields: dancers, jugglers, classical pianists, orchestra players, conductors and jazz pianists. She firmly believed that a vital, all-encompassing rhythm is the basic coordinating factor involved in building an effective technique. “This rhythm must be the basis for musical continuity and beauty of interpretation. Such a rhythm will also express itself in physical continuity of movement and flow” (Gerig 1975:470).

The final aim expressed in the majority of literature is always the close integration of technical development with the highest ideals of musical interpretation and performance, listening appreciatively and performing artistically. In a certain sense listening (a cognitive act) is also technique.

2.4 Current views

Robert Weirich (2011a:6-7) writes about the eye-catching headline of an article by the chief *Times* music critic Anthony Tommasini, in the New York Times, namely: *Virtuosos becoming a dime a dozen*, stating that an extraordinary number of young pianists today can seemingly play anything with absolute ease. “The knuckle-busters of yore like Gaspard de la Nuit or Petruschka are child’s play for them, and what was once extremely rare, jaw-dropping technical excellence is now relatively common” (Weirich 2011a). Tommasini (New York Times, Aug. 2011) cites a story in this article about Jerome Lowenthal (a longtime Juilliard faculty member) being asked if the third Rachmaninoff concerto played in the movie *Shine* (1996) was as formidably difficult as the movie suggests. Lowenthal answered that he had two answers: “one was that this piece is terribly hard, and two was that all his sixteen-year-old students were playing it.”

Weirich (2011a) comments that with so many pianists playing so well, it becomes more and more difficult to dazzle. “Superb technique has its limits--like the speed of light, one can only go so fast. When most pianists reach that limit, what then?” Weirich reminds one, though, that “there have always been musicians for whom virtuosity per se means little; these are the artists who spend their years plumbing the depths of literature that (as Schnabel said) is better than it can be performed”.

American pianist Leon Fleisher says (after he had a three-hour-lesson with Schnabel on three lines of Beethoven), that he was transported out of himself by the interpretational genius of the man and that “great artists achieve through concentration, discipline and inspiration what many of the younger generation today seek to achieve through chemicals!” (Uszler 1991:372).

Tommasini (2011) states that as opposed to pianists who have the technique to play anything, pianists such as Schnabel have all the technique they need to play the music which matters to them. Weirich further comments that virtuosos were frowned upon long before Schnabel’s

heyday and that many virtuosos are constantly tempted to indulge in an undue exhibition of their wonderful technique, but that the greatest artists usually object to having it coupled to their names. Here one sees how technique can overshoot itself and its function, becoming an end in itself, at the risk of damaging the artistic result.

Weirich (2011a) reminds the reader that Liszt was the consummate showman, but also considered *the* Beethoven pianist of his age, and he poses the question why these two tracks are seen as mutually exclusive? He writes that Liszt's *études d'exécution transcendante* refer to etudes that transcend their execution, and to play them successfully, one's technique must be so complete that the experience of the music is the prime concern, not the playing of the notes. He concludes with the fact that Liszt himself said: "technique should create itself out of spirit, not out of mechanics" (Weirich 2011a:7).

Tommasini's explanation (2011) is that the overall level of technical proficiency in instrumental playing, especially on the piano, has increased steadily over time, and that many piano teachers, critics and commentators have noted the phenomenon, which is not unlike what happens in sports. What long-term effect this trend will have on the field is not clear. Because so many pianists are so good, many concertgoers have simply come to expect that any soloist playing the Tchaikovsky First Concerto with the New York Philharmonic will be a phenomenal technician.

Tommasini continues that one reason that pianists are getting technically stronger is that as in sports, teachers and students are just learning to practise the craft better, becoming better conditioned and getting better results. Another reason is that pianists are rising to the challenges of new music that pushes boundaries. This phenomenon should be seen in historical context. The first several decades of the 20th century are considered a golden era by many piano "buffs", a time when artistic imagination and musical richness were valued more than technical perfection. But there were certainly pianists during that period who had exquisite, impressive technique, like Josef Lhevinne and Rachmaninoff himself, and "white-hot" virtuosos like the young Vladimir Horowitz who 'wowed' the public. However, Tommasini warns that there is a danger in pursuing perfection. Critics found that many of these young pianists had 'competition chops' but not much else to offer. But more recently some of the younger pianists have not been only "cookie-cutter" virtuosos. Technical excellence is such a given that these

artists can cultivate real personality, style and flair: artists like the Ukrainian pianist Alexander Romanovsky, whose 2009 recording of Rachmaninoff's *Études-Tableaux* for Decca is wondrously beautiful, or the highly imaginative Polish-Hungarian pianist Piotr Anderszewski, an exceptional Bach interpreter, come to mind.

In an interview, by Mark Ainley, with the Hungarian pianist Livia Rév (2011:16-17) she agrees that the younger generation plays Stravinsky and Prokofiev and all the pieces that are difficult so well, but when they get to the "simple" or "easy" music like Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms, there is very little depth. She also states that pianists now play so well, quickly, softly, loudly, all one could hope for, but they are often not making music. They are not free to express themselves, or they have nothing to say; "all is well done except for the music." Madame Rév feels that all these big international competitions reduce the musical plane to what one can measure: force and speed. The talent and all the rest one cannot measure, "musical expression, inspiration – we can't learn it, we can't grade it; and then there are juries who are generally made up of former competition winners. I am very proud that I never entered a competition – and now I wonder whether I would have won if I had."

Tommasini further agrees with Weirich that during every era of the piano there were players who were superb artists with more on their minds than dazzling virtuosity and that you might divide pianists into two basic groups: those who have the technique to play anything and those who have all the technique they need to play the music that is meaningful to them. The group of play-anything pianists, of which Mr. Lang is a leader, becomes ever larger, and this list goes on: "Martha Argerich can be a wild woman at the piano, but who cares? She has stupefying technique and arresting musical ideas. I would add Krystian Zimerman, Marc-André Hamelin and probably Jean-Yves Thibaudet to this roster. There are others, both older and younger pianists". Tommasini states further that lovers of the piano can disagree about the musical approaches of these tremendous artists, but the fact that that they are all active right now suggests that a new level of conquering the piano has been reached. With pianists getting better and better, so many are so good that, paradoxically, one is less impressed by virtuosity. (Compare this with what Leschetitsky said about "too much" technique at 2.1.3.)

Antonio Pompa-Baldi (conversations 2012) strongly disagrees with the opinions expressed on almost every "new" pianist named in the Tommasini article. He thinks that the biggest problem today is that this horde of pianists "who can play anything" express very little. The fact is that

even the better critics (the good ones have all passed away, and the new are appallingly incompetent by comparison) fail to understand the difference between great mechanics and great technique.

Great mechanics give you speed, strength, precision and coordination. A machine can easily and infallibly achieve the same. Great technique includes tone-production, colours, imagination, pedalling, all translating into sound. Sound is the essence of music and the vehicle of expression. The great pianists are others. Mark-Andre Hamelin, Krystian Zimerman, Aldo Ciccolini, and luckily several others (but no young ones that I know of), these artists all make you forget of what absolutely stunning mechanical abilities they have, because they grip your heart, soul, and brain with the musical concept they want to transmit, with the inner energy and charisma they emanate. Charisma isn't the Lang Lang clown act. It isn't the miniskirts of Wuja Yang or the multiple changes of dresses by some other female pianists who show more and more cleavage.

Pompa-Baldi continues that technique and interpretation cannot be anything else but one and the same: the artist looks at the score, the music in his/her head generates both intellectual and emotional responses, a concept, an idea forms, then they just express it through sound. It does not matter what the intricacies are. The goal is clear, to reach the interpretation that most clearly conveys that concept and those emotions. The rest is but a means to an end. This is just the opposite of "new" pianists, at least 99% of them. New generations are proficient, but they are killing music, because people accept that empty show of exceptional typewriting to be the standard. The musical and artistic ignorance, or absence of artistic sensitivity, of many even among the industry leaders, the "deciders", the people who are Executive Directors of the best orchestras, or Artistic Directors of the biggest concert series, makes them also easily and completely fooled by what publicists tell them. "I am trying to do my extremely small part in trying to bring back the idea that piano playing is an art, not a skill. I truly miss some of Richter's "sloppy" performances where I could easily be brought to tears or jolted upwards in an absolute state of feverish excitement" (Pompa-Baldi 2012).

Weirich (2011b:6) agrees with Pompa-Baldi on the idea of sound being the essence of everything. He talks about music being the most powerful language ever devised, and verbalizes his guess about the influence of music as follows: "The language of music has the power to change us forever; it has something to do with the fact that music is sound, and sound involves vibrations. Quantum physics tells us that everything vibrates, even solid matter. Could the nature of musical sounds, organized by composers of extraordinary sensitivity, somehow alter our own vibrating consciousness?"

Scott McBride Smith (2011:48-49) also addresses the issue of sound in an interview with Adele Marcus, master teacher, and sums up her terms in practical pianism as follows: “I think mainly in terms of sound – sound as an expression of energy and projection, and also as a delineator of form.” Smith explains that, as one of her pupils, she was always interested in her students’ emotional response to the printed page, and that she taught them to reach out into the hall with their sound, to draw the audience to them with their own love of the music.

Lois Emery Nielson (2010:23-27), another eminent American piano teacher, writes about “Technique and Musicality: the indispensable and eloquent duo”. She agrees with Pompa-Baldi’s views about the younger generation and asks all music teachers if they are searching for beauty or mere precision, and if they are teachers distinguishing between mere technical achievement and beautiful artistry. She stresses the fact that sensitive pianism nurtures our human demand for beauty, poetry, reason and eloquence.

2.5 The “unexplainable” factor

The purpose of this study was not just to demonstrate the link between technique and interpretation (shown over and over again in the quotations in this chapter, coming as they do from the most distinguished composers, performers and teachers of classical music – the irreducible provenance, the architects, the executives of the process *par excellence*, whose views are so authoritative as scarcely to admit of challenge). It is a contention that has been explored in numerous writings and generally accepted in the musical world. It is rather to demonstrate how technique influences/decides interpretation in the piano music of Brahms, and more specifically in the Piano Quintet Opus 34. What has been seen is that, although the truism that technique equates to interpretation is applicable to the music of most piano composers, it is arguably paradigmatically present in Brahms’s piano writing, where interpretation and technique are, indeed, so intimately and uniquely linked that a performance lacking the one or the other would be unimaginable. The Piano Quintet is an ineffably beautiful example of this linkage. It is only natural to assume that the way Brahms wrote was the way that was comfortable for his technique (his hands) and developed pianistic skills, some of them personal, but these latter were not easily transferable to others without concentrated application and adjustment of traditional approaches. He employed certain technical devices to express his own personal aesthetics and intentions, which are daunting for pianists in general.

What is unique of Brahms's piano writing is its ambiguity, spiritual dimension and ethereal quality. "It does not stand too much interference from the performer" (Dowis conversations, 2011). It is a perfect example of "written out" interpretation, in other words, the written music unquestionably becomes (manifests itself into) the interpretation.

Interpretation in music is the refinement of performance to empower shared meanings about humanity and its world. Interpretation, typically in a western art music sense, is the pivotal enabling act which allows the roles of composer, performer and listener to coalesce, mediated by the work itself, into the indivisible relationship which is indispensable to any musical experience. The creativity characteristic of engagement with the art-symbol transmutes interpretation and vicarious composition and listening into subconscious interpretation, for proactive listening is, after all, a kind of vicarious performance (Heneghan 1994:2).

Technical devices typical of Brahms's writing greatly determine the unique aesthetics (sound) of the compositions. Considering that Brahms "wrote out" his interpretations, the music itself becomes the interpretation, as opposed to the performer solely shaping/deciding the interpretation. Thus the written music "talks", not only through the harmonic, melodic and other structural aspects of the composition, but in the way the keyboard is explored (i.e. technique) which becomes, in essence, the interpretation in itself, or, at least, a large part of it.

The next three examples of the above aspect are:

How Brahms uses the floating arm for ethereal unarticulated singing sounds, as in the beginning of the Trio in B major, Opus 8.

Example 2.5.1: Trio, Opuses 8, main theme

Johannes Brahms, Op. 8 Neue Ausgabe
(Veröffentlicht 1891)

Allegro con brio

How in the d minor concerto Opus 15, third movement, the sounds have to be rather cold, sober and Germanic (as in Beethoven), and well articulated.

Example 2.5.2: Concerto No 1 in d minor, third movement

How for big chords the full arm is used, and not the hands alone. In comparing the opening of the second piano concerto with the previous example, these different sounding chords are physically produced differently, and in this way the technique is equal to the interpretation.

Example 2.5.3: B flat major Concerto, opening

Further demonstration of this also appears in an interview with Santiago Rodriguez by Dean Elder (1978a(4):10-14) where he describes the opening of Stravinsky's *Petrouschka* in the following way:

I have worked tremendously on the opening five-note chords that go up and down the keyboard. This opening must sound technically brilliant and at the same time like a Russian dance. To begin close to the keyboard for me is committing suicide. Coming down into the keyboard with an armstroke produces a better sound, creates an immediate beginning to the dance and is great fun to watch. Then, too, if you play these opening chords close to the keys, the accents won't be there. By beginning above the keys the accents come out wonderfully. This beginning shows something essential in real music making: you have to take chances.

Example 2.5.4: Stravinsky, *Petrouschka* Suite, opening



Igor Stravinsky
1911-1921

Allegro giusto ♩ = 116

Piano.

Another angle to the previous examples is found in an interview with the Hungarian pianist Tamas Vásary (Elder 1978b(5):12-17), and represents what this study is not trying to deal with, namely the emotional, feelingful, spiritual side of music.

When asked what his approach to interpretation is, Vásary answered:

For me music is like a poem; I must feel an emotional logic in the music like the logic you feel in a dream. For me this emotional content is the essential quality. When I hear a concert by a great interpreter, I feel he is telling me a story. All these moods and emotions are going through a work, and the artist's difficult role is to sense this imaginative quality and to communicate it. What is important is to have a conviction in your interpretation (Elder 1978a:13-14).

He continues: "What interests me more and more as a listener and as a performer is finding the spiritual message. As a performer I view a work as a sort of spiritual medium through which to give the message of the composer to the public."


Vásary explains that there are big declamations, gestures and huge jumps in the Brahms B flat Concerto and to be sure of not hitting a wrong note, you will put your hand safely on the right place: so the notes will be right, but not the gesture (technique). And the gesture produces the right sound. He says that he prefers those artists who, for the sake of the music's character, are willing to take risks.

When asked about the spiritual side of the Schubert Piano Sonata in G Major (described as the most beautiful composition on earth) Vásary said: "I think that the first movement starts like a spiritual devotion. You hardly touch the keyboard. You put this first chord down and then without resting you feel in your soul you are floating on to the next chord" (Elder 1978b:14).

Example 2.5.5: Schubert G Major Sonata Opus 78, first movement

Fantaisie
Molto moderato e cantabile

Op. 78.



He continued:

Starting with these long chords is like being in church or out in nature, just looking at something, at the beauty itself. It is a simple G Major chord, yet something is coming out of it. Here I become mystical about music. Nothing happened before this chord and after two bars nothing much has happened but this chord. And yet something miraculous is present. I can try to analyse what it is, but my analysis would be only the impression I get from the music and nothing I can prove to be true.

In relation to the previous statements, the writer found that they are in alignment with the following views:

Art is not characterized only by considerations of means and end, by a preconceived plan and the exercise of skill or routine in its creation; these things may be necessary and present in art but they are not sufficient. The definition of art in an aesthetic sense is very much influenced by the underlying reason for its creation. The stimulation of

emotion, although it may be incidental to aesthetic experience, is insufficient to constitute art if done for its own sake (Heneghan 2001: MEND, doc 608, 2.8.03).

There is confusion, though, about the relationship between art, beauty and pleasure, all being loosely subsumed under the rubric of aesthetics.

Aesthetics is most usually considered to be a study of response to things perceived, which demands an extreme refinement of sensibility in the subject, playing down raw emotion and elevating the interplay of sensation, imagination, recollection and reasoning as the more stable and reliable components of feeling, leading to the personal and collective identification of beauty (Heneghan 1994:3).

On this subject Kant claims that feeling is a necessary criterion of the judgement of beauty, as beauty is a criterion of art (Heneghan 1994:8). Rink (2002:226) puts this point at its simplest but also at its most profound, saying that feeling is an amalgam of being and doing, of emotion and intelligence, of response and control, of empathy and command.

R G Collingwood (1958:41) says that the craft of the process is necessary but is merely there to serve the art proper: “there is in art proper a distinction resembling that between means and end, but not identical with it; something to do with emotion, with a resemblance to arousing it, but which is not arousing it; something to do with making things, but not by skill”.

In the final analysis there is an additional quality in great interpretation which is as real as it is unmissable. It is obvious from the consulted writings of philosophers and aestheticians that this elusive quality defies definition; it is undoubtedly related to human feeling, that prime requisite for art to exist (Heneghan 1994:14).

Another opinion on this is given by Edwin Fischer (1951:22), a much admired twentieth century musician, seeks to define the subtle quality of communication in music by suggesting that the interpretative artist is only the “mediator between the Divine, the Eternal and Man”.

Finally, in Tamas Vásary's words (Elder 1978b:14):

There is a spiritual side of music, for me the most valuable, which is unexplainable. If you can explain something it becomes more and more a matter of science. But music and art have their right to live because they can offer something extra, something more than science or anything else. Music can be a medium to leave this earth, to reach a state of mind and of spirit in which you are a much more refined person with almost half a leg in heaven. The greatest music is that which is able to help us leave the suffering of this material plane, to find a sublimated world which you can call heaven, an exalted state of mind. The Schubert G major Sonata (see Example 2.4.5) is one of those mediums which enable us to communicate with this other world.

2.6 Epilogue

Having given the explanations of the terms technique, interpretation and pianism in Chapter 1, the conceptual joining of these three factors might be explained as follows: technique (objective craft) and interpretation (subjective art) together, in the case of music for piano, can be collectively presented as pianism, and this research is about technique and interpretation in Brahmsian pianism. After analysing the thoughtful, elucidative writings/sayings of celebrated teachers in the literature survey above, the writer endeavoured to find answers to the following relevant questions in the course of Chapter 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The questions asked below correspond with, and are expansions of, the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

2.5.1 What are the most eclectic and authoritative statements to which 21st century teachers and students have recourse? (corresponding with Chapter 2).

2.5.2 Is there a system that lays this out? Can the composite technique (basic plus Brahmsian) be logically laid out, and under what headings, aspects, generic principles? (corresponding with Chapter 3).

2.5.3 Is there a Brahmsian technique? Is there a difference between 'standard' technique and Brahmsian technique? What gives Brahms's piano music (and technique) the heroic character it demands and evinces in, for example, the Piano Concerti, the Paganini Variations, and, most particularly in the chamber music, of which Opus 34 might lay claim to being the most perfect and heroic piece of chamber music in existence (Dvořák, Franck, Schumann and Shostakovich Quintets arguably not having the same galaxy of pianistic virtues)? (corresponding with Chapter 4).

2.5.4 May technique and pianism be considered as a static unchanging corpus of knowledge? – to which the answer is a definite no (corresponding with Chapter 5).

2.5.5 What is the relationship between art (subjective consciousness) and craft (objective technique), and what is the necessary craft that empowers/enables the art of interpretation? (corresponding with Chapter 5).

2.5.6 If this is such a vast and comprehensive field of study, cannot technique and pianism, if treated subjectively, eventually replace or merge with the idea of interpretation, since they are together *sui generis* a unique combination and have no separate existence or other form? (corresponding with Chapter 6).

In the next chapter the writer indicates how Brahmsian technical aspects correlate with other generic aspects of technique, in order to find criteria against which Brahmsian techniques can be measured/mirrored.

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Chapter 3

The generic technical criteria

Introduction

The question that follows after the previous is: can the objectivity of traditional technical method, as dealt with in Chapter 2, be defined in a comprehensive matrix? In anticipation of the analysis of the Brahms technical prototypes, which follows in Chapter 4, the writer wishes to compare these aspects of technique with a generic set of criteria, to show which are, in general, the most commonly used prototypes. The generic criteria are compiled from the writings of nine well-known musicians/authors associated with piano pedagogy, and are chronologically well spread (to link, but more systematically, with those suggested in the course of Chapter 2). The writer then seeks to classify the prototypes in three kinds of movement, into which all piano-playing can be categorized in relation to the keyboard, namely Vertical, Lateral and In-and-Out. These movements are then viewed in their combined and consequently more complex forms in the Chapter on “the marriage between technique and interpretation” (Chapter 5).

3.1 The process of establishing technical criteria as a background for the Brahms prototypes

In this section the writer provides a generic list of aspects from which the matrix of a holistic piano-technique can be generated, in order to furnish the reader with criteria to determine 1) whether Brahms uses the full spectrum of pianistic technical devices in the Sonata and Quintet, and 2) whether one can demonstrate, using this list in its complex applications, that Brahms achieves the marriage of technique and interpretation in Opus 34, showing that musical results depend, initially and fundamentally, on technical means.

The writer has had a number of extended consultations with the co-supervisor who has been researching piano technique at fundamental (first principles) level for many years. His currently unpublished research results, which have general application, may be summarized as in the list below at 3.1.2.8, to throw light on the pianistic challenges in the scores of Brahms's Opus 34.

In order to compile these generic lists, diverse technical criteria in advanced piano playing have been researched, such as the Heneghan and Taubman basic concepts, as well as Alfred

Cortot's "Principles of Pianoforte Technique", checklists from Muzio Clementi, Carl Czerny, Rafael Joseffy, and the writings of József Gát, Georgy Sandor and Heinrich Neuhaus. Attention is drawn to the fact that all these methodologies, some of which are only informative, are not necessarily in agreement, even on fundamentals, though there is much overlapping, and the headings are of course not irreducible. There is a lot of detail hidden in the multiplicity of possible subheadings from this list (e.g. Sandor) and a definite progression towards the essentially reductionist reappraisal by Heneghan in the Appendix. As implied above, reconciliation between apparently opposing views is possible by refining the technique of converting words, used as unambiguously as possible, to actions. It will be shown that there is a fundamental tendency towards agreement rather than the opposite, when all these methods are thoroughly compared and contrasted.

The Taubman approach (listed below and shown unabridged in the appendix at the end of the mini-thesis), is a groundbreaking analysis of motion (the virtually invisible motions that occur within the body and function in support of a virtuoso technique). The resulting knowledge intends to help pianists overcome technical limitations as well as to cure playing-related injuries. It also deals with tone production and other components of expressive playing - how they can be analysed, understood and taught.

The Clementi, Czerny and Joseffy examples are too specific to be useful in classifying technique in abstract or irreducibly fundamental terms, but it is useful, for completeness, to include them, as it enables the writer to justify the approach in getting to the basics, which are largely defined by the headings vertical, lateral and in-and-out (V, L and I/O), the three classical 'dimensions' of movement. The Clementi, Czerny and Joseffy examples below are merely specific cases and combinations of skill requirements that can be reclassified under V, L and I/O and are not typically generic.

The earlier schools (Clementi, Czerny, and even Cortot) depended on the ministry of a teacher and merely provided the exercises for the teacher to guide the student through technically. While this is sound time-honoured, if not always the most efficient, pedagogy, more modern contributors to the trove of method tend to appeal to the intelligence of musicians and, by underlining the basic muscular anatomical approach to stress avoidance, demystify the technical approach to all mechanical pianistic problems. Czerny's 'quiet hand', ridiculed, arguably unfairly, in the tapes issued by the Taubman Institute, is an example of technical

wisdom which has stood the test of time but needs constant explaining and reinforcement to avoid misinterpretations of what it actually means, namely economy of movement.

Disambiguation of verbal process is the key here. The problem with all explanation of technical procedures is the avoidance of misunderstanding and misapplication in transferring from the word to the action. Large amounts of other technical material (Cesi, Dohnanyi, Pischna et al) depend on one-to-one teaching to elucidate the method of using the musculature to achieve the object of the exercises without injury. From Neuhaus on there was a tendency to focus on principles, namely the understanding of how the musculature works. Sandor and Taubman go further than that, but they, too, are subject to serious misinterpretation. Taubman is still far from sufficiently refined (and still requires a major teacher involvement, though this is in any event seldom expendable) and is not fully accessible to an unaided (albeit intelligent) student.

Eclecticism demands, if nothing is to be lost in holistic training of a pianist, that the old finger method should be respected for its virtues and inherent agility, that painstaking teaching should be the vehicle, enriched with serious analysis of muscularity and tension avoidance, while the psychological, arguably transcendental, notions of Neuhaus and his peers should be added to enhance the spiritual subjectivity and to invoke ravishing sounds in the eventual performance.

Taubman summarizes, by ending her technical lists with: “how musical results depend on technical means”, which is of course the main thoughtline of this mini-thesis.

After playing both the scores of Opus 34 many times, and keeping the technical landscape in mind, the following reduced lists could be compiled (all unabridged lists are shown in the Appendix at the end). The selected generic aspects were chosen because they have specific relevance to the Brahms prototypes which are discussed in Chapter 4. The writer wants to indicate how the Brahms prototypes are related and reducible to generic difficulties, while retaining a characteristically Brahmsian style of pianism, resulting in a specific style of interpretation, as evinced mainly in characteristic Brahmsian ‘sound’.

At this stage the writer also has to point out that Chapters 3 and 4 were conceptualized at the same time as one process; chapter 3 contains the holistic criteria for “pianism in Brahms”, and chapter 4 contains examples of “Brahmsian pianism” (note the difference in the meaning of the two phrases). As a summary of all the above facts the following are the systematical steps in which the writer researched these chapters:

3.1.1 Criteria for pianism in Brahms (C)

- I chose 9 author's works with which I was familiar as a teacher, arranged them chronologically and selected 10 aspects from each, representative of a holistic piano technique to play Brahms
- I looked at the Brahms examples from the scores and started eliminating from my C lists those aspects which did not fit well with my B20 aspects
- I arranged the 9 composers' C aspects into the different pianistic movements of vertical, lateral and in-and-out (explained previously)
- I took the B15 and compared them to the C aspects of the 9 others, and arranged them according to the pianistic movements of V, L and I/O
- I designed the tabular list with the B10 prototypes arranged according to the 5 movements of V, L, I/O, C (combinations) and "other" (see end of chapter 3).

3.1.2 Brahmsian pianism (B)

- Here I developed a card system gathering numerous examples of technique/ interpretation in Opus 34 (the sonata and quintet)
- I limited the above by choosing 20 prototypes (B20) representing the best examples of T/I in Opus 34
- I reduced the above further to 15 aspects (B15), choosing only those in my card system which best demonstrated the examples taken from the scores in step 1
- Then I had to make a final elimination to come down to B10 according to the same system, so that my tabular list was not too long and heavily laden (see end of chapter 3), but still clearly showing the B aspects within the C aspects
- Finally I took the B10 aspects and chose the best examples of Opuses 34, 35, the 51 exercises, plus Opus 56b, and came up with the 5 prototypes discussed in chapter 4 (because I knew that chapter 5 was going to be lengthy, since there I use the full B10 to demonstrate the marriage of T and I).

3.2 Information about the nine selected composers/authors

The "piano schools" that are mentioned below have been explained in Chapter 2 at 2.2.5.

The writer has each time selected ten generic aspects (but with Cortot, Neuhaus and Sandor only the five aspects presented to readers) from the unabridged lists given in the appendix at

the end, after having researched the Brahms prototypes in Chapter 4. These ten aspects were chosen because they relate closely to aspects in Opuses 34, 35 and 56b in the Brahms prototypes and form a logical complementarity, which nevertheless does not exclude any of the classical branches of technical study. These aspects are all arranged alphabetically, except for Neuhaus and Sandor where the order is as it appears in their books.

3.2.1 Muzio Clementi: *Gradus ad Parnassum*, published in 1817. Clementi was a representative of the “old finger school” (see 2.2). Beethoven considered the Clementi studies as excellent practice studies for the formation of taste, and as truly beautiful pieces for performance. Karl Tausig selected 30 of the 100 studies for the Augener edition (London), seeking to represent a comprehensive technical palette. The ten aspects selected are:

- Double thirds in the left-hand
- Extensions between the weak fingers
- Leaps in the left-hand and scales in the right-hand
- Mixing chromatic runs with scales and arpeggios
- Octaves and broken octaves
- Passing (under and over) the thumb
- Presto staccato with rotation
- Quick two-note phrasings
- Scales with different fingerings
- Tenuto and staccato simultaneously in the same hand.

3.2.2 Carl Czerny: *Kunst der Fingerfertigkeit* (The Art of Finger Dexterity), Opus 740 [published in the early 1900s]. Czerny was also a representative of the “old finger school” of the 19th century. The ten aspects of the 50 to be selected are:

- Bravura in touch and action
- Clearness in great strength
- Clearness in velocity
- Double octaves
- Finger action with quiet hand
- Flexibility of the left-hand
- Light breaking off or detaching of chords

- The same unilateral movement in both hands
- The thumb on the black keys, with the hand perfectly quiet
- The utmost velocity in chord passages.

3.2.3 Rafael Joseffy: The *School of Advanced Piano Playing* was published in 1902. Joseffy was a Hungarian pianist and a student of Liszt's. He was a 'disciple of perfection' in every element of technique and execution, and a representative of the finger school, tending towards the anatomic-physiological school (see 2.2). Joseffy lists 24 aspects of piano technique, of which the ten selected are:

- Alternation and interlacing of the hands
- Chromatic exercises
- Embellishments
- Exercises in piano and *pianissimo*
- Extended chords and figures, stretches
- Rhythmical studies.
- Sliding from the black keys
- Thirds and sixths
- Trills
- Various types of touch.

(The three authors above are 'specific' and somewhat randomly lacking a feeling of completeness, or the generality of basic principles.)

3.2.4 Alfred Cortot: *Rational Principles of Piano Technique*, published in 1930. This book is mainly a restatement of ideas in the finger school of J Nepomuk Hummel of 100 years earlier (Heneghan 2007). Cortot states that all the problems of pianistic execution can be grouped into five essential categories:

- Double notes and polyphonic playing
- Extensions
- Equality, independence and mobility of fingers
- Passing under of the thumb in scales and arpeggios
- Wrist technique and execution of chords.

(Cortot's containment which categorizes the interminable number of permutations and combinations of technical routines into five main categories is already a move in the right direction to focus the mind on the principles referred to in the title of his work.)

3.2.5 Jozsef Gát: *The Technique of Piano Playing*, published in 1965. Gát, mainly of the anatomic-physiological school, is nevertheless reminiscent of Czerny, with some ideas in the direction of the psycho-technical school. The ten technical aspects isolated are:

- Fingering
- Naturalness of movements
- Slow practising of fast playing
- Structure and form of the hand
- The laws of legato and staccato
- The playing of scales and chromatic passages
- The role of various joints
- The technique of octaves and chords
- Tremolo, skips and glissandi
- Trills and the technique of repetition.

3.2.6 Heinrich Neuhaus: *The Art of Piano Playing*, published in 1973. Neuhaus is mainly a representative of the psycho-technical school. Neuhaus, in being more intellectual and less physical than his predecessors, is really more modern than Gát and identifies eight aspects of technique (raw material) that make up the "great edifice of piano playing" (Neuhaus 1973:114), of which the following five aspects are most applicable to the Brahms work in question:

- The playing of one single note, with all the different shadings of feeling, dynamics and imagination that are possible, using different fingers, with or without pedal.
- All manner of scales, the turning of the thumb under or passing the whole hand over the thumb.
- The arpeggio (broken chord) in all its forms (triads and every possible chord of the seventh). Flexibility, foresight and evenness.
- The whole of chord technique, three-, four-, and five-note combinations played simultaneously with one hand. Constant alternation of effort and rest.

- The transfer of the hand over a large distance, so-called “jumps and leaps”: the shortest path between two points on the keyboard is a curve, so one should speak of transferring, carrying, flying across, descending, etc.

(Note that Neuhaus is already proceeding towards a more ‘generic’ outlook. The similarity of this to the golden rules of practising enunciated by the celebrated German pianist, Wilhelm Backhaus (“I practise scales arpeggios and Bach” [contrapuntal technique or note combinations played simultaneously with one hand] is remarkable).

3.2.7 Georgy Sandor: *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression*, published in 1981. Sandor’s aim is to achieve the greatest results with the least expenditure of energy, and to coordinate muscles rather than build them. He explains the human performing mechanism using headings such as: coordination of the small and large muscles/extensors, flexors, biceps and triceps/fingers, hand, forearm, and upper arm/the shoulder/torso, back and chest muscles, and the diaphragm/sitting positions/the feet and the bench.

Sandor lists five basic motion patterns:

- Free fall: gravity and muscles – the role of weight – lifting, drop, landing, and rebound.
- Five-fingers, scales and arpeggios: anatomy of the fingers and thumb – horizontal and vertical adjusting motions – use of the thumb – the upper arm and body – shifting in arpeggios – note groupings and legato – use of the damper pedal – phrase endings.
- Rotation: anatomy of the arm – pronation and supination – axial rotation – fingers, forearm and elbow – lateral motions.
- Staccato: the wrist staccato – roles of the fingers, hand, forearm and upper arm – lift and rebound – white and black keys – staccato and legato octaves.
- Thrust: thrust versus free fall – when to use thrust.

(This, too, is an approach to generic principles.)

3.2.8 Heneghan: according to the Heneghan interviews (2007) his summary of ten essential technical accomplishments is:

- Coping with the black keys and the general variables in the shape of the keyboard and manual physicality (this coincides with the ‘in-and-out’ function).

- Passing of the thumb in arpeggios (and less obviously so, in scales); the “virtual legato” concept. Differences between passing the fingers over and passing the thumb under as a focus for special study and vigilance.
- Phrasing and touch.
- Relationship of key-speed to dynamic level.
- ‘Relaxation’ (defined at 3.3), the active/passive concept, the neutral hand position, and the eventual emergence of the ‘reactive’ method as a refinement of the active/passive concept, leading to total coordination of the musculature at all times.
- Rotation around a ‘point’ (fingers around the knuckles, thumb and hand around the wrist, forearm around elbow), as distinct from axial rotation. The real significance of axial rotation (the ‘ability to rotate,’ rather than the rotation itself, as a method of allowing gravity to act naturally) is a prime outcome of the application of this method.
- The recognition of the fading quality of piano sound.
- The role of a co-ordinated or balanced arm in facilitating a spectrum of tonal quality.
- The use of the process of dealing with sources of power (the weight of the arm used as a reactionary downward force [gravity] against which the fingers push).
- Vertical action at the wrist (detached chords and octaves), with the wrist as fulcrum.

The above technical approaches, when understood and applied, lead, in turn, to the phenomenon of ‘shaping’, which facilitates the question of musicality and interpretation (subjectively) as proceeding directly from the objectivity of technical expertise.

3.2.9 Taubman: the Dorothy Taubman Technique (Institute founded in 1976, lists presented in 2003) (see also www.golandskyinstitute.org for further details) lays out all the technical and interpretative considerations that need to be taken into account in any pianistic appraisal (including chamber/ensemble music).

The ten most relevant aspects are:

- Alternating from double intervals or chords to single notes
- Fingering to place one at the best advantage for fluent execution of a passage
- Forearm and hand weight for chords
- Legato and speed in octaves
- Legato and staccato leaps

- Role of shaping and pedalling in legato playing
- Security in complex metric designs
- Synchronization of fingers, hand and forearm
- Technical and interpretative aspects of shaping
- When and why to redistribute a passage between the two hands.

3.3 The classification of movements

Three irreducible/fundamental principles can be isolated on which most pianistic movements (pianism) rely. These are:

a) the analysis of hand position and the realization that since music (and, in this case, its relationship to the workings of the piano as an instrument) is about 'movement,' the musculature is also moving constantly (or 'about to move', like a runner at the beginning of a race) so there cannot be a unique ideal hand position

b) the three basic movements in piano playing, namely:

i) vertical motion dictated by the physical way the keys of the piano work –'down and up'

ii) lateral movement or extensions, necessary for the music to cover the pitch range

iii) the 'in-and-out' movement, which is the degree of freedom most often ignored (moving from the white-key area to the black-key area), misunderstood or forgotten, and responsible for many of the distortions of the hand that teachers are familiar with and finally

c) 'virtual legato,' which covers all the 'deceptions' in pianism where a 'seemingly impossible effect' can be created by sheer sleight of hand and developing (and understanding) the speed of movement (particularly of the forearm) that joins sounds. Virtual legato relies on the axiom that legato is 'in the ear,' not 'in the hand'; the deception of the ear (with its own cooperation) plays a significant role in most limiting cases of technical virtuosity. The simplest and most used example of that, from which all the rest subsequently derives by logic, intelligence and analysis, is typified in going from dominant to tonic with fingers 3 and 1 (right-hand) in the root position of any common-chord arpeggio on a white note (e.g. G to C in C major; F# to B in B major). This applies also, but to a lesser extent, in the passing of the thumb in scale passages. The arpeggio

example is, however, the paradigm. Virtual legato is thus concerned with the lateral shifting of the thumb in arpeggio playing (typically) which achieves the purpose of legato, a function of the ear setting the targets for the fingers, hand and arm to ensure that the transport is fast enough to deceive and therefore to create virtual legato i.e. a legato which is not 'real' but is so skilful and fast in its execution that it achieves the aesthetic purpose of the music, when joining sounds, as demanded. Put another way, the join is achieved without any distortion of the natural hand position or twisting from the wrist.

Other clarifying aspects are the following:

- V= vertical; L= lateral; I/O= in-and-out; C= combination of V, I and I/O.
- Octave playing (one of the most difficult and challenging techniques to teach) combines vertical, lateral and 'in--and--out' movements, applicable to most of what a pianist does on the piano. There are very few uncomplicated movements that isolate a single dimension. Consequently V, L and I/O cover a vast area of technique, but when expanded will introduce the others as derivative or supporting movements (such as 'rotation' and virtual legato).
- Rotation falls under the category of 'combination of movements' (see below). It is always present in V and L as a 'facilitator' for arm-weight and gravity to act freely. Rotation is a facilitator: the conscious *ability* to rotate is quintessentially important to most free muscular movements aimed at using gravity as the principal agent of sound production, but rotation can achieve no sound on its own (because intrinsically it has no vertical component; it relies on some form of articulation for the fulfilment of its very necessary function).
- Security in complex metric designs is valid as "other" but this is a function of mental control (cueing and interdependence of hands) as much as physical control.
- Pedalling is another function which is not of the hands but has its technical aspects, too. The operation of the pedal is theoretically simple in its basic movements. The refinement of its basic up and down movement is, nevertheless, the subject of a vast field of independent artistically-driven enquiry and is consciously excluded from the scope of this study.
- Coping with the black keys and general variables in the shape of the keyboard and hands are mainly I/O but there are also V and L elements. There are very few simple movements; most actions in playing the piano are complex, and, at least triple in character.

- Recognition of the fading quality of piano sound is a mental/aural function which can then transmute smoothly into technical control of V, L and I/O with the constant attention of the aural faculty.
- So-called 'relaxation' and the neutral hand position are actually not relaxation, but coordination (the necessary supporting muscles are in action). This neutral position of the hand is a precondition or pretechnical requirement.
- Equality, independence and mobility: independence is a key word in technical development. Mobility applies to all V, L and I/O movements.
- Evenness and shading are aural functions which eventually feed back to V, L and I/O.
- Alternating hands is a mental function of cueing the hands.
- According to Heneghan (2007), shaping is a redundant consideration and should result naturally from the correct application and combination of V, L and I/O.
- Interdependence versus independence of hands calls for mental control of two simultaneous but separate functions; it is this rather than a physical function in itself.
- Physical components of tone production have to do with rotational freedom and V combined to release armweight freely into the key. Essentially this converts into the control of key speed and the avoidance of "key-bedding" – redundant force.
- Many of the different categories are derivative and fit into the V, L and I/O slot. For example, octaves (double but not *tremolando*) have a very substantial V element (with arm and wrist considerations) in them, but they also come under the heading of gravity/reaction (or bounce), which is a pre-technical requirement (as is good hand position) so that the V, L and I/O elements can and should operate in a coordinated fashion without unnecessary tension.

The musical "inner ear" of a pianist is a very important link in the realization of technique; when the pianist's interpretational ear is sensitive, his/her technique should automatically adapt. Without technique the sheer mechanical difficulties cannot be overcome and therefore the audio-physical features cannot be satisfactorily presented. Without the sounds, as intimately connected to the technique of delivering them, the music, and therefore the interpretation, cannot begin to be realised. Therefore it is a relevant and valid study for the technical features to be isolated for specific study and demystification.

In the categorizations below, many aspects, such as octaves in different applications, may appear simultaneously under different headings, depending on the technical angle from which they are approached.

3.4 Re-arranging the aspects in the above selected lists after further analysis

The next arrangements demonstrate how each composer's material can be reduced to the most basic movements. The information given at 3.2 (the nine authors) has been set out according to the most obvious primary movement used for each listed technical aspect, although one or more of the other movements could also be included secondarily. As explained above the movements are: mainly vertical (V), mainly lateral (L), mainly in-and-out (I/O), combinations of the previous three (C), and finally "other," (O) as also seen in the tabular layout at the end of this chapter.

3.4.1 Mainly Vertical

Clementi: quick two-note phrasings; tenuto and staccato at the same time in the same hand.

Czerny: finger action with quiet hand; clearness in velocity; light breaking off or detaching of chords. (There is always a certain lateral component in music when performed.)

Joseffy: trills; chromatic exercises; exercises in *piano* and *pianissimo*.

Cortot: equality, independence and mobility of fingers.

Gát: tremolo; laws of legato and staccato; trills and the technique of repetition.

Neuhaus: the playing of one single note, with all the different shadings of feeling, dynamics and imagination that are possible, using different fingers, with or without pedal.

Sandor: the role of weight, lift, drop, landing and rebound; thrust versus free fall, when to use thrust (this is also valid as psychological prop/aid); the wrist staccato.

Heneghan: vertical action from the wrist (the hand and fingers move vertically and the wrist is a static, though inwardly flexible, fulcrum between hand and forearm); arm weight as source of

power using downward gravitational reality against which the fingers push; relationship of key speed to dynamic level.

Taubman: synchronization of fingers, hand and forearm; forearm and hand weight for chords.

3.4.2 Mainly Lateral

Clementi: extensions between weak fingers; mixing of arpeggios, scales and chromatic runs; double thirds; leaps in left hand and scales in right hand; scales in thirds with different fingerings; passing under and over of the thumb.

Czerny: the same unilateral movement in both hands.

Joseffy: thirds and sixths; alternation and interlacing of hands; extended chords and figures, and stretches.

Cortot: passing under of the thumb in scales and arpeggios; extensions; also passing the fingers over the thumb (see Neuhaus below).

Gát: skips and glissandi; the playing of scales and chromatic passages.

Sandor: five fingers, scales and arpeggios, and use of the thumb.

Neuhaus: all manner of scales, the turning of the thumb under or passing the whole hand over the thumb; arpeggios and broken chords in all forms, with flexibility, foresight and evenness; the transfer of the hand over a large distance, so-called 'jumps and leaps'.

Heneghan: passing of the thumb in arpeggios, the virtual legato concept.

Taubman: legato and staccato leaps; redistribution of a passage between two hands.

3.4.3 Mainly In-and-Out

Czerny: double octaves; thumb on black keys; the utmost velocity in chord passages.

Joseffy: sliding from the black keys to the white keys.

Cortot: in-and-out is always implicit in Cortot because he uses all the keys.

Gát: the technique of octaves and chords.

Sandor: white and black keys, staccato and legato octaves.

Taubman: legato and speed in octaves.

Heneghan: coping with the black keys and general variables in the shape of the keyboard and hands.

3.4.4 Combinations of V, L and I/O

Clementi: presto staccato with rotation; octaves and broken octaves.

Czerny: flexibility of the left hand; clarity in great strength; bravura in touch and action.

Joseffy: all kinds of embellishments.

Cortot: wrist technique and chords; double notes and polyphonic playing.

Gát: the role of joints and levers; the technique of octaves and chords.

Neuhaus: the whole of chord technique, three-, four-, and five-note combinations played simultaneously with one hand, with constant alternation of effort and rest.

Sandor: rotation, axial rotation; horizontal and vertical adjusting movements.

Heneghan: rotation around a 'point' (fingers around the knuckles, thumb and hand around the wrist), as distinct from axial rotation (forearm rotating from elbow).

Taubman: technical and interpretive aspects of shaping; alternating from double intervals or chords to single notes (a mental function of being able to adjust to a new demand of V, L and I/O).

3.4.5 Other aspects (O)

Joseffy: rhythmical studies; various styles of touch.

Gát: fingering; naturalness of movement; structure and form of hand; slow practicing of fast playing.

Heneghan: the role of the coordinated arm in a spectrum of tonal quality; use of phrasing and touch (this requires perfection of shaping which is a combination of V, L and I/O); recognition of the fading quality of piano sound; 'relaxation' and the neutral hand position.

Taubman: security in complex metric designs; the role of shaping and pedalling in legato-playing; fingering to place the pianist at the best advantage for fluent execution of a passage.

3. 5 Applying all the above aspects to Brahms's Opus 34

To categorize the different technical aspects within the chosen Quintet and Sonata, at first, the two approaches were to ask:

a) where are the noticeable sections in the score which could cause interpretational problems in relation to technique, particularly advanced technique with complex components? When these sections have been identified, how should the prototype of technique required for the needed interpretation be analysed, and

b) are there certain prototypes of typical technical difficulties that can be established beforehand, which can then be applied to the score to find matching pairs, showing the marriage of technique and interpretation?

After both the above approaches (a and b) were applied, the writer found that the following prototypes of technique (see 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 where the system of elimination is explained) appeared repeatedly in Opus 34:

- Active/passive touch (V and O)
- Broken octaves (C)
- Building of dynamics by means of texture and rhythm (O)
- Chords (C)

- Clarity in articulation (V)
- Combinations of leaps and slurs (L) and (V) and even (I/O)
- Contrast of timbre (C)
- Colouristic effects of tone production (O) and also (V)
- Fast repeated notes (V) and (L)
- Fingering for evenness (O)
- Fingering for strength (fullness of sound) (O)
- Hand redistributions (L)
- Leaps and the importance of the thumb (L)
- Leaps in opposite directions (L)
- Levers (C)
- Modification of ornaments (V, L and I/O)
- Phrasing and touch (O)
- Repeated octaves (V and I/O)
- Staccato and legato octaves (V and L)
- Textural difficulties (C)
- The balanced arm (C)
- Thirds and sixths (L and C)
- Unison (the same) rhythms and complex metrical designs (O)
- Virtual legato (L).

After inter-relating approach (a) with approach (b), always keeping in mind the numerical and qualitative value of the score examples in the card system (see 3.1.1 and 3.1.2), the choice of which Brahms prototypes to demonstrate in Opus 34 was further abbreviated to the fifteen below, and then finally to ten, as seen in the compact tabular layout at the end of this chapter:

- Active/passive touch
- Chords
- Clarity in articulation
- Colouristic effects of tone-production
- Contrast of timbre
- Fast repeated notes
- Fingering for evenness

- Fingering for strength
- Leaps in opposite directions
- Legato and staccato octaves
- Phrasing and touch
- Textural difficulties
- Thirds and sixths
- Unison (similar) rhythms and complex rhythmical designs
- Virtual legato.

3. 6 Interface between the above Brahms-list (15 aspects) and the selected lists from the nine other authors above

This arrangement shows the overlapping of “Brahmsian pianism” with aspects represented by the other nine composers’ generic lists (“pianism in Brahms”).

Brahms: active/passive touch and relaxation (coordination).

Other: constant alternation of effort and rest; free fall, gravity and muscles as sources of power; relaxation (coordination), the active/passive concept and the neutral hand position; synchronization of fingers, hand and forearm.

Brahms: chords.

Other: sliding from the black keys; extended chords and figures; stretches and extensions; the technique of octaves and chords; the whole of chord technique, three, four and five notes in one hand; forearm and hand-weight for chords; the utmost velocity in chord passages; light breaking off or detaching of chords.

Brahms: clarity in articulation.

Other: clearness in velocity; presto staccato with rotation; slow practicing of fast playing; when and why to redistribute a passage between the two hands; equality, mobility and independence of fingers.

Brahms: the colouristic effects of tone-production.

Other: the use of the process of dealing with sources of power; technical and interpretive aspects of shaping; the relationship of key speed to dynamic level; the recognition of the fading quality of piano sound; the role of shaping and pedalling in legato playing.

Brahms: contrast of timbre.

Other: exercises in *piano* and *pianissimo*; bravura in touch and action; the playing of one single note with all the different shadings of feeling, dynamics and imagination; thrust versus free fall, when to use thrust; the role of the co-ordinated arm in facilitating a spectrum of tonal quality.

Brahms: fast and repeated notes.

Other: the laws of legato and staccato; trills and the technique of repetition.

Brahms: fingering for evenness.

Other: thumb on the black keys with quiet hand; the playing of scales and passages; the arpeggio in all its forms.

Brahms: fingering for strength (fullness of sound).

Other: alternation and interlacing of the hands; structure and form of the hand; fingering to place one at the best advantage for fluent execution of a passage; clarity with great strength.

Brahms: leaps in opposite direction.

Other: tremolo, skips and glissandi; the transfer of the hand over large distances; legato and staccato leaps; leaps in the left hand and scales in the right hand.

Brahms: legato and staccato octaves.

Other: octaves and broken octaves; double octaves; vertical wrist action in detached chords and octaves; legato and speed in octaves.

Brahms: phrasing and touches.

Other: various styles of touch; the use of phrasing and touch; quick two note phrasings; naturalness of movements.

Brahms: textural difficulties.

Other: double notes and polyphonic playing; technical and interpretive aspects of shaping; tenuto and staccato simultaneously in the same hand; flexibility of the left hand.

Brahms: thirds and sixths.

Other: thirds and sixths; coping with the black keys and variables in the shape of the hands; double thirds in both hands; scales in thirds with different fingerings.

Brahms: unison (the same) rhythms and complex rhythms.

Other: the same unilateral movement in both hands; rhythmical studies; security in complex metric designs.

Brahms: virtual legato.

Other: passing under and over of the thumb; passing under of the thumb in scales and arpeggios; passing of the thumb in arpeggios; the virtual legato concept.

3.7 Devising a final table

To simplify the final process of finding matching pairs (in the score) in which the link between technique and interpretation is optimally demonstrated, as will be explained in Chapter 5, the following table was compiled. In this table the ten selected prototypes have been arranged in only one slot at a time, but in Chapter 5 more complex combinations of the prototypes are treated.

Tabular layout of prototypes and movements:

	Vertical	Lateral	In/Out	Combinations of V, L and I/O	Other
Prototype 1				Chords	
Prototype 2	Clarity in articulation and fast repeated notes				
Prototype 3					Colour and timbre contrasts
Prototype 4					Fingering for tonal strength and evenness
Prototype 5		Leaps			
Prototype 6				Phrasing, singing touch and active/passive movement	
Prototype 7					Rhythm and complex metrical design
Prototype 8				Textures	
Prototype 9			Thirds, sixths and octaves		
Prototype 10		Virtual legato			

Chapter 4

The Brahms prototypes

Introduction

The material of the next two chapters is justified by the Research Question (see 1.6) asking to what extent objective methodology and traditional pedagogic devices can be used to empower the technical means for successful interpretation. Where the writer thus gives some pedagogical and technical instructions for the realisation of the piano parts, the relevance to the thesis subject is to show the technique-intensive quality of this music, if the composer's intentions and the interpretation are to be realized. It is also important to point out that Chapters 3 and 4 were researched simultaneously as one process (as explained in Chapter 3 at 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). The discussion of these examples and comparisons in Chapter 4, as being representative of Brahmsian pianism, have contributed greatly to the process of identifying and classifying the Brahms prototypes in Chapter 3.

Brahms was the most advanced composer of his time in the management of larger canvasses, including the four movement format. The three piano sonatas are monumental in their scope; the first piano concerto was the largest of its kind; the Händel Variations were epically conceived, and the Piano Quintet was at that stage meant to challenge the highest interpretative and technical resources of the performers. (Brahms's first symphony appeared only in 1876, twelve years after the Piano Quintet.) Brahms's early piano sonatas, Opus 1, 2 and 5, and after that the sets of Variations, Opus 9 (Variations on a Theme by Schumann), Opus 21 (Variations on a Hungarian Song and Variations on an Original Theme), and Opus 24 (the Händel Variations) contain a lot of material which shows his contrapuntal mastery and already demonstrates a fertile field of development which transfers into his chamber music.

In comparing Opus 34 with Opus 35 (Studies for the Pianoforte: the Paganini Variations, composed in 1862/3 and published in 1866) one finds certain pianistic parallels and use of the same devices. Also comparisons to the *51 Übungen* WOO6, (composed between 1850-1893) can be made, as well as some cross-relations between the Quintet and Opus 56b (1873), Brahms's only other large-scale work for two pianos.

Opus 35 (Paganini Variations) is particularly relevant (as being contemporaneous) and the connection between Opus 35 and the *Übungen* is easy to prove by examples, although the *Übungen* were not published until 1893 (30 years after the Quintet was published). There can be no doubt that Brahms, as a virtuoso pianist who infused his works with his own ideas of virtuosity (including specific Brahmsian devices such as Example 4.1 below, from the Rhapsodie Opus 119) must have had these ideas of the *51 Übungen* already in his mind when composing Opuses 34 and 35. It is reasonable to assume that he only formulated and published them much later, and that they were his solutions to problems encountered in previous works. The fact remains that there are many related examples coupling the Quintet and the *Übungen*.

The Piano Quintet contains many of the elements we now associate with Brahms's mature style, including his bold use of harmony, rhythm and counterpoint, his song-inspired melody writing, and his sense of a structural whole. Specific piano-technical features are large extensions, awkward leaps, veiled melodies, textural complexities, two against three cross-rhythms, dense chording and triadic harmonies.

Brahmsian technique is also considerably different from that of other composers, and the level of legato playing is very advanced, for example his method of playing extended arpeggi with every fourth note stemmed as a crotchet to create, visibly, a more sustained sound. In Example 4.1 below, see this demonstrated in the left hand as indicated in the score.

Example 4.1: Rhapsodie in E flat, Opus119/4, Bars 38-42



In the prototypes shown below, the pointing out (identifying) of characteristic technical aspects/problems, generic type to which they belong, their hierarchy within a range of difficulties, and possible ways to approach them in order to reach a “better” sounding interpretation, are based on the writer’s experience as a teacher, and could be described in many different ways.

Chapter 4 consists of four sub-parts, which are:

4.1 To ask the valid question, if the two-piano version embodies technical difficulties that are not in the Quintet version, or vice versa. Idiomatic writing for the strings has a role to play in the asking of this question and thus this aspect will be discussed very briefly; but a fully detailed description goes beyond the scope of the study.

4.2 To select the most commonly used technical prototypes in Opus 34, and then compare them to Opus 35 (the Paganini Variations), and to the *51 Übungen*, in order to show their common sources in Brahmsian pianism, and to try to establish a hierarchy in these technical difficulties, which could reveal the extent of the piano's exploitation of them in Opus 34.

4.3 To make, in addition, comparisons with Opus 56b, the Haydn Variations (Brahms's other large-scale two piano work), further demonstrating the hierarchy of difficulties in Brahmsian pianism, complex rhythms in this case.

4.4 Conclusions.

4.1 Are there any differences in piano technique between the Quintet and Sonata?

Generally speaking the two piano version could be more difficult for a pianist, because in the Quintet the pianist is helped by four other players who share the musical lines, but in the Sonata two hands have to do what four instruments do in the Quintet. The scores sometimes differ in texture, determined by the idiomaticism of the string quartet. There are no real pianistically different situations in the Sonata versus Quintet; the same kind of technical problems occur, more or less concentrated, but not vastly different. In the majority of cases Brahms made a rather conservative arrangement with the first piano equalling the string quartet part, the second piano equalling the string quartet part, or the Quintet part being a combination of the right hand of the first piano and the left hand of the second piano.

Please note that all score examples follow below the descriptive paragraphs, not above.

In the following material the abbreviations in use are qpp=Quintet piano part, and spp=Sonata piano part (Piano 1 or 2):

In Example 4.2 in the first movement Bars 1-11, Brahms's arrangement of the Quintet piano part is the same as the unison of Piano 1 and 2 in Bars 1-4, carrying the main theme. Then in Bar 5 comes the compression of the main theme into sixteenths, when the Quintet piano part is the same as that of Piano 1, and the string quartet has the material of Piano 2, until Bar 10, where there is a slight difference when the Quintet piano part plays the arpeggio downwards with both hands. In the Sonata the arpeggio in Bar 10 is played with the right hand of Piano 1 and the left hand of Piano 2. This could be slightly more difficult in the qpp because of fingering, to get the left hand moving with the same agility as the right hand.

Example 4.2: Sonata, first movement, Bars 1-11

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1-4) is for Piano I and Piano II, both marked "Allegro non troppo" and "mf". The second system (bars 5-8) features Piano I with "con forza" and Piano II with "Voglia Voglia". The third system (bars 9-11) continues the piano parts. Performance markings include "ritard." and "a tempo" with arrows, and circled bar numbers 1, 5, and 9.

Example 4.3: Quintet, first movement, Bars 1-11

The image displays a musical score for a quintet, first movement, covering bars 1 through 11. The score is arranged in five systems, each with a different instrument's part:

- System 1:** 1. Violine, 2. Violine, Bratsche, Violoncell, and Pianoforte. The tempo is marked *Allegro non troppo*. The first violin part begins with a *mf* dynamic. The piano part includes a circled bar number '1' and a *riten.* marking. The system concludes with *a tempo* and a *f* dynamic.
- System 2:** Continuation of the string parts. The piano part has a circled bar number '5'.
- System 3:** Continuation of the string parts. The piano part is marked *con forza*.
- System 4:** Continuation of the string parts. The piano part has a circled bar number '10'.
- System 5:** Continuation of the string parts. The piano part concludes with a *f* dynamic.

Arrows point to specific notes in the piano part at bars 1, 5, and 10. The score is in a key signature of three flats and a 3/4 time signature.

In Example 4.4 another arrangement of the parts can be seen. In Bars 17-23 the qpp plays the material of Piano 2, and the quartet plays the material of Piano 1. Here the quartet has to do the figuration of sixteenth notes derived from the main theme, which is idiomatically more difficult to outline in the strings than in the piano. At Bar 23 the qpp becomes easier, playing the combined left hands of Piano 1 and 2.

Example 4.4: Sonata, first movement, Bars 17-21

The image displays a musical score for Example 4.4, consisting of two systems of music. Each system contains a piano part (left hand and right hand) and a quartet part (left hand and right hand). The piano part in the first system (bars 17-18) features a complex sixteenth-note figuration in the right hand, while the left hand plays a simpler accompaniment. The quartet part in the first system (bars 17-18) mirrors the piano's right-hand figuration. The second system (bars 19-21) shows the piano part continuing with similar figuration, and the quartet part playing a more complex, rhythmic accompaniment. The score is written in a key signature of three flats and a 3/4 time signature. Bar numbers 17, 19, and 21 are circled in the score.

Example 4.5: Quintet, first movement, Bars 17-23



The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system contains bars 17, 18, and 19. The second system contains bars 20, 21, 22, and 23. The top two staves represent the string quartet, and the bottom two represent the piano. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *cresc.*, *fz*, *p espress.*, *p dolce espress.*, *p dolce*, and *marcato*. Bar numbers 17 and 20 are circled. Arrows point to specific melodic lines in the string quartet parts.

An example of an arrangement where the string quartet line is idiomatically easier when played by the strings, than by piano, is seen in the Sonata and Quintet, first movement, Bars 74-81. The legato melody in Bars 74 and 75 is more difficult to play in both hands of Piano 1, than played by the four strings. The qpp is easier here, taking the material of the second piano. In Bar 76 the rising fourth and falling third of the main theme feature again.

Example 4.6: Sonata, first movement, Bars 74-81

The musical score for Example 4.6, Sonata, first movement, Bars 74-81, is presented in four systems. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The score consists of two staves per system: a piano (piano) staff and a violin staff. The piano part is written in the bass clef, and the violin part is written in the treble clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The first system (bars 74-76) features a piano introduction with a forte piano (*fp*) dynamic. The second system (bars 77-79) continues the piano introduction with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third system (bars 80-81) shows the piano introduction concluding with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a piano crescendo (*p cresc.*). The fourth system (bars 82-83) shows the piano introduction concluding with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a piano crescendo (*p cresc. poco a poco*). A 'G' chord marking is present above the piano staff in the third and fourth systems.

Example 4.7: Quintet, first movement, Bars 74-81

The image displays a musical score for a quintet, first movement, covering bars 74 to 81. The score is arranged in two systems, each with five staves. The first system (bars 74-76) shows a complex rhythmic texture with triplets and sixteenth-note runs. The second system (bars 77-81) continues this texture, featuring a prominent triplet in the right hand of the piano part in bar 77. Dynamics include *p*, *fp*, and *ppp*. Bar numbers 74 and 77 are circled and have arrows pointing to specific musical features.

Another slight difference between the Sonata and Quintet (Examples 4.8 and 4.9) can be seen in Bars 132-133 of the first movement. The *qpp* has fewer notes in the half-step motion, and is easier than the *spp*, which has sixths in both hands. The second piano has the triplets of the viola part in the right hand, and the cello part in octaves in the left hand.

Example 4.8: Sonata, first movement, Bars 132-133

The musical score for Example 4.8, Sonata, first movement, Bars 132-133, is presented in five systems. The key signature is G minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various dynamics and articulations:

- System 1:** Starts with *rinf.* (ritardando) in the first staff. The second staff has *sf* (sforzando) markings.
- System 2:** The first staff has a circled **132** above it. The second staff has *sf* markings.
- System 3:** The first staff has a *p* (piano) marking.
- System 4:** The first staff has an *f* (forte) marking.
- System 5:** The first staff has a *p* marking.

Example 4.9: Quintet, first movement, Bars 132-133

At the start of the coda of the first movement, Bars 261-278, there are a few differences between the three piano parts. The *ppp* has a pedalpoint on F, which could be idiomatically more suited to the strings. However, there are ways and means of sustaining pedalpoints on the piano, when necessary, so it is not really unidiomatic for the piano. Having in mind the resonant bass of a 9ft 'Steinway' and the *pianissimo dolce* strings, the effect can be quite ethereal without any further hammer emphasis in the piano part, so the effect is fully idiomatic, and could be an indication of the cello part of the original String Quintet. The two pianos of the Sonata play the inverted opening theme of the first and second violin parts in Bar 261. The main theme is heard in the cello in Bar 265. So in general the *ppp* here is non-existent and from Bar 271 the Sonata's texture thickens. Playing absolutely together in the unison lines of the Sonata, Bars 273 and further, can present difficulties in Piano 1 and 2. But overall, when the string parts are adapted to two pianos, the pianistic demands do not really change significantly.

Example 4.10: Sonata, first movement, Bars 261-278

The musical score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 261-266) is marked **Poco sostenuto.** and **p dolce**. The second system (bars 267-270) is also marked **Poco sostenuto.** and **p dolce**, with a **pp legato ed espress.** marking at the end of bar 270. The third system (bars 271-278) continues the **pp legato ed espress.** marking, with a **dimin.** marking at the end of bar 278. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Example 4.11: Quintet, first movement, Bars 261-278

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (bars 261-264) includes a 'Poco sostenuto' tempo marking and dynamics such as *dimin. e poco riten.*, *pp dolce*, and *pp arco*. The second system (bars 265-268) includes *molto p* and *pp dolce*. The third system (bars 269-278) features multiple *pp* and *dimin.* markings. The piano part is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature.

Also in the Scherzo one finds examples of a thicker texture in the Sonata. In Bars 234-261 Brahms's use of octaves to create *con spirito* and *agitato* is seen in the Sonata. He also

mimicks the start of the Scherzo in Bars 258-261. From Bar 234 the Sonata (with octave doublings) has “more notes” than the Quintet, creating a thicker texture.

Example 4.12: Sonata, Scherzo, Bars 234-261



The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at bar 233, shows a piano introduction with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking and a 'L' (ritardando) marking. The second system, starting at bar 244, shows the Scherzo section with a 'pp' (pianissimo) marking and a 'dimin.' (diminuendo) marking. The Scherzo section is marked 'Scherzo Da Capo sin' al Fine.' and includes a repeat sign. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves.

Example 4.13: Quintet, Scherzo, Bars 234-261

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (bars 234-238) features a piano introduction with dynamics ranging from *p* to *fp*. The second system (bars 243-247) continues with a piano accompaniment. The third system (bars 252-258) includes a piano part with *dimin* and *pp* markings, and a bass line with *pp* and *pliss.* markings. The piece concludes with the instruction *Scherzo D. C. sin' al Fine*.

In the fourth movement, Bar 137-145, the qpp consists of the top line of Piano 1, and the bottom line of Piano 2. The qpp is a little more difficult in Bars 141-145 because both hands play in thirds. The Sonata might “work better” than the Quintet here, because the dialogue and articulation can be more precisely balanced between the two pianos than between the quartet and piano.

Example 4.14: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 137-145

Example 4.15: Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 137-145



The musical score for Example 4.15, Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 137-145, is presented in five systems. The first system covers bars 137 to 141, with a circled '137' at the beginning and a circled '141' at the end. A 'ben marcato' marking is placed above the staff at bar 141. The second system covers bars 142 to 145, with a circled '143' at the beginning. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Another small difference can be seen in Example 4.16, Bars 161-183 in the fourth movement, where Piano 1 has the double appoggiaturas in both hands, and the *ppp* only in the right-hand. The *ppp* has the second piano's part, which is easier. In the strings all four instruments play the appoggiatura, so care must be taken to decide where the main accent falls.

Example 4.16 Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 161-183

The musical score is presented in five systems of staves. The first system (bars 161-162) shows a piano introduction with a *dimin.* marking in the bass and *p dolce* in the treble. The second system (bars 163-166) is marked *espress.* in both hands. The third system (bars 170-173) is marked *dimin.* in both hands. The fourth system (bars 177-180) shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, melodic lines, and dynamic markings.

Example 4.17 Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 161-183



The last examples (4.18 and 4.19) are seen in the Coda of the fourth movement, Bars 427-438. In Bar 427 the left hand of Piano 1 plays double thirds, which makes the texture thicker than in the string quartet, and in Bar 431 moves directly to filled-in sixths in the right hand. The *ppp* is slightly easier and throughout the same as Piano 2. In Bar 431 both subjects are used together, with the first piano left hand in the cello. In Bar 435 the first piano left hand again has the typical double thirds which dramatically intensify the emotional rhetoric. Here the right hand chords of Piano 1 are also thicker than those of the string quartet. However, the use of 'double' thirds in Brahmsian textures is so widespread and characteristic in the composer's output (see Paganini Variations, Books 1 and 2, the opening Variations) that this can scarcely be advanced as a reason for claiming that the piano part of either version of Opus 34 is over-exploitative of technical virtuosity. It merely highlights that it invokes it necessarily and effectively as the heroic

character of the music demands. It also underlines the demand for pianists who have developed this technical skill to the appropriate level, fortifying the case for the axiom that technique and interpretation are inseparably bound, because if the thirds are not done adequately, the interpretation will suffer.

Example 4.18: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 427-438

The musical score for Example 4.18, Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 427-438, is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a piano (left) and right-hand (treble) staff. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (bars 423-427) is marked *ff* and *non legato*. The second system (bars 429-431) is marked *piu f sempre ed agitato*. The third system (bars 434-438) is marked *p dolce*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 4.19: Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 427-438



The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves represent the string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass), and the bottom staff is a grand staff for the piano. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Key markings include *più f sempre ed agitato* (repeated in measures 430-435), *p dolce*, and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The tempo marking *tranquillo* is present at the end of the excerpt. Bar numbers 424, 427, 430, and 435 are circled in the original image.

4.2 Relevant comparative examples from Opuses 34, 35 and the 51 Übungen

This section strives to select the most commonly used technical prototypes in Opus 34, and then compare them to Opus 35 (the Paganini Variations), and to the *51 Übungen*, in order to show their common sources in Brahmsian pianism, and to try and establish a hierarchy in these

technical difficulties, which could reveal the extent of the piano's exploitation of them in Opus 34.

After the following five prototypes were isolated as being typical of those most commonly used in Opus 34, the writer found that they also represent five aspects from the tabular list at the end of Chapter 3:

Brahms prototype 1: The triadic aspect (chordal/harmonic); prototype 9 in tabular list.

Brahms prototype 2: Leaps between chords or single notes; prototype 5 in tabular list.

Brahms prototype 3: The melodic, singing touch; prototype 6 in tabular list.

Brahms prototype 4: Textural variety; prototype 8 in tabular list.

Brahms prototype 5: Complicated rhythms; prototype 7 in tabular list.

4.2.1 Prototype one: the triadic aspect (chordal/harmonic)

The most characteristic and by far the most often encountered feature in Brahmsian piano technique is different fillings-in of the 3rd, 6th and 8th of the chord, and combinations thereof, which result in the typical sound ideal of triadic harmonies in the ear of the Brahms-listener.

4.2.1.1 Octaves and filled-in octaves

The following example features staccato, double forte octave-work in the right hand, alternating the 4th and 5th fingers. Free fall and rebound of the forearm in the right hand, as well as in-and-out arm movements in the execution of the *fortissimo* staccato octaves, with thumb and 5th finger secure, are necessary.

Example 4.20: Quintet, Scherzo, Bar 157-161



In the next example (4.21) the second finger is added in the right hand octave work (middle voice) to fill the chord. Care has to be taken that the right-hand second finger does not cramp the wrist from Bar 168 onwards; a supple wrist has to be sustained. Thus this example has to do with fingering for tonal strength and a balanced arm.

Example 4.21: Quintet, Scherzo, Bar 163-172

The image displays a musical score for a quintet, specifically a scherzo, covering bars 163 to 172. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system contains five staves: four for the string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) and two for the piano. The piano part features a trill in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system also contains five staves, continuing the string quartet and piano parts. The piano part includes a trill in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. Bar numbers 163 and 168 are circled in the piano part.

Compare the previous example to the following Brahms exercise where the composer specifically wants the fingers 5/1 (octave) and 2 to strengthen. The generic problem here is the quick lateral opening and closing of the hand, but the *leggiero* quality and the fast moving octaves demanding agility, clarity and accuracy in 'in-and-out' movement are also well served.

Example 4.22: 51 Übungen, Book 2, No 51

Compare also to:

Example 4.23: Opus 35, Book 2, Var. 11

From Bars 177 to 186 in the Quintet occurs the characteristic filling-in of the octaves with the 3rd and 6th. Full-arm rebounding movements are needed to play the full chords with weight from one's back. The use of 2nd, 3rd or 4th fingers should reflect fingering for strength in the right hand chords, with direct pedallings on the beat. The building of dynamics by means of texture and rhythm is clearly demonstrated here.

Example 4.24: Quintet, Scherzo, Bar 177-186



Also in relation to the previous example, similar chord formations are found in the Brahms exercises, at a higher level of technical competence, devised to strengthen the action of third and fourth fingers in broken chords (all pointing to the prerequisite of technical mastery before addressing such heroic music), such as:

Example 4.25: 51 Übungen, Book 2, No 33a

This is also found for fingers 5, 4 and 2 in chords:

Example 4.26: 51 Übungen, Book 2, No 50

Another example (4.27) within this genre can be found in Bars 168-175 of the Quintet Scherzo, compared with Examples 4.28 and 4.29, in different degrees of technical difficulty, demonstrating again fingering for tonal strength and the use of the right leverage:

Example 4.27: Scherzo, Bars 168-175

The image shows a musical score for Example 4.27, Scherzo, Bars 168-175. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system contains bars 168 to 174, and the second system contains bars 175 to 175. The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes. The dynamics range from *ff* (fortissimo) to *fs* (forzissimo). The piece concludes with a *Fine* marking.

Example 4.28: Opus 35, Book 1, Var. 9 (Bars 1-4)

The image shows a musical score for Example 4.28, Opus 35, Book 1, Var. 9 (Bars 1-4). The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system contains bars 1 to 11, and the second system contains bars 12 to 12. The music is in 2/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes. The dynamics range from *fpp* (fortissimissimo) to *p* (piano). The piece concludes with a *legato* marking.

In the next example note the octave leaps in the left hand, a typical generic difficulty in Brahms playing.

Example 4.29: Opus 35, Book 2, Var.14 (Bars 89-96)

The musical score for Example 4.29 is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 89-96) features a right hand with a complex, multi-voiced chordal texture, often marked with an '8' indicating an octave. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system continues this texture, with arrows pointing to specific chordal fillings in the right hand. The third system concludes the passage with a final chord and a fermata.

4.2.1.2 Filling-in of chords with thirds, sixths and eighths

In Bars 81-87 (Example 4.30) in the first movement of the Sonata, thirds and sixths are used alternately in each bar, so double thirds and/or different fillings-in (6ths and 8ths) of a chord (Bar 86) are the generic issue here, as apparent from the score:

Example 4.30: Sonata, first movement, Bars 81-87



In the Paganini Variations this problem is still more challenging by the addition of leaps (Var. 8):

Example 4.31: Opus 35, Book 1, Var. 8



This is also found in the next variation, Var. 9 with different fillings-in of the chord, as well as leaps:

Example 4.32: Opus 35, Book 1, Var. 9



The above, in a work so contemporaneous as the Paganini Variations, consciously geared to bravura, shows that Brahms was not only aware of what traditional solo virtuosity demanded or could aspire to, but was careful not to cross the boundary of what might be expected from a pianist within the *gemütlichkeit* of chamber music, even in such an intrepidly challenging and threshold work as Opus 34.

In the Sonata first movement, Bars 74-77 (Example 4.33) contrary movement occurs with a mixture of thirds, occasional fourths and sixths in the right hand, and a single arpeggio line in the left. Correct fingering, a pre-technical consideration, is of paramount importance.

Example 4.33: Sonata, first movement, Bars 74-77



Exercises 4b and 18, of *51 Übungen*, Book 1, also address the issue of thirds and sixths (in this case broken); the question of a supple wrist and co-ordinated arm is at stake, so that axial rotation from the wrist can occur, freeing arm weight to have its tonal effect and avoiding over-reliance on flexor muscles, thereby isolating the arm and excluding it from its proper role.

Example 4.34: *51 Übungen*, Book 1, No 4b

Eseguire forte ben legato ed anche pianissimo, leggero

Moderato

4 b)

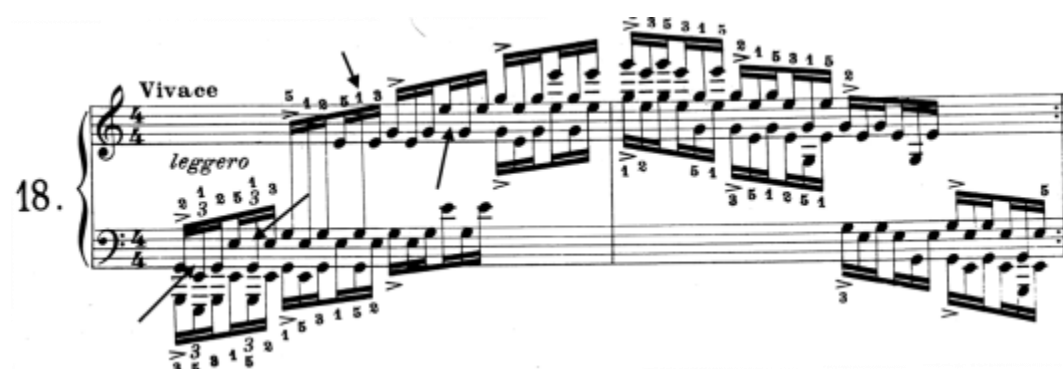


Example 4.35: *51 Übungen*, Book 1, No 18

Vivace

18.

leggero



If one approaches the inversion of the second subject, starting at Bar 137 (Example 4.37), from the viewpoint of being woven into the contrapuntal working-out of material which starts at Bar 122 (Example 4.36), one finds that Brahms, being such a consummate master of thematic development, writes patterns which no amateur can play. The difficulties here have to be approached from a mature understanding of Brahmsian technical norms – double thirds and sixths, nuanced phrasing and cross-rhythms occurring simultaneously. Such norms are an integral part of Brahms’s constant and characteristic enrichment of the textural palette.

Example 4.36: Sonata first movement, Bars 122-129



The image displays a musical score for Example 4.36, consisting of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system covers bars 122 to 125, and the second system covers bars 126 to 129. The music is in G major and 3/4 time. The score is characterized by intricate contrapuntal textures, including double thirds and sixths. Key markings include 'cresc.' (crescendo) and 'sf' (sforzando). The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs. The score is presented in a clear, professional layout with standard musical notation.

Example 4.37: Sonata first movement, Bars 137-144



In the Quintet (ppp), first movement, Bars 146-151 (Example 4.38), both hands have sixths, the right hand pure sixths and the left hand filled-in sixths, both hands moving unilaterally until Bar 147, and then in the opposite direction with filled-in sixths in the right-hand, and broken octaves in the left. The two-note slurs of the sixths demand relaxation on the weak beat, and a supple wrist. Another generic aspect is rotation in the broken octaves from Bar 147, and big, agile leaps from Bar 149. This example, of such concentrated complexity, could alone, apart from its showing a unique aspect of Brahmsian texture, be used to exemplify the truism of the inseparability of technique and interpretation.

Example 4.38: Quintet, first movement, Bars 146-151

Example 4.37 and 4.38 can now be compared with the Paganini Variations, Book 1, No 5 (Example 4.39). These combinations of thirds, broken octaves and sixths are higher up in the hierarchy (as becomes the solo version of such difficulties at 4.31/ 4.32 above) of technical difficulties than the Quintet. Here again the generic problem of slurs and leaps occurs.

Example 4.39: Paganini Variations, Book 1, No 5

4.2.1.3 Hands constantly on the alert for approaching thirds and sixths

The next example (Example 4.40) in the Scherzo of the Sonata also demonstrates the use of sixths, for which the hands have to be alert, ready and co-ordinated at any given moment. Generic requirements would be correct hand and arm leverage for execution of the unilateral sixths from a flexible wrist, with both hands slightly biased towards the top note. An experienced pianist will see that slight forearm rotation can be felt and used to advantage in negotiating these sixths.

Example 4.40: Sonata, third movement, Bars 53-57



The image shows a musical score for Example 4.40, consisting of piano and violin parts. The piano part is in the upper system, and the violin part is in the lower system. The piano part features a melodic line with sixths and a bass line with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The violin part features a melodic line with sixths and a bass line with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The score includes dynamics such as *cresc.* and bar numbers 53 and 54 circled in red.

From Bar 94 in the Scherzo of the Sonata (Example 4.41) the sixths are in the left hand of Piano 1, which should then lead in sound production by correct voicing (of the thumb) within the hand, another technical subtlety which adds textural colour to the interpretation.

Example 4.41: Sonata, third movement (Scherzo) Bars 94-96

The above examples can be compared with Opus 35, Book 1, Variations 1 and 2 (studies in sixths) which are, of course, more difficult and fatiguing to execute. Fingering (critically important in relation to different hand sizes) is of paramount importance.

Example 4.42: Opus 35, Book 1, Var.1

Example 4.43: Opus 35, Book 1, Var. 2



Example 4.44 features the typical Brahms double thirds and octaves (occasionally a fourth) in two-note phrasings. Leaps in opposite direction of the hands are also an issue here. In-and-out arm movements are required for the thirds in pairs in Bars 299-302 of the fourth movement of the Quintet:

Example 4.44: Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 299-302



In the *51 Übungen* Book 2, Nos 36a and 49 (Examples 4.45 and 4.46) the playing of broken or double thirds, octaves and tenths in leaps is addressed exclusively in Example 4.45, with

Constant alternation of effort and rest (thinking the active/passive movement) in the execution of passages in thirds (Example 4.47 and 4.48) is called for. Accurate movements with minimum effort and maximum economy, and a balanced arm, are needed in these long stretches of thirds (right hand of Sonata, Example 4.47 and left hand of Opus 35, Example 4.48).

Example 4.47: Sonata, fourth movement, Bar 378-385



Example 4.48: Paganini Variations Opus 35, Book 2, No 1

The last Paganini Variation, no 14, Book 1 (Example 4.49 a-d), using much independent thumb movement and lateral moves along the keyboard, provides more difficulties in the context of agile octaves in Examples 4.47 and 4.48 than even the most difficult similar passages of both the Quintet or Sonata. Generic aspects of big leverage in going into the unilateral *forte* broken octaves (Example 49c) is needed. Again the principle is observed and the difficulty is merely a matter of degree.

Example 4.49: Paganini Variations, Book 1, No 14

a)

Var. 14
Allegro

ben marcato
con fuoco

s.....

ff

b)

ff

c)

Section c) consists of two systems of piano music. The first system features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The instruction *ben marcato* is written below the first measure of the treble staff. The second system continues the piece, with the instruction *sempre cresc. -* appearing in the bass staff. Arrows point to specific notes in both systems, likely indicating performance techniques or fingering.

d)

Section d) consists of two systems of piano music. The first system features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The instruction *p* (piano) is written below the first measure of the treble staff. The second system continues the piece, with the instruction *poco a poco cresc. -* appearing in the bass staff. Arrows point to specific notes in both systems, likely indicating performance techniques or fingering.

4.2.1.5 Finger-agility and independence, interspersed with octaves/thirds/sixths

In the Quintet and Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 81-88 (Examples 4.50 and 4.51), the piano part of the Quintet version has to provide power and contrast of timbre with the strings, so fingering and clarity of the arpeggio in opposite motion has to be secure, and in the Sonata, for both pianos, the quick opening and closing of the hand, as needed for different hand placings, has to be practised assiduously with the eventual speed in mind.

Example 4.50: Quintet, 4th movement, Bars 81-88



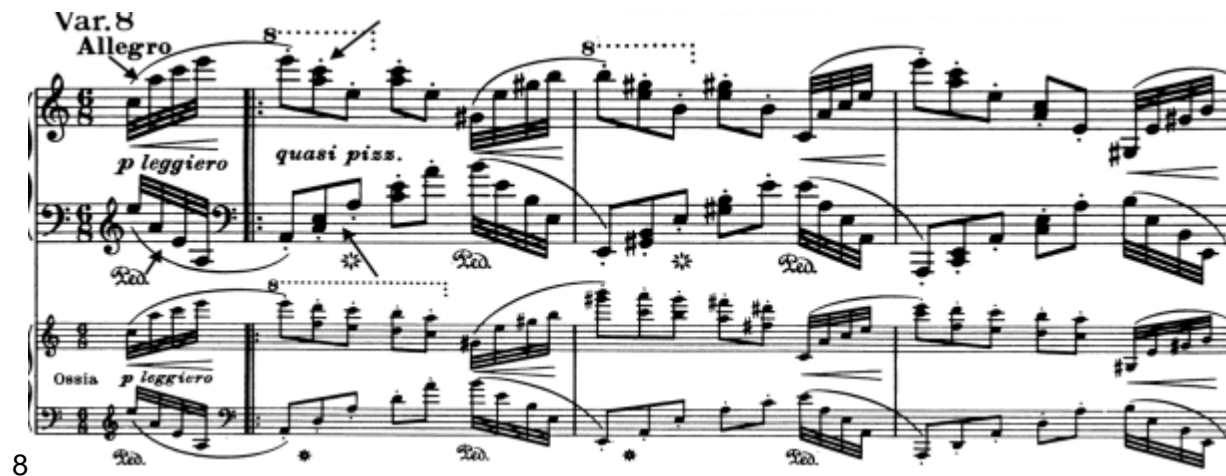
The image displays a musical score for Example 4.50, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 81-84, and the second system covers bars 85-88. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. The piano part (bottom two staves) features a complex arpeggiated pattern in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The string parts (top three staves) provide harmonic support and contrast. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 4.51: Sonata, 4th movement, Bars 81-88

The image displays a musical score for a piano sonata, specifically the fourth movement, covering bars 81 through 88. The score is written for piano and is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It is divided into two systems. The first system, starting at bar 81, shows intricate arpeggiated figures in both the right and left hands, with various dynamics and articulations. The second system, starting at bar 86, continues these patterns, ending with the instruction *un pochettino più animato*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *f* and *sfz*.

Compare the previous examples with Paganini Var. 8, Book 2 (Example 4.52), where agility in arpeggios moving in opposite directions outwards is alternated with staccato thirds inwards, which is, again, higher in the hierarchy of difficulties. Meticulous fingering for precision is needed.

Example 4.52: Paganini Variations, Book 2, Var.



In Example 4.53 one finds another angle to the same problem. Practising the *51 Übungen*, Book 1 No 13e and f (which is more difficult) could develop the agility and independence needed in the fingerwork of Bars 81-88 of the 4th movement (Example 4.51 and 4.52); slow and conscious practice of each change of handposition produces good results.

Example 4.53: *51 Übungen*, Book 1 No 13



The last example (4.54) in prototype one is found in the Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 137-140, where Brahms uses octaves alternated with stepwise single-voice, and quick direction

changes. From Bar 137 and further, the leverage which is used should be adapted to make quick lateral leaps.

Example 4.54: Quintet, 4th movement, Bars 137-140

Compare the previous with Paganini Var.7, Book 1 (Example 4.55), where the octaves alternate with stepwise thirds, which need more agility and independence than the single alternating voice in Example 4.54. However, the parallel is still palpable.

Example 4.55: Paganini Variations, Book 1, No 7 .



As a further germane example, No 51 of the *51 Übungen* (Example 4.56) alternates octaves with stepwise movement with both hands staccato, in opposite directions, developing general agility still further, whether in single voice or in octave-playing.

Example 4.56: *51 Übungen*, Book 2, No 51



4.2.2 Prototype two: Leaps between chords or single notes

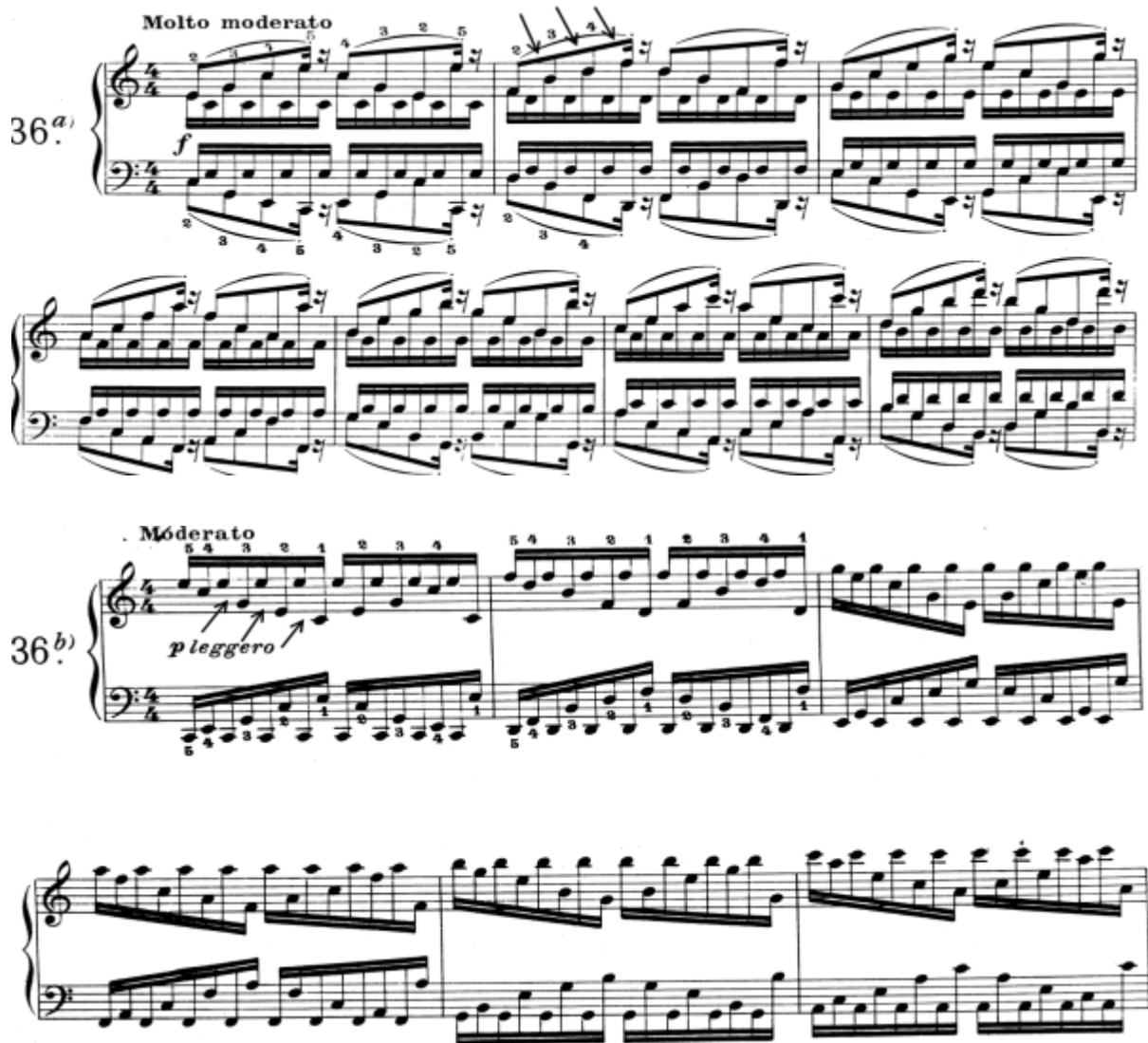
In the Sonata, first movement, Bars 12-22 (Example 4.57) the arm movements start unilaterally in piano 1 from Bar 12. Agility in handposition changes, as well as finger-agility, is important. This is then contrasted with octave movement in piano 2, which carries the main theme. From Bar 19 both hands have to be extremely agile, executing quick leaps.

Example 4.57: Sonata, first movement, Bars 12-21



Example 4.58 shows the *51 Übungen*, Book 2 No 36a and b, which are designed to assist the independence of the fingers, such as needed in Example 4.57, and especially to develop the stretch (inhibited by webbing) between fingers, resulting in suppleness and readiness for leaps.

Example 4.58: *51 Übungen*, Book 2, Nos 36a and b



In the Quintet, first movement, Bars 296-299 (Example 4.59), there are *fortissimo* chordal leaps in both hands in opposite directions, with the right-hand having the fuller chords, which are phrased in typical two-note slurs. In Bars 298 and 299 (Example 4.59) the left hand has three rolled chords upwards (large extensions), which could be missed or not played with sufficient power. A solution to this is to play the bottom three notes of the left hand simultaneously and not

as a rolled chord (Bar 298). The handposition can then be shifted to accommodate the thumb inwards and upwards, in order to play the A-flat with the thumb and full-arm momentum, while keeping the pedal down; this creates a neat jump and good resonance.

Down-up movement for the two-note slurs (Bar 296) is necessary. Practising of the sustaining of the common note between the two chords has to be done (the fifth finger and thumb of the right-hand are on the same note, F). A general solution is to isolate the notes that form the closest distance between two chords and then only concentrate on them, such as the left-hand fifth finger and thumb consecutively, Bars 296-298, with the fifth finger closing a gap from a fourth to a unison (B flat, A flat, G, F) in every second crotchet.

Example 4.59: Quintet, first movement, Bars 296-299

This can be compared with Opus 35, Book 2, Var.14, Bars 89-98 (Example 4.60) where the chordal leaps are in the right hand in opposite directions (Bars 97-98) with octaves in the left hand from Bar 89-96 which could be extremely awkward, and also with the rhythm three against two, which is difficult to execute cleanly. Generic aspects would be lateral freedom and supple wrists.

Example 4.60: Paganini Variations, Book 2, Var.14

Practising the leaps and sustained notes in *51 Übungen*, Nos 20a and b, Book 1, is difficult to synchronize yet would simplify the chordal jumps in the Quintet, Bars 296-298 of Example 4.59 (see above), if the principle is applied to thumb movement.

Example 4.61: *51 Übungen*, Book 1, Nos 20a and b

Examples 4.62 and 4.63 feature the Sonata and Quintet, second movement, Coda, Bar 120, where it is important to establish a pivotal point in the hand-position, to execute difficult leaps in a two octave range in the quavers of the left hand (the same in the Quintet and in both parts of the Sonata).

Example 4.62: Sonata, second movement, Bars 117-126

The musical score for Example 4.62 is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 117-126) features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a *mf* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking, leading to a *f* dynamic at bar 120. The piano accompaniment starts with a *pp* dynamic and a *mf* dynamic, with a *f* dynamic at bar 120. The tempo is marked *a tempo* and *I a tempo*. The second system (bars 122-126) shows the vocal line with a *dimin.* dynamic and a *poco ritard.* marking, ending with a *pp* dynamic. The piano accompaniment also features a *dimin.* dynamic and a *poco ritard.* marking, ending with a *pp* dynamic. Bar numbers 120 and 122 are circled, and arrows point to specific notes in the left hand of the first system.

Example 4.63: Quintet second movement, Bars 115-126



In the *51 Übungen*, Book 2 No 36b, the difficulties increase by using one pivot-point to balance the hand while the thumb and 5th finger are quite far apart. In the Sonata and Quintet (Examples 4.62 and 4.63) this pivoting could also be practised as a glissando between the bottom and top notes (A flat to A flat) of the staccato notes in the left hand, shown in Bar 120. Still better would be to think of the pivot as being a notional thumb on the A flat between the two outer ones and to use finger 2 for the top A flat, so the principle of using a pivot is still applicable.

Example 4.64: 51 Übungen, Book 2, No 36b



4.2.3 Prototype three: the melodic singing touch

The cultivation of a *cantabile* touch is one of Brahms's most characteristic requirements and has to be striven for in all his piano music.

4.2.3.1 Legato and staccato singing touch in octave-playing

In the Quintet and Sonata, second movement, Bar 83 and further (Example 4.65), the one-bar-refrain main melody of the second movement (which started in thirds at the beginning of the movement), returns in cantabile legato octaves in the right hand, interspersed with sixths. The slow tempo “works better” in the Quintet version because of the more lyric qualities of the strings. The Quintet piano part has the same accompaniment in Bar 83 which appears in Piano 2 of the Sonata. Well thought-out fingering should be used at Bar 83, with the fourth and fifth fingers in the top voice of the right-hand, “singing” with a light cantabile touch. In general a supple and relaxed touch is needed, as well as in-and-out movements and a light rotation of the wrist in the octave melody line. In the Quintet part (the same as Piano 2 of the Sonata) the piano accompaniment should use a “weightless” arm, because the octaves here are in the accompaniment, not in the melody.

Example 4.65: Sonata, second movement, Bars 83-87



Example 4.66: Quintet, second movement, Bars 83-90



This could be compared with the Paganini Variations, Book 2, Var.4 (Example 4.67). There are lyrical comparisons between the Sonata's/Quintet's slow movement and this slow Paganini Variation, even though it is in 3/8, not in 6/8, as in the slow movement of the Sonata/Quintet. In the Paganini Variations the same lyrical touch is needed for the octaves, although this Variation carries the melody in *portamento* octaves in the right hand, its being more difficult to sustain a melody with this intense touch. The tenths in the left hand on the first beat also present a problem of placement of the hand.

Example 4.67: Opus 35, Book 2, Var. 4



In Example 4.68 and 4.69, in the second movement of the Sonata from Bar 105, the left hand applies falling octave leaps downwards in Piano 1. In the Quintet piano part (Example 4.69) the right-hand has this motif from Bar 109. (This falling octave is also found in the slow introduction of the fourth movement.) At Bar 105 of the Sonata left hand and 109 of the Quintet right hand gliding from black to white notes and also between stepwise movement, substituting fingers 4 and 5 are called for, to create the *molto espressivo* which Brahms indicated. Care has to be taken to control the key speed when playing down into the octaves, for more or less sound.

Example 4.68: Sonata, second movement, Bars 104-112

espress.
poco cresc.
105
poco cresc.
molto espress.
poco f
p
molto espress.
cresc.
un poco string.
108
poco f espress.
cresc.
f
un poco string.

Example 4.69: Quintet, second movement Bars 104-112

poco f molto espress cresc. f
cresc.
poco f molto espress cresc. f
un poco string
109
poco f espress cresc.

In Example 4.70 the piano part at Bar 240 has the cello part of Bar 41 (as will be shown later in Example 4.80). Here the main theme of the fourth movement, which first appeared in the cello-part, appears as singing octaves in the left-hand of the piano-part, and the right-hand top-voice uses agile 4th and 5th fingers in the accompaniment. This again shows Brahms's academic skill in metamorphosis of ideas, having to be contained in technique.

Example 4.70: Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 240 and further



4.2.3.2 The singing touch in stepwise movement: melodic independence of second, third, fourth and fifth fingers, stepwise and also in thirds and other intervals

In the next examples of melodic independence (Example 4.71-4.74), great clarity and strength are needed from all the fingers, even extending to thirds and octaves. Example 4.71 shows the Sonata, Piano 2, fourth movement, Bars 342-352. Here the great *Presto* Coda starts by transforming and juxtaposing of the main and second themes of the fourth movement (Bar 348).

Example 4.71: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 342-352



Presto, non troppo.

342 **Presto, non troppo.** *p non legato*

348 *p* *fp non legato*

Practising the Presto, starting at Bar 342, correlates well with practising the *Übungen* Book 2, Nos 42a and 43 (Examples 4.72 and 4.73), and with the Paganini Variations Book 1, Var. 8 (Example 4.74), where the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers are trained to act melodically independently. The degree of difficulty escalates in the examples that follow.

Example 4.72: 51 *Übungen*, Book 2, No 42a



Moderato

42^a) *mf* *f*

Example 4.73: 51 Übungen, Book 2, No 43

Of course the above is more of an extension exercise, but it can also perform the function suggested, if specifically sought after.

Example 4.74: Paganini Variations, Book 1, Var. 8

In Bars 1-4 of the Quintet and Sonata (Example 4.75), the first motif in the opening theme of the first movement, the melodic projection of intervals is not bigger than a fifth; then there is a compression of the initial statement into sixteenth notes, Bars 5-11. Here the fingers should create a profound *cantabile* sound (Bars 1-4), and articulate the sixteenth notes well (Bars 5-11). The Quintet piano part is exactly the same as Piano 1 of the Sonata.

Example 4.75: Sonata, first movement, Bars 1-11

JOHANNES BRAHMS, Op. 34-bis

Allegro non troppo.

PIANO I *mf* *ritard.* *a tempo*

PIANO II *mf* *ritard.* *a tempo*

con forza

5

9

ff

In Examples 4.76 and 4.77 (and also 4.78 and 4.79) the broken figures in 51 *Übungen* no 5 and 6 of Book 1 correlate well (but are more difficult to play) with this “measuring” of distances between fingers that carry the melody in the above first-theme statement, especially where the opening figure is compressed to sixteenth notes (Bar 5). These examples continue to show that Brahms correlated the pianistic textures he produced with specific exercises which were at that time classifying themselves in his mind, although the completed work did not appear until much later.

Example 4.76: 51 Übungen, Book 1, No 5

5 a)

Allegro
f *brillante*



5 b)

Eseguire anche *lentamente* tenendo ferme tutte le note



Example 4.77: 51 Übungen, Book 1, No 6

6 a)

f



6 b)

f



Exercise No 8 in Book 1 of the *Übungen* (Example 4.78) develops all the melodic seconds, thirds and fourths, as in the opening theme of Opus 34, and No 12, Book 1 (Example 79) also develops the second, third and fourth fingers, as in Bars 5-11 of the Sonata and Quintet (ppp), where rhythmic compression of the initial statement of the main theme occurs.

Example 4.78: 51 Übungen, Book 1, No 8

8 a)

Allegro moderato

3 b)

Example 4.79: 51 Übungen, Book 1, No 12

12.

Lento

flegato

Another example is found in the main theme of the fourth movement, Bar 41 (Example 4.80), and its repetitions (see Bar 240 and as in Example 4.70). Here again the melodic intervals are realized within small hand-spacings, calling for much independence as well as alignment of fingers, hand and forearm.

Example 4.80: Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 41-46

In the *51 Übungen*, Book 1, Nos 4a and 7a (Examples 4.81 and 4.82) and in Book 2, No 49 (Example 4.83) this melodic independence of the third, fourth and fifth fingers is further developed.

Example 4.81: *51 Übungen*, Book 1, No 4a

Example 4.82: 51 Übungen, Book 1, No 7a



Example 4.83: 51 Übungen, Book 2, No 49



4.2.4 Prototype four: textural variety

This prototype is treated in a more pedagogically informative way than methodologically technical because of the aural aspect of different textures which should be “heard” when played.

In the second movement of the Sonata and Quintet, Bars 29-30 (Example 4.84), the typical Brahms legato chromaticism is seen in chord movement downwards. The falling legato figure has to be fingered precisely, with gliding of fingers 4 and 5 in the right hand. The 3 against 2 in Bar 30 (a typical gesture of Brahmsian pianism) should not be rushed. The *ppp* has the same material as Piano 2, which has the easier part, with a thinner texture than the Piano 1 part.

Example 4.84: Sonata, second movement, Bars 29-30

The image shows a musical score for Example 4.84, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a single treble clef staff. The grand staff shows a piano part with a 'cresc.' marking and a 'dimin.' marking. The single staff shows a second piano part with a 'dimin.' marking. The second system also includes a grand staff and a single treble clef staff. The grand staff shows a piano part with a 'dimin.' marking. The single staff shows a second piano part with a 'dimin.' marking. The score includes fingerings (5, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4) and a '3' indicating a triplet in bar 30.

Example 4.85: Quintet, second movement, Bars 29-30



Similar material is seen in the Paganini Variations No 7, Book 1, Bars 1-8, with the legato octaves needing fingers 4 and 5 to glide along.

Example 4.86: Opus 35, Var.7, Book 1, Bars 1-8

In the *51 Übungen*, No 46c (the last three bars), Brahms devises an exercise (Example 4.87) for this kind of chromatic hand movement in octaves. There is constant reinforcement here of the idea that Brahms was keenly aware of the technical demands of his music, since it appears comprehensively worked out in the *Übungen*. The fact that this mature and thoughtful work postdated the Quintet by many years (in fact its maturity and comprehensiveness point to its long gestation) is no proof that its details were not already formulating themselves in the mind of this highly organized composer, as he wrote the passages now being compared with the *Übungen*. It is a truth to be pondered, in music certainly, that very often the theory (*Übungen*) follows on and is derived from the practices and discoveries of creative minds.

Example 4.87: 51 Übungen, No 46c

In the Scherzo of the Sonata and Quintet, from Bar 158-166, the texture is percussive unison octaves, with the *ppp* the same as Piano 1, and Piano 2 taking the strings part. In Bar 159 the sixteenth notes from the second theme have a slightly thicker texture in the Quintet than in the Sonata.

Example 4.88: Scherzo, Sonata, Bars 158-166

The image displays a musical score for a Scherzo from a Sonata, covering bars 158 to 166. The score is written for piano and bass, in 2/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). The first system includes a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking and arrows pointing to specific notes in the piano part. The second system is marked with the number 158, and the third system is marked with the number 163. The score consists of four systems of piano and bass staves, showing intricate rhythmic patterns and chordal textures.

Example 4.89: Scherzo, Quintet, Bars 158-166

When the ending of the Scherzo and the ending of the fourth movement are compared (Example 4.90 and 4.91), different textures are found in the scores. The Quintet part at the end of the Scherzo is more intense because of the four string lines, as opposed to Piano 2, which has two lines to play in unison from Bar 184 to the end.

Example 4.90: Sonata, Scherzo, Bars 184-193

The image displays a musical score for a Scherzo movement, spanning bars 184 to 193. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 184 to 188, and the second system covers bars 189 to 193. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by a complex, rhythmic texture, primarily consisting of sixteenth notes and eighth notes, often grouped in pairs or fours. The first system begins with a circled bar number '184'. The second system begins with a circled bar number '189'. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word 'Fine.' written above the staff in the final measure of the second system.

Example 4.91: Quintet, Scherzo, Bars 184-193

In comparing the end of the fourth movement (Example 4.92) with the end of the Scherzo (above), where one again finds open octaves in the left hands of all three piano parts, but where the Sonata has a thicker texture (more notes) than the Quintet, the syncopation between the bars is in Piano 1 and 2 at the same time, whereas the strings just play on the main beats. The downward chromatic line starting in Bar 478 occurs in both pianos' right hands. .

Example 4.92: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 478-492

The image displays a musical score for the fourth movement of a sonata, covering bars 478 to 492. The score is written for piano and is in G minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (bars 478-480) features a complex texture with dense chords and rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment. The tempo is marked *agitato*. The second system (bars 481-486) continues this texture, with a *f* (forte) dynamic marking appearing in the right hand. The third system (bars 487-492) concludes the passage with a final cadence. Bar numbers 478, 480, and 486 are circled in the original image. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 4.93: Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 478-492



The musical score for Example 4.93 is a Quintet, fourth movement, covering Bars 478-492. It is written in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. The score is divided into five systems. The first system (bars 478-481) includes four staves for the string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) and a grand staff for the piano. The tempo is marked 'f agitato'. The piano part is highly textured with chords and unison octaves. Bar 478 is circled in red, and bar 482 is circled in blue. Arrows point to specific notes in bars 478 and 482. The second system (bars 482-485) continues the piano part with similar textures. The third system (bars 486-492) concludes the passage with a final cadence. The piano part is highly textured with chords and unison octaves.

In the Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 86-88, Piano 1 (Example 4.94) the texture consists of chords mixed with unison octaves. The top part of the right hand and the thumb of the left hand move downwards in the same direction in chromatic and stepwise motion. The generic problem is one of possibly unclear articulation as rapid movement of the thumbs could present obstacles.

There could be tension caused by the different actions of thumb, middle fingers and fifth finger in balancing the hand for coordinated playing. Care is needed with the two-note slurs (Example 4.94), which are ideal cases for the application of upward wrist movement on the moment of impact, after the first chord of every pair has been played.

Example 4.94: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 86-88



un pochettino più animato

Practising the articulation within the closed five-finger position of the hand/fist in *51 Übungen*, Book 1, No 1a, b and c (Example 4.95) will help to simplify chromatic passages in general, and keep them “within the hand”.

Example 4.95: *51 Übungen*, Book 1, No 1a, b and c



legato

1. b) *pp legato*

1. c) *pp legato*

With regard to texture in general the Sonata and/or Quintet (ppp) more often uses a stepwise scale-like position of the fingers, as in Bars 149-160 of the Sonata (Piano 1 and 2, left-hand) of the fourth movement (Example 4.96), than purely chromatic passages.

Example 4.96: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 149-160

149

152

The above examples' textures can be compared to Opus 35, Book 2, Var. 13 (Example 4.97) where the chromatics are entangled (with intricate fingerings) in the double thirds of the right-hand, as indicated in the score.

Example 4.97: Brahms Paganini Variations, Opus 35, Book 2, Var. 13

The image shows a musical score for Brahms Paganini Variations, Opus 35, Book 2, Var. 13. The score is in 3/4 time and marked 'Un poco più Andante'. It features a complex texture with intricate fingerings (e.g., 4 85 45 45, 45, 45) and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'poco espress.'. The right hand plays double thirds, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment.

4.2.5 Prototype five: Complicated Rhythms

The aspect of rhythm will be further discussed in Chapter 5, when demonstrating the “marriage” of technique and interpretation. Only one generic aspect is given here, namely playing two against three rhythms.

In the first movement Bars 150-154 of the Sonata, Piano 1, and in the piano part of the Quintet (Examples 4.98 and 4.99), the right hand consists of filled-in octaves which move in regular two's, while the left hand is laterally static on a triplet figure. The static hand (Sonata, left-hand, Bar 150) has to be controlled within a coordinated hand position. In both the Sonata and Quintet, one could use the two note slurs as relaxation points with active/passive touch. The four note slurs (Bar 151) in quavers will need supple wrists, with in-and-out arm movements and a feeling of the shortest distance between chords.

Example 4.98: Quintet, first movement, Bars 150-154

In Example 4.99, Piano 1, from Bar 151 has filled in octaves, which are more difficult to perform legato; fingering is thus a very important aspect, though it must be considered in its context of avoiding twisting of the hand in lateral motion.

Example 4.99: Sonata, first movement, Bars 150-154



The previous examples can be compared to the Paganini Variations, Book 1, Var. 9 (Example 4.100), and Book 2, Var.1 (Example 4.101), which are more difficult variants of what happens in the Sonata in the previous example. Care has to be taken that the hand that has the filled-in octaves (in Var. 9, left hand) does not over-stretch. Fingering is again very important in this example, which, of course, may also be seen as a perfect case for invoking the 'principle' of virtual legato (referred to in Chapter 3) where the arm does the work and the hand is not twisted.

Example 4.100: Paganini Variations, Book 1, Var.9



Example 4.101: Paganini Variations, Book 2, Var.1

Var.1

In the *51 Übungen*, Book 1, Nos 15 and 17 (Examples 4.102 and 4.103), the basic three against two can be practised as a preliminary. These exercises, in this context (see Exercises 17a and b), are also excellently devised for the development of total independence of the fingers.

Example 4.102: *51 Übungen*, Book 1, No 15

15. Allegro

Example 4.103: 51 Übungen, Book 1, No 17

4.3 Comparisons with Opus 56b

It became clear to the writer, in the process of analysing the Brahms prototypes, that there are distinct comparisons between Opus 34 and Opus 56b (which could also be substantial material for further research). To conclude this chapter, the writer compares the two opus numbers very briefly in relation to the following prototypes: chords, melodic/singing touch, rhythm, texture and triadic aspects (thirds/sixths/octaves).

4.3.1 Chords

In Opus 34, the Sonata Scherzo, Bars 23-28 (third theme), both pianos have chords which should sound heroic (with typical Brahmsian orchestral sound). These chordal textures (Example 4.104) have to be contained within the handposition/structure, and never just constitute straightforward potentially harsh playing. The chords need armweight with a true feeling for free reactivity between the body and the instrument, hands staying on the keys after having been put down with quick key speed to produce the sound. The chords are sources of musical power, where the weight of the arm is used as a free downward force against which the fingers push reactively.

Example 4.104: Sonata, third movement, Bars 23-28

This can now be compared with an example of chordal leaps from Opus 56b. Care has to be taken that the hands do not suffer tension when the reactive process is complete, with automatic and immediate release of tension after each chord.

Example 4.105: Opus 56b, Finale, Bars 21-26

It is interesting to note that Opus 35 does not feature full chordal passages. The *51 Übungen* also do not feature chords as such, except in Book 1, Nos 20a and b. Here the spreading out of

difficult note progressions in both hands obviously implies that difficult extended chords should be played as extensions of these exercises. Exercises 20a and b can be seen in Example 4.61.

4.3.2 Melodic singing touch (octaves)

A typical *Sicilienne*, which is in groups of three with the second note dotted, is found in the *cantabile* of Opus 56b, Var. No 7 (*Grazioso*), and in the Paganini Variations, Book 2, Var. No 4 (Example 4.107). In Opus 34b the melodic octaves (previously shown in Example 4.65) have the same singing touch as in the other two examples shown below.

Example 4.106: Opus 56b, Var. 7, Bars 1-10 and Opus 34b, Bars 83-87

The image displays a musical score for two pieces. The top system shows the first four bars of Opus 56b, Var. 7, marked *Grazioso* and *p*. The bottom system shows the first four bars of Opus 34b, Bars 83-87, marked *molto dolce*. Both systems feature melodic octaves in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. Arrows point to specific notes in the right hand of both systems, highlighting the 'singing touch' mentioned in the text.

Example 4.107: Opus 35, Book 2, Var. 4, Bars 1-8

4.3.3 Rhythm

In Opus 56b a more difficult hierarchy in the complexity of three-against-two rhythms is found. In the main polyrhythmic and truly orchestral variation (the ground bass which constitutes the Finale) with triplet quavers in the bass and triplet minims in the right hand (Bar 41), it becomes evident that Brahms under-exploits the pianist in the Quintet/Sonata because the piano is capable of so much more virtuosity than demanded. But the context and the opportunity available in Opus 56b are factors here. (This statement will be taken up again in the conclusions, Chapter 6). Opus 35 and the *51 Übungen* can thus be seen as showing ultimate technical potential beyond what is asked for in the piano parts of the Quintet and Sonata. Opus 56b is an interesting hybrid in that there are things here that the orchestra cannot easily do where Brahms is not slow to grasp the opportunity to show how the two piano version can add subtlety to the score, as in Bar 41 of the ground bass variation. It is interesting that the orchestral simplification is given in *ossia* in the two piano score. This complexity demands a very

high level of rhythmic skill in the pianist and can only be mastered by a performer who has copious experience of the technical solutions to the basic cross-rhythm between the hands in simpler three against two examples. In fact, there is no displacement of notes in this example. The LH and RH notes are struck simultaneously. Also in Bars 31-35 of the Finale (Example 4.109) one sees the 3 against 2 in a somewhat thicker texture between both pianos.

Example 4.108: Opus 56b, Finale, Bars 41-45

The image displays a musical score for Example 4.108, Opus 56b, Finale, Bars 41-45. The score is written for piano and consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the right hand (RH) playing a 3-note triplet and the left hand (LH) playing a 2-note pair. The second system continues this pattern with a 'p dolce' marking. The third system shows the RH playing a 3-note triplet and the LH playing a 2-note pair. The fourth system shows the RH playing a 3-note triplet and the LH playing a 2-note pair. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 4.109: Opus 56b, Finale, Bars 31-35

4.3.4 Texture

One good example of difference in texture is seen when comparing the opening of the first movements of Opuses 34b and 56b. Opus 56b uses more full chords in both pianos, imitating the theme in the orchestra, as opposed to the beginning of Opus 34b, where Brahms uses only unison octaves up until Bar 11.

Example 4.110: Opus 56b, main theme, Bars 1-10

Johannes Brahms, Op. 56^b
Veröffentlicht 1873

Chorale St. Antoni
Andante

Pianoforte I

1 Andante

Pianoforte II

I

II

Example 4.111: Opus 34, first movement, Bars 1-11

SONATA

after Piano Quintet

Allegro non troppo. JOHANNES BRAHMS, Op. 34-bis

PIANO I

PIANO II

mf *ritard.* *a tempo* *f*

mf *ritard.* *a tempo*

con forza

f *sf* *sf* *ff*

Published by International Music Company, New York City

4.3.5 Triadic aspects; thirds, sixths and octaves

Var. 6 of Opus 56b can be seen as an epitome in the use of the intervals of thirds, sixths and octaves (open or filled-in), as seen in the next example. This can then be compared to the extensive section on thirds, sixths and octaves (prototype 1) in Examples 4.20-4.56 from Opus 34.

Example 4.112: Opus 56b, Var. 6, Bars 1-10



The musical score for Opus 56b, Var. 6, Bars 1-10, is presented in four systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system is marked with a circled '1' and 'Vivace' with an accent. The third system is marked with 'p sempre' and a circled '6'. The fourth system shows a first and second ending. Arrows point to specific triadic intervals throughout the score.

4.4 Summing up

The technical prototypes have now been isolated, with detailed pedagogical and/or methodological comments added, to clearly demonstrate Brahmsian piano technique. Analysing and comparing all of the above examples, it became clear that the mastery of Brahmsian technique presupposes a mature pianist with a secure holistic technique. Only then can Brahms's most celebrated solo and chamber music compositions, such as the Sonata/Quintet and the Paganini Variations, be satisfactorily interpreted in a way that is worthy of the craft, art and genius of the composer.

In the next chapter the ten selected prototypes from the tabular list in Chapter 3 (which includes the above five Brahms prototypes) will be juxtaposed with the generic technical aspects and movements shown in Chapter 3, while demonstrating conclusively how technique and interpretation are inseparably linked.

Chapter 5

The conceptual indivisibility of pianism, technique and interpretation

Introduction

In this chapter, which seeks to bring back into focus the main Research Question, the question is asked: to what extent does the hybrid concept of pianism act as a portmanteau device to reconcile the objectivity of basic technical method (muscular coordination, skill and knowledge) with the subjectivity of finished interpretation (sound quality, imagination, communication and gesture)?

Rosina Lhevinne said (see 2.2.3) that “technique is the sound, and the sound is the interpretation”; so the writer wishes to show how the sound is made, and to show that all interpretation starts with, and is linked to technique. The examples shown in this chapter were chosen because they attempt to demonstrate most succinctly the truism of the “marriage” between technique and interpretation, but a score of such richness abounds in examples which illustrate the point.

The question as to how one can demonstrate the “marriage” of technique and interpretation in Opus 34, and show clearly, in the light of Chapter 4, how the difficulties are multi-dimensional, will be examined in this chapter. The writer will analyse selected technical aspects and offer deeply pondered methodology to achieve the mechanical delivery of eclectic examples drawn from the ten generic factors set out in Chapter 3, enhanced by the addition of dynamics, *rubato*, *crescendo*, agogic, balance and control, to achieve the ‘musical’ or interpretative effects needed. Within each of these ten aspects complex, multi-dimensional movements feature, but, as might be expected, it is difficult to keep the ten generic aspects separate from each other; these aspects, plus multiple others, intertwine and interlink, and simulate still more effects, and so combining, evolve into a world of transcendental interpretation. In other words, they are interdependent and interact freely in practical terms.

In Chapter 4, five aspects of the tabular list shown in Chapter 3 have already featured in the discussion of the prototypes of technique which are found in the playing of Brahms, namely thirds and sixths, octaves (these last three with their typical Brahmsian combinations and

extensions in advanced technique), textures, rhythms and leaps. The final examples which are chosen for Chapter 5 show, at best, the multi-dimensional form of difficulties that seldom or ever come singly; in fact, it is a characteristic of virtuoso music that difficulties do not come singly. When the difficulties are combined (for example in the first Chopin Etude, Opus 10 No 1 in C, where one has independence of the fingers combined with in-and-out movements, huge extensions and contractions, stretches and lateral movement of the hand and arm), one can begin to define virtuosity, pianism and transcendence, reaching the point where it becomes patently obvious that the art is constrained by the craft.

In each example the writer will indicate which technical aspects are present, but the final pedagogical details obviously need one-to-one verbal and practical demonstration at the piano. Each example will be listed under the most obvious generic aspect (prototype) from the tabular list at the end of Chapter 3, with a further analysis of the combination of multiple difficulties inherent in the score. The writer tried not to repeat examples used in Chapter 4, but where they are used again, they are generally discussed from another angle or under another prototype heading.

5.1 Concerning the interrelationship of technique and interpretation, germane to the chosen examples

One must always be aware of the fact that technique includes many invisible motions that function to support a virtuoso technique. Basic piano technique can flow naturally into good tone production and other components of expressive playing that can be understood and taught. On the other hand there are pianists with a natural inexplicable aptness and better neurological responses than others. The purpose of this thesis is to expound a general pedagogy which seeks to minister to the needs of those, regardless of natural physical flair or otherwise, seeking to bridge the gap between undeveloped formal technique and effective interpretation.

It was also realized in the course of this study that technical problems can often be simplified by the way one thinks about them. The cerebral content of practical skills should constantly make pianists aware that they play the piano with their minds, not only with their fingers. Many passages would be virtually unplayable if the correct technique, replete with the fruits of analysis of muscular movements, is not addressed intelligently beforehand; that is, after all the essence of virtuosity, rendering easier what seems to be difficult. Of course one has to keep in mind that,

in professional practice and on the concert platform, the subconscious mind (the so-called automatic pilot system) of an advanced pianist takes over when interpreting transcendently, but the general principle holds that the adept pianist must still understand the workings of his/her arms/fingers/body intimately; therein the degree of success of the interpretation is largely defined.

In offering the suggestions about technique and interpretation advanced in this chapter, the question of taste does not enter as to what is distinctive when listening to music, whether the impression is positive or negative. "We need criteria that are identifiably objective, though they may be partially subjective (that is, criteria which cannot hide behind the protean and therefore unreliable force of taste alone). We are interested in as much objectivity as we can impose reliably" (Heneghan conversations 2006). Reimer's criteria offer another, confirmatory, way of approaching the problems of evaluating music, which should not be an exercise in the ascendancy of taste, which is value free. '*De gustibus non est disputandum*' (about taste there is no argument).

Parallel to the preceding statement it follows that when an established player attempts the Brahms Quintet or Sonata, the ultimate challenge is situated in interpretative skills, which nevertheless include, inter alia, rhythmical control, harmonic and contrapuntal clarity, melodic fluency and dramatic unfolding of the whole, all of these latter being intimately interlinked with specific techniques.

By using the mentioned criteria (in Chapter 3) to evaluate these intimate relationships between, for example, technique and harmonic or melodic qualities, technique and dynamic structure, technique and rhythm, etc., it is intended, in Chapter 5, to establish that interpretation eventually and truly does depend on the technical skills which produce it, and is not "an isolated self-fertile subjective consciousness in itself, which operates independently of the technical means, while simultaneously producing them" (Heneghan conversations 2006).

It has to be remembered at all times that more than one interpretation of a piece is possible, this serving as a definition of what interpretation means. There are so many possibilities and variations as to how a particular interpreter chooses the criteria that are most important to him/her (take, for example, in the balance between structure/style and *rubato*, which are potentially conflicting), every performance becomes just one strand or possibility as to how the

work can be delivered in potentially countless ways. It is not possible for the composer to cover every possibility for variation, nor would it be desirable that he/she should (see the reference to Stravinsky in Chapter 2 at 2.2.1). There must be many interpretative paths, depending on how the forces are deployed. This does not negate the interconnection with technical means: in fact it gives a stability or common factor to all interpretation.

The technical questions are more or less the same in the Opus 34 two piano version as in the Quintet, as shown in Chapter 4. But technique should not be viewed in isolation: that is the whole point of this mini-thesis; technique should be linked with interpretation and academic thought at all times. Without technique and the physical analysis thereof (which in itself is an academic or cerebral activity) there is little to be gained from merely having a good mental musical grasp of what is required; that latter will not evince convincing evidence of interpretation empowered by the underlying technical skills inherent in almost every aspect of its delivery.

In this study the syllogism that “music is inseparable from interpretation; music is inseparable from technique; therefore technique and interpretation are inseparable when making music”, should help the reader to make sense of the basic thoughtline. Interpretation is always the end result; after one reduces the work to muscularity for the student, to deliver it, at first, mechanically (but one has to make sure, as a teacher, that the mechanical delivery evolves into the expression of a musical personality as well and as quickly as possible in the process) and then to convert from pure delivery by rote to subjective, sound-sensitive, imaginative, communicative, gestural, rhythmic, knowledgeable music-making.

5.2. The “marriage of technique and interpretation” in bravura, melody, rhythm, dynamics and colour, in brief

Interpretation of bravura is when technique metamorphoses into interpretation in the fullest sense of the word, because the brilliant passagework (e.g. double thirds, octaves, trills, etc.) fits exactly into the specific motives/phrases in the score, which are calling for it on an interpretative level, and so transcends the mere application of technique for technique’s sake. (Such climaxes in the Sonata and Quintet are shown in Chapters 4 and 5.)

With interpretation of melody one has the problem of detaching the melody part from the harmony and rhythm parts. A famous example of this is found in the start of the Brahms Trio no

1 in B major, where first the piano, then the cello, carries the wonderful one-of-its-kind melody (also see Chapter 1 at Example 1.1).

Example 5.1: Trio Opus 8 no 1 in B Major, first theme

Johannes Brahms, Op. 8
(Veröffentlicht 1854)

Allegro con moto M.M. $\text{♩} = 72$

The musical score consists of three staves: Violine (Violin), Violoncell (Cello), and Pianoforte (Piano). The tempo is marked 'Allegro con moto' with a metronome marking of 72 quarter notes per minute. The key signature is B major. The piano part begins with a melody marked 'p' (piano), 'espressivo', and 'legato'. The violin and cello parts enter later in the piece. The score includes various dynamic markings and performance instructions such as 'p dolce' and 'marc.'.

In the slow movement of the Quintet, Brahms chooses the piano to carry the tune first, not the strings. Also “Brahms’s treatment of the horn and clarinet as melody instruments was especially successful; while in the violin concerto (Opus 77) the subject of the slow movement is an example of the composer’s invention at its greatest height, it would be difficult to match the entire movement for melodious beauty” (Erb 1934:121).

In the interpretation of difficult rhythms one penetrates to the heart of musicality, because artistic delivery is heavily dependent on subtleties of rhythm, which, in turn, are situated in a performer’s ability to control musical (muscularly generated) gestures with sequential precision (see previous comments by Abby Whiteside quoted in Chapter 2 at 2.2.6). In its fullest sense rhythm covers everything pertaining to what may be called the *time* side of music

as distinct from the *pitch* side, according to the definition of rhythm in the *Oxford Companion to Music* (Scholes 1955). At the start of the Brahms Scherzo (third movement) the pianist has to have complete control of muscles (technique and therefore objective) plus rhythmical stability, to bring the agitation and sense of excitement (interpretation, being overtly subjective) to life, without getting faster and faster.

A very clear example of interpretation of dynamics occurs in the first movement, first theme, when Brahms indicates how he wants to use a *mezzo-forte* in the *unison* statement of the main theme (Bars 1-4), then an implicit *crescendo* in intensity, leading to the restatement of the theme in *fortissimo* (Bars 12-15). A transition of ten bars follows, displaying a contour in a gentle *piano* (Bars 23-25), through a *crescendo* to a *forte*, and then a *pianissimo* entrance for the second theme (Bars 34-36). See examples in the score below. These dynamic changes are brought about with lesser or more key-speed, and with correct leverage (muscular coordination; this is perhaps one of the most fundamental of all technical routines, as it is invoked in every single sound produced).

Example 5.2: Sonata, first movement, Bars 1-4

JOHANNES BRAHMS, Op. 34-bis

Allegro non troppo.

mf

ritard. *a tempo*

Allegro non troppo.

mf

ritard. *a tempo*

Sonata, first movement, Bars 12-15

Musical score for Sonata, first movement, Bars 12-15. The score is written for piano in G minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (bars 12-14) features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system (bars 15) continues the melodic line in the treble clef and the accompaniment in the bass clef. A dynamic marking of **ff** (fortissimo) is present at the beginning of bar 12. Bar numbers 12 and 15 are circled.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 23 to 25

Musical score for Sonata, first movement, Bars 23 to 25. The score is written for piano in G minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (bars 23-25) features a treble clef with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system (bars 23-25) continues the melodic line in the treble clef and the accompaniment in the bass clef. A dynamic marking of **p** (piano) is present at the beginning of bar 23. The word *espress.* (espressivo) is written above the treble clef staff in bar 24. Bar number 23 is circled.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 34-36



Considering interpretation of the colouristic effects in pianism, interpretation derives from imagination, which, here, calls for imitation, which demands technique (Van der Westhuizen conversations 2008). Thus: technique – imitation – imagination – interpretation, or vice versa: interpretation – imagination – imitation – technique. Gát (1965) says (see 2.2.3) that the variations of the movements should exactly follow the modifications of the musical concept (such as colour and contrast of timbre). The correct muscle-work will become proportionately more and more differentiated with the increase in intensity of the musical concept, in this case the colouristic effects to be created. (How Brahms creates, for example, “darkness and light” are also valid as interpretative challenges. The Dflat/C falling semitone relationship of the first theme from the first movement is an indication of darkness. See Bars 1-2 in Example 5.2 above.)

5.3 The ten prototype headings as applied to the presentation of the examples below:
chords, clarity in articulation, colour, fingering, leaps, phrasing and touch, rhythm,
texture, thirds/ sixths/ octaves, and virtual legato

These ten prototypes are originally shown in the tabular list at the end of Chapter 3, where the reader may also identify the primary classification of each generic movement. In the discussion below, the writer uses quotation marks when referring to subjective interpretational aspects in each example. Abbreviations are spp = Sonata piano part, qpp = Quintet piano part and sqp = String quartet part.

All the material below addresses the connection between technique and interpretation as no loose claim that can be accepted or rejected at will but that has a deep, significant, critical, ineluctable, pervasive and multi-dimensional element, and the offering of routines (generic and segregated aspects) makes, more or less, the same claim. It is not simply that interpretation is dependent on technique as a concept, but to every detail of technique, as it occurs and is relevant. It is arguable that the idea of 'interpretation' can be dealt with, as to its meaning, by a simple verbal dictionary definition, but its 'significance' (the crucial aspect of meaning) requires a detailed definition of 'nuts and bolts' of 'technique,' which is a vast and poorly understood, time-consuming field of activity, demanding serious commitment.

In all instances the score-examples follow below the descriptive paragraph.

5.3.1 Prototype: chords; Movement: combinations

Example 5.3: Sonata and Quintet: First movement: Bars 159-166: These *pianissimo legatissimo* syncopated chords are typical of Brahms's pianistic writing. The role of rhythm is clearly depicted in the syncopated crotchets and in the speeding up in Bars 164-166 towards the entrance of the recapitulation in Bar 166. Legato fingering in Piano 1 for the chords; body gesture to enhance the syncopation; a soft weighing of the chords in the hand from very soft to loud in Bar 166 – all these are needed for a skilled technique enabling good interpretation.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 159-166

Musical score for Sonata, first movement, Bars 159-166. The score is in G minor and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (bars 159-163) features a piano (*pp*) and legato texture. The second system (bars 164-166) features a crescendo (*cresc.*) and fortissimo (*f*) texture. Performance markings include *p*, *marcato*, *pp*, *cresc.*, and *f*. Bar numbers 159, 164, and 166 are circled.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 159-166



Example 5.4: Quintet second movement, Bars 98-100: This example shows how dynamics influence touch in consecutive rolled chords. At Bar 98 the strings move in unison and *legato* with a *forte* dynamic level downwards to a *pianissimo* level, while the piano forms an individual party starting with *forte* arpeggiando chords and “dying down” to a *pianissimo* level within three bars. This is in contrast with the start of the first movement where all voices move in unison. These rolled chords in the piano part must be controlled technically with a good and even spreading and timing of the notes within the roll, otherwise they can sound untidy. A well-

controlled *diminuendo* is needed, as well as a flexible wrist and much lateral freedom of the arm.

Quintet, second movement, Bars 98-100

Example 5.5: Sonata and Quintet, third movement Bars 23-29 (one sees the same material in Example 4.106 in Chapter 4): For this bravura chord playing the movements used are a combination of lateral, vertical and I/O, with full arm weight from the shoulder, producing the *forte* sound. There is a propulsion of sound by thinking in 6/8 rather than in 2/4. In Bars 26-29 one has a “resting” on the first beat, a lateral movement from this beat into the first *fz* staccato quaver, and then vertical, close-to-the-key movements for the three staccato quavers. All these actions are delivered while keeping in mind the broad statement of the third motif of the Scherzo theme.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 23-28



Quintet, third movement, Bars 23-31



Example 5.6: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 478-485 (also see Examples 4.92 and 4.93 in Chapter 4): These are the same kind of syncopated chords as in the first movement Bars 159-166 (see first example of chords above), but now they are not soft and legato, but loud and agitated, creating an “angry outburst” of sound towards the end of this movement. In the Sonata Brahms switches the syncopation between the hands in Bars 478 and 482. There is a combination of difficulties here; the solution lies in matching and controlling the *forte* touch with the syncopated articulation.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 478-485



5.3.2 Prototype: clarity in articulation; Movement: vertical

Example 5.7: Quintet: first movement, Bars 17-18, Bars 57-58, Bars 65-66 and Bars 293-294 (also see Examples 4.4 and 4.5 in Chapter 4): These semiquavers could have been the “growling and grumbling” of which Joachim complained in the original String Quintet. The strings now have the semiquaver figuration first seen in the piano part, which is more difficult to get clearly outlined in the strings. This is the same material from the start (Bars 4-11) that creates such a powerful ending to the first movement. In Bars 17 and 18 one needs I/O movement, plus power and articulation in vertical and lateral movement in the semiquavers. The quaver two-note groups have to be thought of as down-up slurs, and could be difficult to articulate separately from the lateral and vertical sixteenths in the left hand. In Bars 57-58 the hands could be redistributed for better articulation as shown in the example. In Bars 65-66 the same figuration is now done *leggiero* with arm weight withdrawn from the fingers, which should be held close to the key. Bars 293-294 show the vigorous ending with the same material in the piano, but augmented in the violins.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 17-18

Musical score for Quintet, first movement, Bars 17-18. The score is in G minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the passage with a sixteenth-note triplet in the first staff and a sixteenth-note eighth-note eighth-note triplet in the second staff. The second system starts at bar 17, marked with a circled '17' and an arrow pointing to a sixteenth-note triplet. Bar 18 is marked with a circled '18' and contains a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic marking, a crescendo (*cresc.*) instruction, and a sforzando (*sf*) dynamic marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 57-58

Musical score for Quintet, first movement, Bars 57-58. The score is in D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the passage with a sixteenth-note triplet in the first staff and a sixteenth-note eighth-note eighth-note triplet in the second staff. The second system starts at bar 57, marked with a circled '57'. Bar 58 is marked with a circled '58' and contains a piano (*p*) dynamic marking, a right-hand (RH) instruction, and a piano espressivo (*p espress.*) instruction. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 65-66

Quintet, first movement, Bars 293-294

Example 5.8: Sonata and Quintet, first movement Bars 33-44: Here one finds a “sinister” half-step triplet motif in the *ppp* and Piano 2 left hand, but in Bar 35 in the first piano both hands play in unison. In Bar 35 the first motif of the second subject enters and in Bar 39 the second motif, marked *sotto voce*. A “caressing” and light touch is asked for throughout, with clean articulation. The repeated C-sharp in Bars 39-40 is done with I/O to ensure clean articulation. In Bars 35-38

the dimension of 3:2 rhythm further intensifies the technical difficulties of controlling the different articulation in both hands.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 33-44

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (bars 33-36) features a treble staff with chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp* and *sempre pp*. The second system (bars 37-39) shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a similar accompaniment. The instruction *pp sotto voce* is present. The third system (bars 40-43) continues the melodic and accompanimental lines. The fourth system (bars 44) includes a piano part with a 'STR.' marking and a treble part with triplets. Arrows point to specific notes in bars 35 and 39.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 33-44



Musical score for Quintet, first movement, Bars 33-44. The score is in A major (three sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of five staves: four for the string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello/Double Bass) and one for the Piano. The score shows measures 33 through 44. Key markings include *pp*, *sempre pp*, *dimin.*, *p*, *pp*, *p sotto voce espress.*, *p sotto voce*, and *pp sotto voce*. There are also circled bar numbers 33, 35, 37, 39, and 41. The score ends with a double bar line and an asterisk.

Example 5.9: Quintet, third movement, Bars 57-62: In these fast repeated chords is found the second motif of the Scherzo theme, which appeared in a hushed form at first in Bar 13 (see the example under the heading of 'colour' below). The interpretation in the Quintet-form benefits

greatly from the incisiveness of the piano articulation. Marked with a *fortissimo* dynamic level, the repetitive movements are mainly vertical, and in the semiquaver groups of Bars 58 and 60 mainly vertical and I/O. The chords are played with a mixture of hand and arm weight with constant active/passive release, all of which happens in a “jacking-up” process culminating in a soft fugato (see next example). This can be compared with Bars 187-190 (see Examples 4.24, 4.27, 4.90 and 4.91 in Chapter 4) at the end of the Scherzo, where the staccato chords are also short/long, which poses a special difficulty of articulation, with the hands in an extended position, playing *fortissimo*.

Quintet, third movement, Bars 57-62



Quintet, third movement, Bars 187-190



Example 5.10: Sonata, third movement, Bars 67-79: Here the working out of the counterpoint is dependent on technique, in this case the independent articulation of the fingers. One of the pianos has to substitute for 2, 3 or 4 stringed instruments, making it an additional technico-interpretative problem. From Bar 71 onwards each voice has a “life of its own” in the developing of the fugato. In Piano 1 the fugato theme imitates the viola entrance and Piano 2 imitates the cello, so the inner ear of the pianist must provide these sound images as imaginative stimuli for correct sound production.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 67-79



The musical score is presented in three systems, each with two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is G minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (bars 67-70) shows a complex texture with many chords and some melodic lines. The second system (bars 71-73) features a fugato section where the right hand (Piano 1) has a melodic line and the left hand (Piano 2) has a rhythmic accompaniment. The third system (bars 74-79) continues the fugato with both hands having more prominent melodic lines. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, and *sempre p*.

5.3.3 Prototype: colouristic effects and contrast of timbre; Movement: 'other'

Example 5.11: Sonata, second movement, Bars 33-40: Here the modulation to E Major facilitates contrast of timbre with the previous material in A flat Major, in which the second movement starts and ends. Tonality is an important aspect of colouristic tone production in the piano. The melody line in Piano 1 (in the Quintet in second violin and viola) is reminiscent of a bassoon's timbre. This needs special attention to 'agogics and pointing' in the syncopated dynamic line in the right hand of Piano 1, with a cantabile active/passive touch. The right hand uses I/O and much lateral freedom at the same time, while the left hand uses a combination of vertical and lateral 'rotational' movements for the *arpeggiando* treatment.

Sonata, second movement, Bars 33-40



The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 33 to 36, and the second system covers bars 38 to 40. The key signature is E Major (three sharps). The score is written for two systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The right hand of Piano 1 (the upper staff in each system) plays a melodic line with syncopated dynamics and a cantabile touch. The left hand (the lower staff) provides an arpeggiated accompaniment. Performance markings include *poco f molto espress.* at the beginning of bar 33, *p* at the start of bar 34, *p dimin.* at the start of bar 35, *p poco f* at the start of bar 36, and *f molto espress.* at the start of bar 38. The score concludes with *f molto* at the end of bar 40.

In the following three examples the three motif groups of the Scherzo should demonstrate that different touches create different colours. The difficulties of the Scherzo are the quick alternation of soft, syncopated octaves and loud unsyncopated chords which have to come out with the right kind of “suppressed excitement” followed by bravura. Together with this the technique has to control the weight factor in the arm to produce a wide range of dynamic, freely achieved. See also further discussion of these examples under the heading of “Touch” at 5.3.6.

Example 5.12: Sonata and Quintet: Third movement, Bars 1-12: The cello plays the first theme in soft, “mysterious pizzicato” on a C-pedalpoint, which suits its idiomatic characteristics very well. In Piano 1 of the Sonata, these pizzicati have to be imitated by the pianist with a well-curved, firm finger touch, keeping close to the key. At the end of Bar 2, the *sempre pianissimo* syncopated rhythm, introduced by the violin and viola in the Quintet, is harder to realize in the piano parts of the Sonata. In the Quintet the piano part introduces only the semitonal countermelody of Bars 5-6, which is more straightforward to play than the soft, syncopated rhythms of Bars 1-12. Well-controlled vertical movement for the pizzicato notes, and lateral shifting of weight in the syncopated melody-notes are needed here.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 1-12

Scherzo.
Allegro.

pp
pp senza Ped.

Allegro.
pp senza Ped.

pp

1

7

Quintet, third movement, Bars 1-12

Scherzo
Allegro



1. Violine

2. Violine

Bratsche

Violoncell

Pianoforte

1

5

8

Example 5.13: Sonata and Quintet: Third movement, Bars 13-22: This “spooky” entrance of the second theme in the violin and viola, with a hushed semitone-relation-theme, creates more suppressed excitement in the atmosphere than the second piano introducing this theme in the Sonata on its own (it surely depends on the skill of the performer and therefore, by inference, on the technique and interpretation offered). Also in Bars 18-21, in the augmentation of the second theme, the string quartet *pizzicati* “work” better and more effectively than in the Sonata. In Piano 2 the *pianissimo* semi-quavers of Bars 13-18 must be played drily, with vertical detachment and very soft touch, with some I/O in Bars 14 and 16. In Piano 2, from Bars 18-21, the right-hand has to bring out the top voice of the augmented second theme.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 13-22

13 *pp*

A

15 *pp* 18

22 *ff* *fz* *fz* *fz* *col Ped.*

ff *fz* *fz* *fz* *col Ped.*

Quintet, third movement, Bars 13-22

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 13 and 14, showing a unison rhythm of piano and strings. The second system covers bars 15 through 22. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *piz.*, and *arco*, and includes performance instructions like 'pizz.' and 'arco'. Bar numbers 13, 15, 18, and 22 are circled.

Example 5.14: Sonata and Quintet: Third movement, Bars 23-28: Here the third theme enters with a joyful and heroic Beethoven-like theme in C Major. The Quintet benefits from the piano's volume and intensity in the unison rhythm of piano and strings. In the Sonata both pianos play the *fortissimo* chords with a combination of lateral, vertical and I/O with whole body gestures and total weight-release on each chord. This further demonstrates how Brahms uses octaves and chords to create *con spirito* and agitation in the Scherzo.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 23-28



Quintet: third movement, Bars 23-28



Example 5.15: Sonata, Third movement, Bars 189-200: Here occurs another important key shift which effectively changes the colour of the movement and has an “uplifting” effect. Brahms makes an abrupt change from c minor to C Major where the Scherzo moves into the trio, with material derived from the third theme of the Scherzo, Bars 23-28 (see previous example), which is also in C Major and not in the original c minor. These chords at the start of the Trio have to sing out in *poco forte* like a French horn, with a feeling for correct placement of the first beat in the bar. The tenor register of the piano is used here in Piano 1 and in the *ppp* for the first theme, to provide the right colour for the phrase. The right-hand uses mainly lateral movements and

has to contain the thirds and sixths filling-in of the chords within the hand, while the fifth or fourth fingers in the top voice use more weight to project melodically.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 189-200



The image displays a musical score for the third movement of a Sonata, covering bars 189 to 200. The score is written for piano and is in 6/8 time. It is divided into two systems. The first system begins at bar 189, which is circled. The piano part features a series of chords with moving inner voices (thirds and sixths) and a more prominent outer voice. The second system is marked 'Trio.' and includes dynamics 'poco f' and 'mf'. The score concludes with 'Fine.' in both systems.

Example 5.16: Sonata and Quintet: In the Finale (4th movement) Bars 1-12, the octave glides, upwards with a rising semitone, appear first in the cello and first violin parts, (the gliding is more idiomatic for strings than for piano), and then the piano part enters with the lowest entrance in Bar 3, used because of more resonance on the longer, lower piano strings. This corresponds with the second cello part of the original String Quintet, according to Lamberton's (1978) concept of its reproduction. These bars show the timbre of soft playing that still has to be *cantabile*. In Piano 1 and 2 the multiplicity of difficulties lies in correct judging of armweight and control of pedal and key speed to produce the "dead and quiet" start from nothing, in the

introduction to the fourth movement. Very little movement is required – with quiet hands not losing key contact, and slow vertical downwards release to make the single voices sing softly, invoking a string sound in the imaginative inner ear.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 1-12

Finale.
Poco sostenuto.

pp

Poco sostenuto.

pp

1

10

cresc.

f

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 1-12

Finale
Poco sostenuto

1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell
Pianoforte

pp *cresc.* *p*

① ⑩

One sees below that in the qpp the piano is also excluded at the start of the Coda, just like the start of the introduction shown above. This is apparently for idiomatic reasons when the string quartet enters with a transformation of the first theme of the fourth movement.

Coda, Bars 342-348

Presto, non troppo

p non legato *cresc.*

p non legato

p non legato

Presto, non troppo

p

Example 5.17: Sonata and Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 41-46 (also see Example 4.80 in Chapter 4): Here the main theme of the fourth movement enters in the cello and in Piano 2. The piano part of the Quintet and Piano 1 has the bassoon-like sixteenth notes. To produce the right

colour the touch has to be modified. The *tranquillo* melody of the cello needs quiet but firm hands in Piano 2, and the non-legato sixteenths, in which the interval of a third is important melodically and harmonically, need a touch in Piano 1 and in the *ppp* which is a combination of vertical, lateral and I/O. Tempo has to be maintained strictly.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 41-46



Allegro non troppo.
non legato
sempre p

41 **Allegro non troppo.**
sempre p tranquillo 46

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 41-46



Allegro non troppo (♩ = ♩)
p tranquillo

41 **Allegro non troppo** (♩ = ♩)
sempre p non legato 44

Example 5.18: Sonata and Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 321-341: Here Brahms again creates “darkness” with the Dflat/C falling half-tone figure in Piano 1 and in the *ppp*. This is a transformation of the main theme of the first movement used in the transition to the coda, which is here indicated as *sempre diminuendo e ritenuto*, which of course implies the need for much control of sound. Here again the quiet, supple hand for soft playing is needed, together with

legatissimo gliding along of fingers 4 and 5 in mainly lateral movement in the downwards chromatic lines of the top voice.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 321-341

The image displays a musical score for a piano and voice. It is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 321-341) features a piano accompaniment in the lower staves and a vocal line in the upper staves. The piano parts are marked *pp legato* and *sempre dimin. e ritard.*. The vocal line is marked *pp* and *dimin.*. Arrows point to specific notes in the vocal line. The second system (bars 332-341) continues the piano accompaniment and vocal line, with the piano parts marked *pp dimin.* and the vocal line marked *pp dimin.*. The score is in G-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time.

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 321-341



Musical score for Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 321-341. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Piano. The tempo is marked "Tempo I" and the mood is "tranquillo". The score includes dynamic markings such as "pp", "ppp", and "ppp dim.", and performance instructions like "sempre dim. e riten.", "arco", and "e riten.". Bar numbers 321 and 332 are circled in the score.

5.3.4 Prototype: fingering for security, independence and evenness; Movement: 'other'

Example 5.19: Sonata first movement, Bars 35-38 and 150-153: Fingering for legato, evenness and accuracy has to get special attention in Piano 1's part. The motif in Bar 35 (first motif of the second subject) starts with a leap and then thirds and fourths in both hands with a singing top voice. Suggested fingering is indicated in the second example below, Bars 150-153. One has to keep note of the contractions and extensions of the hands in Bars 150-153. Movement is mainly lateral, using a very soft touch for the first example, and a *fortissimo* touch for the second one. Phrasing is used here as an inherent interpretative tool, as well as to re-coordinate the hands between sounds.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 35-38



Musical score for Sonata, first movement, Bars 35-38. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system shows the right hand with chords and the left hand with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *pp* and *sempre pp*. The second system continues the triplet in the left hand and features a melodic line in the right hand. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. The third system shows the right hand with a melodic line and the left hand with a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *pp sotto voce*. The fourth system continues the triplet in the left hand and features a melodic line in the right hand. Dynamics include *p sotto voce*. Bar numbers 35, 37, and 38 are indicated.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 150-153



Musical score for Sonata, first movement, Bars 150-153. The score is in B-flat major and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows the right hand with a complex chordal passage and the left hand with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Fingerings are indicated above the notes in the right hand. The second system continues the chordal passage in the right hand and the eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. Bar number 151 is indicated.

Example 5.20: Other examples of passages in the first movement where careful fingering has to be worked out, avoiding stretching, twisting or crowding of the fingers, are: Bars 10-11; Bars 57-

58; Bars 178-179; Bars 281-282 and Bars 286-288, as shown below. Sometimes a redistribution between the two hands makes fingerings easier for the smaller hand (see Example 5.7).

Sonata, first movement, Bars 10-11

Musical score for Sonata, first movement, Bars 10-11. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system shows the right hand playing a melodic line with various fingerings (5, 4, 2, 4, 2, 1, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 5, 4) and the left hand playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system shows the right hand playing a melodic line with fingerings (2, 1, 2, 4, 2, 4, 5) and the left hand playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *sf*.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 57-58

Musical score for Sonata, first movement, Bars 57-58. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system shows the right hand playing a melodic line with fingerings (3, 4, 5, 1, 2, 4, 2, 1) and the left hand playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system shows the right hand playing a melodic line with fingerings (5, 3, 3, 5, 4, 2, 1) and the left hand playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *sf*.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 178-179

Sonata, first movement, Bars 281-282

Sonata, first movement, Bars 286-288

Example 5.21: In the second movement careful fingerings are mainly used for evenness, legato and a cantabile touch. Bar 85 in Piano 1, and Bar 86 in Piano 2, need to be fingered for agility with one finger gliding into the next, especially 4 and 5, for total evenness, while also controlling the amount of sound necessary for the *espressivo sotto voce* marking.

Sonata, second movement, Bars 83-87



Example 5.22: second movement, Sonata Bars 100-102: A very agile thumb is needed in Piano 1's texture. In the inverted melodic turn ornament in Bar 102, the two hands have to be in total unison when playing the turn.

Sonata, second movement, Bars 100-102

Example 5.23: In the third movement of the Sonata and Quintet, Bars 144-157, the role of body-gesture can be seen, used together with syncopation, which in its turn empowers the fingering in the realization of a perfect legato in playing octaves and sixths. In Bars 144 and 145 the dynamics range from a *piano* to a *fortissimo* within two Bars, demanding total tone-control combined with the legato-playing of octaves (in the Quintet). From Bar 147 onwards (in the Sonata) the thumbs are important in the fingering of the sixths in both hands. In the *ppp*, from Bar 146, the crotchet-octaves should be virtually legato, using lots of gliding between 4 and 5, and 1 and 2, together with pedal. Here the lateral movement of the hands, assisted by the free wrist, with minimal twisting, is essential. (See “virtual legato” at 5.3.10. Brahms’s music assumes the skill/craft of absolute familiarity with this technique; it truly shows the intimate relationship of technique and interpretation.)

Sonata, third movement, Bars 144-157

143 145

p cresc. *ff*

p cresc. *ff*

151

Quintet, third movement, Bars 144-157

Example 5.24: fourth movement, Sonata and Quintet, Bars 81-85 (also see Examples 50 and 51 in Chapter 4): Independence of the fingering for intrinsic strength is the issue here, with contrary motion arpeggiated figures, an agile left thumb in Bar 82, and slurred semiquavers in Bar 83, where the wrist moves vertically down and up. In the qpp the piano provides power and contrast of timbre to the sqp. Here the aspects which are combined are I/O, leaps, staccato and legato octaves. Similar contrary motion figures occur in Bars 141-145 and Bars 148-149, where correct fingering is crucial in fingers 4 and 5.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 81-85

Musical score for Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 81-85. The score is written for piano and features two systems of staves. The first system consists of a treble and bass staff. The second system also consists of a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Bar numbers 81 and 83 are circled. An arrow points to a specific note in bar 83 of the second system.

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 81-85

Musical score for Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 81-85. The score is written for piano and features two systems of staves. The first system consists of a treble and bass staff. The second system also consists of a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Bar numbers 81 and 83 are circled. An arrow points to a specific note in bar 83 of the second system. The signature "J. B. 25" is visible at the bottom of the second system.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 141-151



Example 5.25: Sonata and Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 301-306 and Bars 378-383: These are good examples of the fingering of thirds in similar rhythms for evenness, with a combination of V, L and I/O movements. It is seen once more that fingering and phrasing are closely related under the rubric of technique, and contribute objectively to a successful interpretation.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 301-306

Musical score for Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 301-306. The score is written for piano and features two systems of staves. The first system consists of a treble and bass staff, and the second system also consists of a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings like *f*. Fingering numbers (1-5) are provided for many notes. Bar numbers 301 and 305 are circled in the score. Arrows point to specific notes in the bass staff of the first system.

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 301-306

Musical score for Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 301-306. The score is written for piano and features two systems of staves. The first system consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass), and the second system consists of two staves (treble and bass). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, dynamic markings like *f*, and bar numbers 302 and 305 circled in the score. Arrows point to specific notes in the bass staff of the second system.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 378-383

374 378

380 383

f

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 378-383

5.3.5 Prototype: leaps; Movement: lateral

Example 5.26: Sonata and Quintet, first movement, Bars 130-132: These phrased, lateral leaps can be very awkward to play cleanly. The dynamic level is intensifying with a big crescendo in Bar 132, and the two hands have to control a uniform rhythmic grouping. The *ppp* is easier to execute than Piano 1 of the Sonata, in the sense of frequency of leaps. It is interesting that this is a perfectly valid application of the virtual legato principle where the crucial technical trick has to do with the movement of the arm, not of the fingers.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 130-132

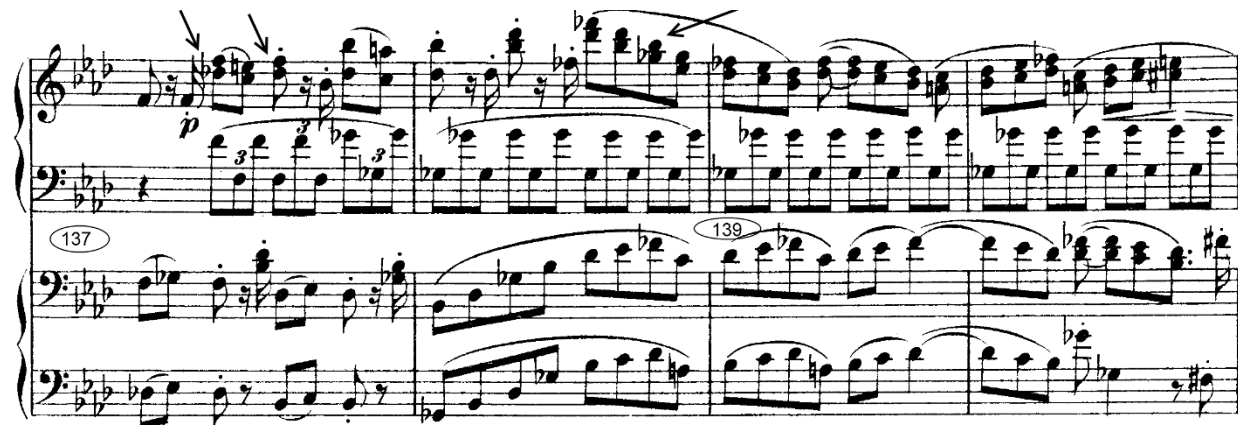


Quintet, first movement, Bars 130-132



Example 5.27: Sonata and Quintet, first movement, Bars 136-139: The quaver leaps in Piano 1 are executed with more comfortable containment than in the Quintet example, and more softly. The articulation of staccato in relation to phrasing is important to realise clearly. In the *ppp* the left hand leaps are larger (Bar 137) and in contrary motion to the right hand. Movements are mainly vertical in Bar 137, and mainly lateral in Bar 138-139. The left hand of Piano 1 is obviously static and quiet, so as not to interfere with the delivery of the contrapuntal component in the right hand.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 136-139



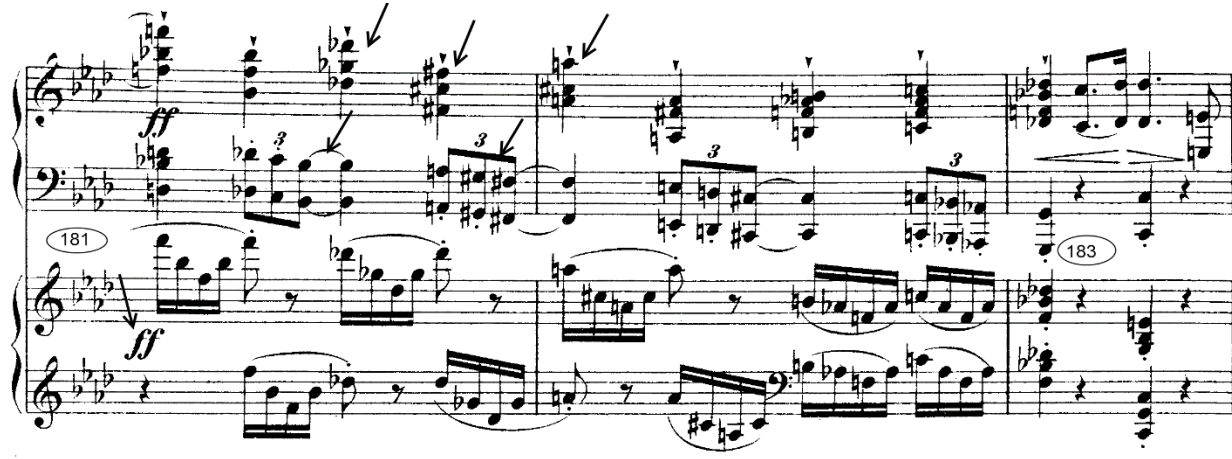
Quintet, first movement, Bars 136-139



Example 5.28: Sonata, first movement, Bars 181-183: Here more wide-ranging movements are called for and the dynamics are stronger than in the previous example. The right-hand plays staccato crotchet leaps, which have to be done with a *fortissimo* and firm touch, bouncing off the key surface directly after touching key-bed. The slurred-over octaves in the left hand have no leaps, but provide a kick-off for the right hand leaps. The right hand leaps are a combination of lateral movements and vertical upward take-offs, which have to be very resonant, preparing for

the *fortissimo* cadence in Bar 183, where a huge *ritardando* is a lead-in to the second theme in Piano 2.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 181-183



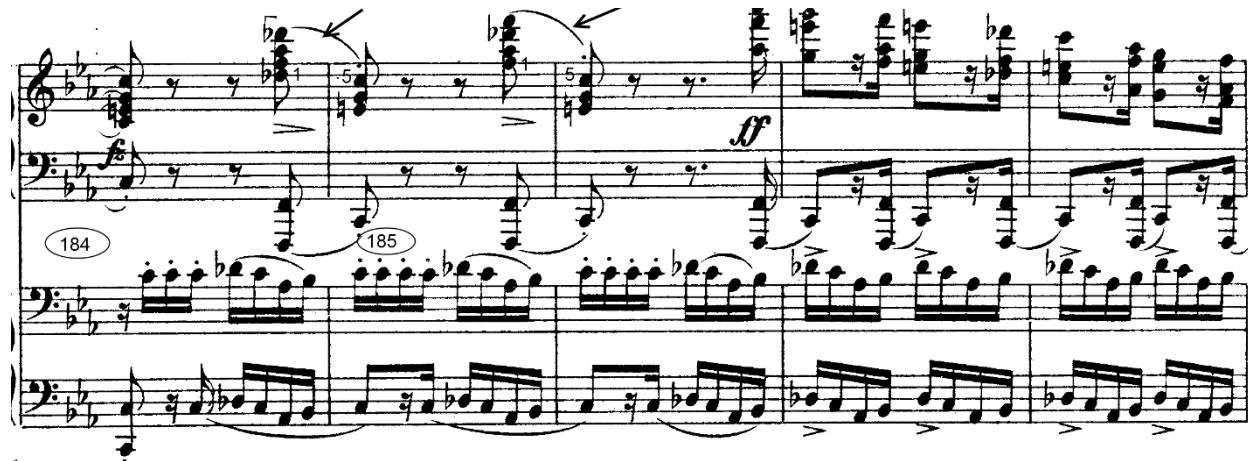
Example 5.29: Quintet, Scherzo, Bars 65-67: In the *ppp* and Sonata, both pianos, one finds again the typical left hand octave leaps in thirds and fifths, which must be done with a quick lateral flick of a free wrist. These transition leaps culminate in a fugato, so interpretatively the *fortissimo* has to be maintained while executing the leaps cleanly, until they resolve into the *piano* fugato.

Quintet, third movement, Bars 65-67



Example 5.30: Sonata and Quintet, Scherzo, Bars 184-185 (also see Examples 4.24 and 4.90 in Chapter 4): These leaps are coupled to fingering and to dynamics and phrasing, all to be thought about at the same time. The leap has to be done in one quick lateral movement downward, with the right hand thumb gliding into the right hand fifth finger, in order to pre-create a mental picture of reducing the leap to a shorter distance.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 184-185



Quintet, third movement, Bars 184-185



Example 5.31: Sonata and Quintet, Trio, Bars 235-241: In the quaver leaps of the right hand, those of the *ppp* and Piano 1 are slightly more difficult than those of Piano 2, because of the thought process in mentally rehearsing and controlling the directional moves. The combination

of difficulties in Piano 1 has to do with the rhythm and repetitive figure on one note in the left hand, which has to be perfectly fitted in with the right hand.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 235-241



Quintet, third movement, Bars 235-241



Example 5.32: Sonata and Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 141-148 and Bars 299-306 (see also Examples 4.44 and 4.54 in Chapter 4): The *pp* and Piano 2 have downwards double thirds in the left hand, and then both hands in Piano 1 have octave leaps in opposite directions (Bar 146), a typical Brahmsian feature, as seen many times previously. Touch and phrasing are as important as lateral and I/O movements, because it is interpretatively specifically marked by

Brahms as *ben marcato*. The piano provides power, contrast of timbre and incisiveness in the interpretation here. The combination of difficulties of technique are thus: leaps, thirds, octaves, slurs, fingering and quick lateral shifts.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 141-148

The image displays a musical score for the fourth movement of a sonata, specifically bars 141 through 148. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves per system, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for each system. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by a strong, incisive quality, marked *f ben marcato*. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and slurs, and technical challenges such as leaps, thirds, and octaves. The notation includes various articulations and dynamics, with the *f ben marcato* marking appearing in the first two systems. The bar numbers 141, 142, 145, and 147 are clearly marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 141-148

The image displays a musical score for a quintet, fourth movement, covering bars 141 to 148. The score is written for five instruments, represented by five staves. The key signature consists of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including frequent triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Bar 141 is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*) and the instruction *ben marcato*. Bars 145 and 147 are circled, likely indicating specific points of interest or analysis. The score concludes with a final cadence in bar 148.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 299-306

The image displays a musical score for the fourth movement of a Sonata, covering bars 299 to 306. The score is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 299-300) features a treble and bass staff for the right hand and a grand staff for the left hand. The second system (bars 301-305) also features a treble and bass staff for the right hand and a grand staff for the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings like *ben marcato* and *f*. Bar numbers 299, 301, and 305 are circled in the original image.

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 299-306



Example 5.33: Sonata, last page of the fourth movement, Bars 468-492: These are definitive, agile and forceful leaps, especially in the left hand. All the crotchets are played from directly on the key surface, with much key speed, and a sudden pull-away of the arm from the keys to create resonance. Chromatic movement helps to create great agitation towards the end. The leaps in the last staccato octaves (Bars 491-492) are done with a combination of lateral and vertical impetus, with whole-arm movements.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 468-492

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at bar 468, shows a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The tempo and dynamics markings include *poco a poco cresc.* and *f*. The second system, starting at bar 474, continues the piece with a more complex texture, featuring a *agitato* tempo and *f* dynamics. The score concludes at bar 492.

5.3.6 Prototype: phrasing and touch; active and passive movement; Movement: combinations

The first 22 bars of the first movement of Opus 34 excellently demonstrate many different touches, but since these bars already feature significantly in Chapter 4, the writer rather discusses the end of the first movement, which also has a quick succession of different touches, one after the other. This also relates well to the multi-dimensional character of technique which is ever present in this chapter.

Example 5.34: Sonata first movement, Bars 271-299 (also see Examples 4.10 and 4.11 in Chapter 4): In this Coda there is a build-up of dynamics from *pianissimo* (Bar 271) to *fortissimo* (Bar 286) with note values changing from crotchets (chords), to triplets, to semiquaver groups, and back to crotchets; therefore the touch differs dramatically and continuously. During this forward propulsion towards the powerful ending of the first movement, the fingers, hand and arm must act interdependently to create these differences in touch. In Bars 273-274 an *espressivo* major/minor “gloominess” has to be realised in the very legato touch of the left hands in Piano 1 and 2. In Bars 281-282 the phrasing assists the *accelerando* and the accents, so the lateral movement uses more arm weight here, and still more in Bars 286-289. These crotchet chords can be thought of in pairs, while retaining their individual strength and power. In Bars 290-291 there are quick horizontal shifts between the groups of eight semiquavers which then change in Bars 293-294 to groups of four quavers, and in Bar 295 to each staccato-quaver on its own, still maintaining force. In Bars 296-298 the phrasing (reversed – weak to strong – slurs) aids arm weight of the crotchet leaps.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 271-299

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 271-279) includes piano and violin parts. The piano part is marked *pp legato ed espress.* and features a circled bar number 271. The violin part is marked *dimin.* and features a circled bar number 273. The second system (bars 279-283) includes piano and violin parts. The piano part is marked *cresc. ed un poco acceler.* and features a circled bar number 279. The violin part is marked *cresc. ed un poco acceler.* and features a circled bar number 283. The score concludes with a *Tempo I.* section marked *f ed agitato* and *ff*.

This musical score is for a piano piece, spanning measures 286 to 298. The music is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The score is presented in a grand staff format, with a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The right hand (treble clef) features a complex melodic line with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. The left hand (bass clef) provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 286 begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) and an accent. Measures 289 and 290 contain a section marked with a 'U' (likely for 'Unison' or 'Uppercut'), where the right hand plays a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign at the end of measure 298.

The whole Andante (second movement) is a treasury of opportunity for “musical” pianism and the management of expressive, persuasive, “gentle” pianism (touches) as exemplified in the Intermezzi of Opuses 76, 116, 117, 118 and 119. This is a special kind of pianism to which Brahms is a distinguished contributor, especially in the latter-mentioned. Many different touch demands occur in conjunction with body gesture, colour changes (such as the key-change from A flat Major to E Major in Bar 33 of the Andante) and constant active/passive playing (referred to in Chapter 3) as well as coordination (the relaxation of muscles not in use).

Example 5.35: Sonata and Quintet, second movement, Bars 1-4: The main melody features in the *ppp*, and in Piano 2. The charmingly hesitant accompaniment in the strings and in Piano 1 is the echo of the main theme, and has to be done with two touches (strokes) of the E flat on top, in the nature of a vague presence. The E flat is always touched at a different point of the key, vertically and I/O. The metaphor of rocking a cradle comes to mind. The main theme, with prominent thirds, is reminiscent of the “hammerless” and technically demanding sound characteristic of the posthumous Schubert B flat major Sonata, D 960 and is articulated on a completely different level of sound from that of the accompaniment in Piano 1. The active/passive touch of the melody releases an *espressivo* and singing sound, reminiscent of a lullaby. The multiple difficulties are situated in the control of these two levels of sound, but still in a *pianissimo, molto dolce* mode, with a subtle sense of *rubato*.

Sonata, second movement, Bars 1-4



Quintet, second movement, Bars 1-4

Andante, un poco Adagio

1. Violine *pp*

2. Violine

Bratsche *pizz. pp*

Violoncell *pp*

Pianoforte *p espress. sotto voce*

Example 5.36: Quintet, second movement, Bars 27 and 109-126 (see also Example 4.62 in Chapter 4): In this movement the second violin only comes to the foreground in Bar 27, with the same theme that is heard again in the Coda (last nine bars of the movement, starting in Bar 119). The slow movement ends with a *pianissimo*, and the repetitive figure of Bar 27 dying away, in which copious technico-interpretative challenges are embodied, such as voicing, weight balance and shaping. Also the ever-present octaves and sixths are presented here within *espressivo legatissimo* playing, such as Bars 109-114. The multiplicity of difficulties in the soft and gentle touch of this Coda, from Bar 118, is mainly situated in the listening skills of the pianist; these aural skills in acting through the mind, nervous system and muscles are quintessential to the refinement of technical skills, which, in turn, are mandatory, at the highest level of execution, in the interpretation of music of this level of sophistication.

Quintet, second movement, Bar 27

poco acceler. *a tempo*

arco *espress.* *cresc.* *cresc. e poco string.*

espress. *cresc.* *cresc. e poco string.*

cresc. *arco* *p cresc. e poco string.*

poco acceler. *a tempo* *poco string.*

cresc.

27

Quintet, second movement, Bars 109-126



un poco string
 poco f molto espressa cresc. f
 cresc.
 poco f molto espressa cresc. f
 109 un poco string
 poco f espressa cresc. f
 un poco riten
 f sempre f espress
 cresc. pizz.
 115 f sempre f espress mf espress
 f dim. p dolce pp 118 cresc. f
 pp mf
 poco riten
 dim. dim. dim. pp
 121 dim. poco riten
 dim. pp

In the Sonata, third movement (Scherzo), Bars 1-37 (see also the above section on colours), quick-changing touches introduce the first three themes (motives) of the Scherzo. Each hand has to move independently within its own touch, but the hands must also be well co-ordinated in relation to each other. Here the role of shaping and pedalling in legato playing is especially

important and dependent on the pianist's listening abilities. The following three examples demonstrate this aspect.

Example 5.37: In the first motif (Bars 1-12) of the Scherzo one finds syncopation over a pizzicato pedal-point, with filled-in thirds and semitonal aspects. The 'combinations' in this case are the weight-balancing in the arm which needs good co-ordination, with a singing top voice in the right-hand, using just enough weight to sustain the *pianissimo* legato-sound, with small agogic accents on the main beat. In the Quintet one should note the crescendo/diminuendo in the three short melodic motifs of Bars 5-6, 7-8 and 9-12 with the third one having the most sound, only using slight shades of pedal on the longer notes. Again this 'pedagogical' information is at the same time targeted towards technique as well as interpretation.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 1-12

The image displays a musical score for a Scherzo, Allegro, in 6/8 time. The score is written for piano (pp) and includes the instruction 'senza Ped.' (without pedal). The music is divided into two systems. The first system covers bars 1-8, and the second system covers bars 9-12. The right hand features a melodic line with syncopation and filled-in thirds, while the left hand provides a bass line with similar syncopation. Arrows point to specific notes in the right hand and the corresponding bass line in the left hand. A circled '1' is in the first measure of the first system, and a circled '8' is in the first measure of the second system. The score concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a final note in the left hand.

Quintet, third movement, Bars 1-12

Scherzo
Allegro

1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell
Pianoforte

sempre pp
pp
pp
pp
pp

pizz.
pp
pp
pp
pp

1 5 8 12

Example 5.38: second motif (Bars 12-22): Here the staccato semiquaver followed by a staccato quaver becomes an “obsessive” figure constantly repeated throughout the Scherzo. In Piano 2 the touch stays dry and close to the key, and Piano 1 just fills in the quickly decaying harmonies with a feather-light vertical touch.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 12-22

13 *pp*

15 *pp*

22 *ff* *col Ped.*

ff *col Ped.*

Example 5.39: third motif (Bars 22-37): The pianistic touch used for this bravura chord playing is already discussed in the above section under the heading of “chords” (Example 5.5).

Sonata, third movement, Bars 22-37



Musical score for Sonata, third movement, Bars 22-37. The score is in G minor, 6/8 time, and consists of four systems of piano and grand staff notation. The first system (bars 22-26) features a "col Ped." instruction and dynamic markings of *ff* and *fz*. The second system (bars 27-28) continues the texture. The third system (bars 29-35) shows a *ff* dynamic and a slur over the right-hand part. The fourth system (bars 36-37) concludes the passage with a *fz* dynamic. Arrows point to specific chordal textures and slurs throughout the score.

Example 5.40: An excellent example of “phrasing demanding touch” can be seen in the slurring of the fourth movement (the Sonata and Quintet) Bars 145-160. This special slurred effect dominates the music from here, and it must be successfully taught, learned and practised. Note

that Piano 2 has five groups of two slurred quavers. This sophisticated cross-rhythm with crossed slurs demands a very sophisticated technico-rhythmic sense to be interpreted effectively. In Bars 145-148 the firm *ben marcato forte* touch has a constant down/up movement on the slurs, and the staccato touch, in Bars 157-158 right hand, is done from the surface of the key, while the left hand keeps a firm “bite” on the fifth finger staccato. Similar patterns come back in Bars 301-316, with some of them more difficult, such as the right hand octave jumps of Piano 1 (Bars 315-316). Again a combination of all these “technical instructions” will produce the right “sounds” resulting in the “right” interpretation.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 145-160



157 160

dimin. *p dolce*

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 145-160

145 149

dimin. *p dolce*

The image shows a musical score for a piece, likely a vocal and piano work. The score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a common time signature. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line (soprano and alto parts) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line features several measures with dynamic markings of *dimin* and a tempo marking of *poco riten*. The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with chords and a left-hand part with a rhythmic pattern. The second system starts at measure 155 and ends at measure 160. It continues the vocal and piano parts, with the vocal line again marked *dimin* and *poco riten*. The piano accompaniment features a more active left-hand part with eighth-note patterns and a right-hand part with chords. Arrows point to specific notes in the piano accompaniment in both systems.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 301-316


5.3.7: Prototype: rhythm; Movement: 'other'

Example 5.41: Quintet, first movement, Bars 261-299: The first movement is indeed bristling with rhythmic, motivic material for technical analysis. One instance, where different rhythmic motives are used to create dynamics, starts in the Coda from Bar 261, where the imitating entrances of the strings at *pianissimo* level, introduce triplets in Bar 281, which in turn become sixteenths, creating the forward propulsion and build-up of sound which conclude the Coda.

From being totally passive in Bars 261-279, and reminding one of the original cello part of the String Quintet, the *ppp* plays a major role in helping to build up a “presence of sound”, starting with semiquavers (Bar 283), proceeding to quavers (Bar 290) and then to *fortissimo* crotchets (Bar 296), creating the “stormy and powerful” ending of the first movement. In Bar 290 the strings have the semiquavers of the piano motif, coming from the beginning of the first movement, for the first time. Here the strings imitate the piano “forcefully and percussively”. The piano part in its turn (Bar 290) has a melodic shaping, arguably imitating the string sounds. This ties in with the concept of “two struggling entities” featuring throughout the first movement (Van der Westhuizen conversations 2008). Then in Bar 293 the material again switches parts. The fact that the material of the ending of the first movement also features aspects such as different colours, chordal leaps, and touches, further proves the multi-dimensional character of music in which interpretation and technique are constantly intertwined.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 261-299

Poco sostenuto

dimin. e poco riten. *pp dolce* *pp dolce* *pp arco* **Poco sostenuto** *pp*

molto p *pp* *p dolce*

pp *pp* *pp* *pp* *dimin.* *dimin.* *dimin.* *dimin.*

261 265 271

acceler. poco a poco

p cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

279 *acceler. poco a poco* 281

p *cresc.*

Tempo I

Tempo I

283 *Tempo I*

f agitato

286 *ff*

Musical score for piano, measures 289-295. The score is written for four staves: two for the right hand (treble clef) and two for the left hand (bass clef). The key signature is three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *ff sosten.*. Measure numbers 289, 290, 292, and 295 are circled. Arrows point to specific notes in measures 290 and 292.

Example 5.42: The Scherzo and Trio bristle with rhythmic devices to create “excitement, anticipation and joy” (Heneghan conversations 2007), which are all interpretative effects. In the first 28 Bars (also discussed at Examples 5.37, 5.38 and 5.39 under the heading of ‘phrasing and touch’) the syncopated/unsyncopated beats in a *pianissimo* range cause a surging of energy forwards, towards the chords in Bar 23. The three quavers with dotted crotchet in Bars 29-30 metamorphose into the material used in the Trio in Bars 197-200, which must be delivered with great assurance and strict rhythm. Thus in the first 28 Bars of the Scherzo the multi-dimensionality is found in the mixture of objectivity and subjectivity in the sound (soft and muted), the melody (repeated motif at the start), the imagination (suppressed excitement), the rhythm (strictness and stability) and the harmony (significantly beautiful chordal progressions).

Sonata, third movement, Bars 1-30

Scherzo.
Allegro.

pp
pp senza Ped.

1 **Allegro.**
pp senza Ped.

7 *pp*

15 *pp*

22 *ff*
col Ped.

ff
col Ped.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 197-200

Example 5.43: The rhythmic motif (three quavers and dotted crotchet) of the previous example is slightly modified in Bars 100-109 and 158-167 (also see Examples 4.20 and 4.88 in Chapter 4). The rhythm is situated in alternating hands, so the cuing of the hands (to trigger perfect continuity in one flowing line) has to be clear in articulation, with matching thumbs and the same *fortissimo* coming from the forearms, with free wrists. Much I/O movement and active/passive (reactive) touch is needed, as well as suitable fingering to deliver the appropriate power in the fast repeated notes.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 158-167



Example 5.44: In the Scherzo, Bars 177-186, syncopated chords derived from the first motif of the Scherzo change into chords on the beat, in Bar 187, using the exciting staccato sixteenth/quaver figure of the previous example, to end the Scherzo in a manner similar to Schubert's String Quintet in C major D. 956 (referred to in Chapter 1), with the D flat/ C falling-half-tone (also heard in the first movement main-theme, Bars 12-15, of Opus 34).

Sonata. Third movement, Bars 177-186

8

ff

177

ff sempre

179

184

187

ff

Sonata, first movement, Bars 12-15:



Example 5.45: The building-up of dynamics and tension towards a climax, by the use of texture and rhythm, can be clearly seen in the ending of the fourth movement (also see Examples 4.90-4.93 in Chapter 4). From Bar 321 (the transition to the Coda) to Bar 492 (last bar of the movement) there are constant changes in texture and a gradual increase in volume. The Coda (from Bar 342) accounts for about one third of the movement (a typically Beethovenish trait), juxtaposing the first and second themes with their different textures. In Bars 321-341 one finds an outline of the first theme of the first movement, built on the D flat/C falling semitone, in *tranquillo* crotchets. Then the Coda enters in Bar 342 with a transformation of the first theme of the fourth movement, moving in quavers. In Bar 362-438 the fullness of harmony and massive sonority necessary are given by the *ppp*. In Bar 368 the *fortissimo* non-legato octave texture against the strings shows a piling up of the theme downwards, changing into chords in Bar 392. In Bar 431 the first and second subjects occur together in *piu forte* and *agitato*, and in Bars 439-466 there is a transformation of both themes, leading back to a soft start in Bar 467. The ending of the movement then starts with “gentle” syncopations in Bar 467. From Bar 478 the strings move “agitatedly” in a chromatic line of *portamento* crotchets, with the *ppp* moving rhythmically in agile syncopated quavers. (In the Sonata both pianos play the syncopated quavers alternately in the right and left hands together, calling for special attention to synchronization). The syncopation and chromaticism work together in the final build-up towards the end of the movement. Much vertical and I/O movement are needed with free forearms and relaxed shoulders. In Bars 491-492 the movement ends with a “gruff” cadential pattern of quavers in the sq and Piano 1.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 321-352

pp legato *sempre dimin. e ritard.*

321

pp legato *sempre dimin. e ritard.*

332

pp dimin.

pp dimin.

Presto, non troppo.

342 **Presto, non troppo.**

p non legato

p *fp non legato*

348 *fp non legato*

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 362-374

8
fresc.
fresc.
f *cresc.*
cresc.
362 *fresc.* 367

8
ff
ff
ff
ff
368 *ff non legato*

374

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 392-403

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 392 to 396. It features four woodwind staves (flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon) and a piano part. The piano part is written in both treble and bass clefs. Bar 392 is marked with a circled number and a dynamic marking of *ff*. Bar 396 is also marked with a circled number. The second system covers bars 398 to 401. Bar 398 is marked with a circled number and a dynamic marking of *ff*. Bar 401 is marked with a circled number. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like *ff*.

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 431-441

più f sempre ed agitato
più f sempre ed agitato
più f sempre ed agitato
f ed agitato
431
più f sempre ed agitato

p dolce
p dolce
p dolce
436
439
tranquillo
p dolce

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 467-475

poco a poco riten **a tempo**

p *poco a poco cresc.*

pizz.

poco a poco riten **a tempo**

pp *p* *poco a poco cresc.*

p poco a poco cresc.

poco a poco cresc.

poco a poco cresc.

467 470 473

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 476-492

476

f agitato

arco

arco

f agitato

f agitato

482

f agitato

8...

487

f agitato

f

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 468-492

468 *poco a poco cresc.*

474 *agitato f*

480

486 *f* 491

5.3.8 Prototype: textures; Movement: combinations

A wealth of contrapuntal textural devices is immediately identifiable from listening to the fourth movement of the f minor Piano Quintet, even without the score. In the next examples from the Sonata's fourth movement, the main theme repeats itself over and over with different *legato* and harmonic textures, inter alia. In Bar 198 chords, in Bar 206 *stretto* in sixths, in Bar 211 single voice, in Bar 216 octaves, in Bar 222 again sixths, in Bar 226 octaves, thirds and other double intervals are used. The interest of the listener is thus maintained by the different harmonic treatments of the ongoing first motif of the theme. In the following examples other technical aspects revolve mainly around quick hand shifts and correct fingering in both hands.

Example 5.46: Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 184-229

non legato
p
184

p
190
sempre dolce
I

sempre dolce
I
197

This musical score is for a piano piece, spanning measures 205 to 229. It is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a 3/4 time signature. The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).
Measure 205: The piece begins with a *cresc.* marking. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present.
Measure 211: The music transitions to a *p dolce* (piano dolce) section, characterized by a softer, more lyrical melody in the right hand.
Measure 213: The dynamics shift to *pp* (pianissimo). The texture becomes more intricate with overlapping lines in both hands.
Measure 216: The *pp* dynamic continues, with a focus on harmonic texture and melodic interplay.
Measure 219: A *p poco a poco cresc.* (piano poco a poco crescendo) marking is introduced, signaling a gradual increase in volume and intensity.
Measure 222: The crescendo continues, with the right hand playing a more active, rhythmic role.
Measure 225: The dynamics reach *fp* (fortissimo), indicating a powerful and energetic section.
Measure 229: The piece concludes with a final *fp* dynamic, featuring a strong harmonic resolution in both hands.

5.3.9 Prototype: thirds, sixths and octaves; Movement: in-and-out

In Chapter 4, Brahms's use of thirds, sixths and octaves has been demonstrated extensively, and has been isolated as the most important immediately recognizable visual aspect of his piano music and that which gives all Brahms's music its unique sound. The writer has selected only a limited number of "marriage" examples below.

Example 5.47: In Bars 137-139 of the first movement *ppp* (also see Example 4.37 in Chapter 4), one finds several combined difficulties. These legato double-thirds move laterally, with some I/O movement and voicing of the top note of the thirds. They have to be played softly, including the staccato sixteenth notes, two note phrasings of sixths and thirds, as well as staccato thirds. All of this happens in contrary motion, and is technically, because mentally, difficult to control and synchronize.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 137-139



Example 5.48: In Bars 149-151 of the Sonata, first movement, the multiplicity of technical aspects lies in the execution of leaps, triplets, filled-in octaves, a legato chordal-sweep in Bar 151, much top-voicing, volume control of the *fortissimo* sound, and a combination of vertical, lateral and I/O movements in both hands. This might be offered as the almost ultimate presence of technical devices occurring either simultaneously or in very quick succession in a nexus bordering on the impossible. Only a composer of Brahms's assurance, experience and intimate knowledge of the limits of idiomaticism would have attempted to place such technical challenges

before his interpreters, aware as he would have been of the insoluble interdependence of technique and interpretation and how the art is limited by the craft. The examples that follow show limiting cases of these principles in action, where the history of great performance and distinguished interpreters has proved its feasibility.

Sonata, first movement, Bars 149-151



Example 5.49: Sonata and Quintet, third movement, Bars 57-67: Here the double *forte* dynamics culminate in the refined fugato beginning at Bar 67. In the Sonata, the transition of Bars 65-67 consists of leaps in the left-hand octaves which have to be clearly and cleanly articulated by using the correct leverage of the wrists and arms. In the Quintet this repetition of the second theme greatly benefits from the piano's incisiveness, its fuller volume relative to that of the sq, and the rhythmic "pulsation" of its sixteenth/quaver figure.

Sonata, third movement, Bars 57-67

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of a Sonata, covering bars 57 to 67. The score is written in 2/4 time and the key of B-flat major. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes bars 57 through 62, and the second system includes bars 63 through 67. The notation is complex, featuring a variety of rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The music is characterized by dense chordal textures and intricate rhythmic patterns. Bar 57 is marked with a forte (ff) dynamic. Bar 67 is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The score is presented in a standard musical notation format, with treble and bass clefs for each system.

Quintet, third movement, Bars 57-67



Example 5.50: qpp and Sonata Piano 1, Bars 234-241 (also see Examples 4.12 and 4.13 in Chapter 4): The Scherzo in particular demonstrates Brahms's bravura use of octaves to create "con spirito and agitato" as seen in this extract. Staccato octaves in the right hand, using correct weight transfer, and repeated octaves in the left hand, have to be articulated clearly. The trill in Bars 240-241 needs special attention because of the octave placement that has to resolve in the right hand.

Quintet, third movement, Bars 234-241

Musical score for Quintet, third movement, Bars 234-241. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, two bass clefs, and a grand staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Bar 234 is circled in the first treble staff, and bar 241 is circled in the second treble staff. There are arrows pointing to specific notes in bars 234 and 241. The grand staff shows a complex accompaniment with triplets and other rhythmic patterns.

Sonata. third movement, Bars 234-241

Musical score for Sonata, third movement, Bars 234-241. The score is written for four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Bar 233 is circled in the second treble staff, bar 235 is circled in the first bass staff, and bar 241 is circled in the second bass staff. There are arrows pointing to specific notes in bars 235 and 241. The score features complex textures with triplets and other rhythmic patterns, and dynamic markings like *cresc.*, *mf*, and *fp*.

Example 5.51: fourth movement, Bars 240-246: In the qpp the left hand has octaves and the right hand has different chordal fillings-in, so a different touch is needed at the same time in the two hands. The one hand plays staccato while the other one is slurred, and vice versa. Much I/O movement is needed in these bars, but the hands stay close to the keys. Rhythm stays strict but with forward propulsion. Thus the in/out movement here partners with the prototype of thirds/sixths/octaves in producing the right kind of sound/interpretation.

Quintet, fourth movement, Bars 240-246



The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 240 to 243. Bar 240 is circled, and arrows point to specific notes in the piano part. The second system covers bars 244 to 246, with bar 244 circled. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, staccato markings, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'fz'.

5.3.10 Prototype: virtual legato; Movement: lateral

Virtual legato is a Heneghan 'term'/coinage, responding to what the American authorities Nelita True and Leon Fleischer said about legato, namely that it is 'in the ear,' so anything that *sounds* legato is legato. This opens up all kinds of possibilities to make successive sounds appear, to the ear, as connected, although to the mind and muscles it is not possible to join them. The arpeggio of G [third finger] to C [thumb] in the rising C major arpeggio in the right hand is the most obvious and rudimentary example. But anywhere that the forearm assists the fingers by moving quickly in a lateral direction (up or down the keyboard), thereby 'deceiving' the ear into believing that the result is 'legato', qualifies for the Heneghan designation of *virtual legato*. This would of course not apply to creating legato by using the pedal which, in a sense, is real legato, because the sounds actually can be joined. In music, legato, as distinct from staccato (meaning disconnected) but in common with it, may be modified by qualifiers such as *molto*, *poco*, *mezzo*, *meno* and *non*.

In musico-artistic terms legato is said to be 'in the ear'; it is what the ear detects that determines the nature of the related sounds. In pianism sounds are typically connected by the fingers acting independently of one another, simply because a sound held by one finger resting in the keyboard can be succeeded by a second sound, controlled by another finger in the same hand, in a kind of toggling action where the sounds are truly connected, if the notes are physically near to one another and within the span of the hand, the first being released (by a skilful use of the ear) only when the second intervenes. This is a real legato. When this is physically not possible (typically where a wide leap intervenes), the fingers themselves cannot effect the legato, because the first sound must be quitted. This deficiency can be corrected by closing the time gap between the sounds until it approaches zero. This is accomplished by the speed of the arm movement while the finger must necessarily be removed from the keyboard as it moves, but only for so short a time that the ear cannot detect the break or at least accepts the plausibility of the resulting deception. This inevitably involves a lateral movement of the arm, which is also capable of moving very quickly to a purpose. It is artistically critical to realize the potential of this skill. It can not only simulate legato (virtual legato) but it can control any of the intervening modifiers of both staccato and legato by using the arm as agent rather than the fingers alone.

Example 5.52: Quintet, first movement, Bars 12-16 (also see Example 4.57 in Chapter 4): The sq presents the grand opening theme in unison with energetic *fortissimo* playing, while the piano

creates a virtual legato line with the placement of both hands in groups of four quavers, and a topmost chromatic line within the long phrase of four bars. Circular movements moving around a free wrist as well as horizontal (lateral) movements are used here to arrive at the right interpretational angle.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 12-16

Example 5.53: Sonata and Quintet, first movement, Bars 36-38: Virtual legato is created in upwards thirds (Sonata) and octaves (Quintet - ppp).

Sonata, first movement, Bars 36-38

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system covers the beginning of bar 36, featuring a piano (*pp*) and *sempre pp* dynamic. The second system continues bar 36 and begins bar 37, with dynamics *p* and *pp*. The third system continues bar 37 and begins bar 38, with dynamics *pp sotto voce* and *p sotto voce*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Quintet, first movement, Bars 36-38:



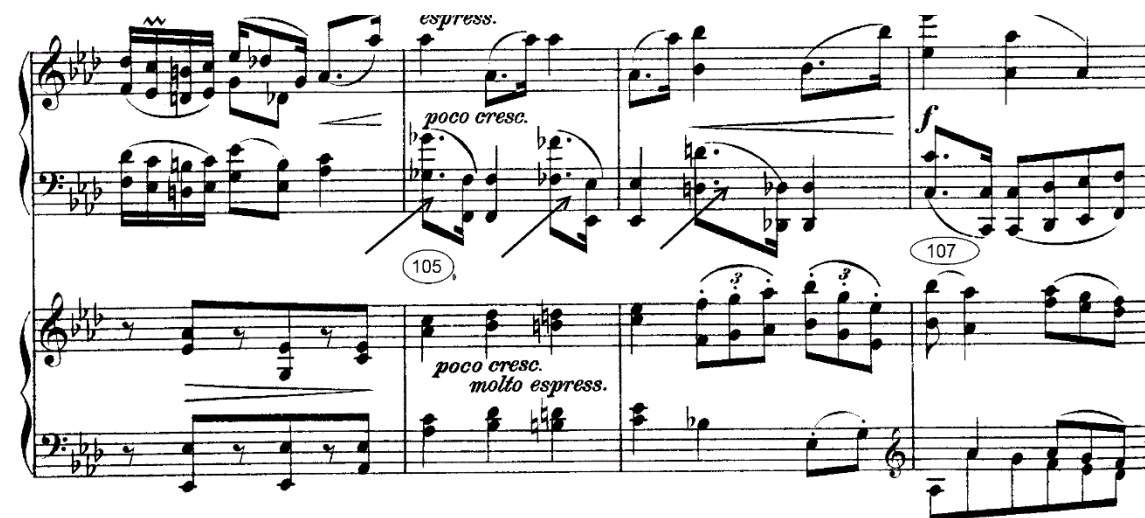
Example 5.54: first movement, Quintet, Bars 171-174: These semiquaver passages have much thumb-passing and virtual legato, with a balanced arm (also see under the heading of ‘fingering’). This kind of virtuoso piano writing occurs extensively in the Paganini Variations Opus 35 and in the B flat Piano Concerto Opus 83, amounting to a Brahmsian ‘hallmark.’

Quintet, first movement, Bars 171-174



Example 5.55: second movement, Sonata, Bars 105-107: The left-hand creates a “fake” but nonetheless effective and convincing legato in the downward leaps. Fingering is crucial here. Again, the trick of reducing the mental leap (in Bar 105 from a minor ninth, thumb to thumb, to a semitone, fifth finger to thumb) is indispensable as an additional aid to accuracy. This is a perfect example of where the interpretation calls for an effect which could be seen as an impossibility unless technical skill comes to its aid. Brahms, himself a virtuoso pianist, would have known that his technical armoury was equal to this demand and therefore his composition became idiomatic from the application of this certainty and because of it.

Sonata, second movement, Bars 105-107



Example 5.56: fourth movement, Sonata, Bars 226-230: The right-hand of Piano 1 and left-hand of Piano 2 create virtual legato not in the halftones, but when a full tone has to sound legato. This passage of course should also be expertly pedaled to ensure that all horizontal lines sound superbly legato.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 226-230



Example 5.57: fourth movement, Sonata Bars 369-372: This is not a real legato because the hands lose some legato in the downward surge maintaining the *fortissimo* touch. Fast arm movements will, however, assist in power without the need to turn the hand. So the virtual legato principle has wide applicability in controlling the nature of both legato and non legato passages. Then in Bar 372 Brahms gives “permission” for a real non-legato.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 369-372



Example 5.58: fourth movement, Sonata, Bars 388-392: Here the single melodic line changes when octaves are incorporated in the flow; the gliding of the left hand thumb in Bars 388 and 399 moves into a quasi-virtual legato created in the left hand octaves of Bar 391-392.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 388-392



Example 5.59: fourth movement: Sonata, Bars 435-439: The double thirds in the left hand of Piano 1 can be done, with correct fingering, as a real legato, but the chords of the right hand need pedalling to create a virtual legato. The principle is, nevertheless, well served if considered from the point of view of the fast arm movements characteristic of it.

Sonata, fourth movement, Bars 435-439



5.4 Summing up

After analysing the above ten prototypes with their corresponding appropriate movements in this way, it should be clear to the reader at this stage that the truism about the inseparable linkage between technique and interpretation is grounded on provable facts. Technique as pianism is a subjective device in which the ear adapts each example to its proper artistic use. Pianism is a much more comprehensively artistic term than pure technique and in fact lends to technique the subjectivity which “marries” it to interpretation. The link between Chapter 3 (generic criteria), Chapter 4 (exclusive application to Brahms works) and Chapter 5 (the inseparable link between technique and interpretation in Opus 34) has now been addressed in sufficient detail to come to certain conclusions in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

Having at this stage extensively analysed pianism in Brahms and Brahmsian pianism (chapters 3 and 4) as well as the matter of technique as a vehicle for interpretation in Brahms's Opus 34 (chapter 5), the writer came to the following conclusions:

6.1 Brahms's Quintet as supreme challenge in chamber music repertoire

Potter (2008:44) claims:

A great string quartet provides the most remarkable example of synergy in our culture. Four people, whose sole connecting link is a skill in playing stringed instruments, come together and something magical happens. Over and above the voices of two violins, viola and cello, a 'fifth voice' can be heard, a corporate personality that is more than just the sum of its parts.

Analogously it can be asked if this can be said about the Piano Quintet as medium (hearing a 'sixth voice') in Brahms's Piano Quintet Opus 34, when listening to examples of famous string quartets, for example the Budapest Quartet, in ensemble with the distinguished British pianist, Clifford Curzon. Potter's rather assertive and exclusivist claim, if not out of context, must also be re-evaluated in the light of its implications. Is it paying tribute to the collective mind (performance without a conductor) of chamber music players in ensemble and, if so, should it not fairly reflect the claims of all the distinguished composers who have served this rich field of musical endeavour? Brahms, 18 of whose 26 major chamber works incorporate the piano, is generally, and not without copious justification, regarded as having reached the peak of his genius with his Quintets, the earlier Piano Quintet (the subject of this thesis) and the Clarinet Quintet (Opus 115).

The fact that Opus 34 existed in three distinct forms, indicating that Brahms battled exhaustively with its demon during its period of gestation, is proof enough of its formidable nature, on many counts. It is additionally significant that the two surviving versions define this inner conflict

provocatively, showing clearly that the string quartet and the piano were seen as two, not five, opposing, as indeed also complementary, forces.

A study of this towering work needs no apologies; the fact that the piano features in both versions raises the question, indeed the certainty, of Brahms's comfort level within the capabilities and potential for ground-breaking creativity in his own chosen instrument, the piano. The reasons for the survival of the earlier version for two pianos, which enjoys great popularity within its own field for those with the technical and interpretative powers to address it (the even earlier, abandoned, String Quintet not having satisfied Brahms's perfectionism), added urgency to this enquiry. The Quintet embodies rich material for study and raised many interesting questions. It must be obvious that its sources in Brahms's characteristic pianism were so representative of his genius that even he could not bring himself to dispose of a work so rich in the very essences of what virtuoso pianism is about. The study therefore concentrated on the pianism of Brahms, to isolate its distinctive features, as typified by the piano's involvement in both versions of the Quintet.

This study of Brahms's Opus 34 has revealed it as a multi-faceted work which celebrates the four movement symphonic form of classicism, infusing it with the romantic utterance which the great piano composers of the nineteenth century spearheaded, but with no tendency towards poor taste in the use of unlimited superfluities. Its chamber music context led into an ambience where close collaborative effort is fertilized and enabled by the genius of a composer in complete control of his resources and of inherited academic device – rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, textural, structural and contrapuntal, all adding to its complexity, technical and interpretative. This richness comprehensively informed the piano writing and produced a display of elegant and exact pianistic endeavour, which at once answers to the demands of Cortot's complete technique (see Rational Principles in Chapter 3), while meeting the most searching interpretative criteria, in an almost perfect fusion of means and end. This was unfailingly reinforced within every avenue of enquiry.

The writer also found reinforcing statements in theses by Garcia, Lamberton and Koo. Garcia (1992: 52) relates that in Eduard Hanslick's music criticisms of 1862 (Hanslick 1950: 83), he states that Brahms and Schumann's music share a sovereign subjectivity, the tendency to brood, the rejection of the outside world, and deep introspection. The musicologist Charles Rosen points out that the most important form of influence of one artist upon another is that

which provokes the most original and personal work. In this sense it is known that the Schumann Quintet Opus 44 was well-known to Brahms when he wrote his Opus 34.

Lamberton (1978: 252) explains that, in November 1864, Hermann Levi wrote to Brahms:

The Quintet is incomparably beautiful; anyone who has known it in the earlier versions, String Quintet and Sonata, will not believe that it was imagined and written for other instruments. Not a single note has given me the impression of an arrangement, all the ideas have a much more suggestive colouring; from the monotony of two pianos has grown a perfect example of sound-beauty (*Klangschönheit*), from a piano-duo accessible only to a few musicians, has grown a tonic for every *dilettante* who has music in his bones, a masterwork of chamber music, such as we have not been able to produce since the year 28 (1828 being the year of Schubert's death).

Garcia (1992: 44) concluded that the arrangement of the work as Sonata for two pianos is a combination that does not always sound satisfactory, because the two pianos are unable to produce sufficient contrasting effects of timbre. The full effect of the magnificent composition is realized only in its final setting for two contrasting types of instrument – the piano and strings. This of course could be challenged as its success or otherwise is reflected in the skills and colour abilities of specific pianists.

Koo's (1993: 37) conclusion was that, even though the Quintet had been recast twice before it settled into its final version, the piece shows spontaneity and originality as a Piano Quintet. Without knowledge of the previous two versions it is hard to imagine that the work is not in the original form; the music itself proves that it requires both piano and strings. The only place which indicates that the Piano Quintet is not an intact original is at the beginning of the introduction to the Finale, where the piano has to cover for the entrance of the original second cello. Tovey (1963a:170) defends this point in saying that "it is the character of all whispers to have no character" (since the piano plays only soft, single notes, see Example 5.16 in Chapter 5).

The writer's own conclusions about the colouring in Opus 34 agree with Garcia and Koo: the two-piano version was composed before the Piano Quintet, so the idiomaticism within the String Quartet, originates from the original String Quintet and/or from one of the two piano parts, sometimes from a mixture of the two piano parts, but is still perfectly blended to the idiomatic needs of a string quartet plus piano. If one has heard the Piano Quintet, one will always associate certain lines with the strings, such as the cello *pizzicato* beginning of the Scherzo, the

slow introduction to the fourth movement, or the start of the slow second movement, where certain lyrical lines (in the violin) cannot be played more expressively by a piano, even though the piano ranges in the top hierarchy of instruments for creating different timbres.

6.2 Conclusions about the chosen title and keywords

The research for this thesis originated from the need to show crucially that interpretation (one of the keywords in the title) is a subjective element and an art in itself, but that it contains a craft element or technique/skill (another keyword), and that the two are inseparable. However, the truism of the inseparability of interpretation and technique is merely a means to an end, namely that of examining Brahms's technical armoury and seeing how his compositions advance technique and, conversely, how technical virtuosity challenges and empowers composers to write more and more impressive music. The Piano Quintet is a beautiful representative of this linkage.

The researcher also perused the chosen work(s) to find evidence of significant differences in the treatment of the piano in the separate scores, to evaluate how such differences might throw light on the pragmatism as to how far the embodied technical demands approached the ultimate of which Brahms, himself a virtuoso soloist, was capable. This invited a parallel study, though at a lower level of intensity, of the two works which most nearly define Brahms's ideas of pianistic virtuosity – the contemporaneous sets of Variations (arguably études) on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 35 and the *51 Übungen* (not published until 1893) embodying his collected and systematic ideas about the aspirations and capabilities of the pianist when only the impossible is the limit.

The score of the Sonata does not reveal any significant changes (pianistically) from the Quintet, and this leads the writer to the conclusion that the music is dictated by what the strings can do. The piano is a very much more adaptable instrument and less limited than string instruments. There is very little that a pianist cannot do (technically-physically) that a stringed instrument can; but the opposite is not true. This is bound up with the fact that strings have one hand devoted entirely to 'making the notes' whereas the piano has all the notes on the keyboard (ready-made) and therefore really has two hands for technical virtuosity against the string player's one.

The writer shows fundamentally that within art (music/interpretation) there is craft (technique). Interpretation (according to the writer) could be analysed in three steps, the one building on the other: step one is the understanding of the written symbols coupled to adequate technique; step two is to let spontaneous feelings and emotions take over; and step three is finally the transcending performance attempting a true realization of what the composer meant. The art of interpretation is thus a synthesis of emotion and feeling (see the “unexplainable factor” at 2.5), which is wholly subjective. Craft (technique) which is skill-based and therefore largely objective, is a part of music in all three of its activities: the composer must have the “taught and learned” skills to notate or objectify his/her thoughts; similarly the performer must have the physical skills (also taught and learned) to convert the composer’s ideas into live, communicable music; and lastly the listener must have the skills (taught and learned) to maximize the listening experience with understanding of the conventions as to how musical ideas are conveyed. Therefore, if the above is accepted, it is a truism to say that technique and interpretation are inseparably bound; one cannot perform music in its developed, sophisticated forms without physical skills.

Technique and interpretation are value-laden words, certainly in the context of this study, not to be dismissed without painstaking enquiry and definition. About music as art there is little dispute. The same applies to interpretation in music and indeed of music teaching as art, because of their recognized creativity and subjectivity. Art cannot be explained but it aims to be understood; interpretation is the enabler. But all these conceptually artistic processes embody craft. Technique in its purely mechanical sense, devoid of the subjectivity with which inspired teaching can imbue it, is the fundamental and indispensable agent of interpretation. However, the research might have ended, convincingly enough, at this point, with a still positive output, had its power to raise a multiplicity of other fascinating questions not been anticipated. Brahms himself was the key to this further enquiry. The questions unleashed a virtual torrent once this trigger had been touched.

6.3 The *cul de sac* of intuitive assertion

The researcher was conscious of having to avoid the *cul de sac* of merely demonstrating the instinctively felt and rather obvious inseparability of technique (skill) from the interpretative process, and the simple conclusion, exemplified in both versions of the Quintet, that a work of such intentionally heroic sound is eventually constrained by what is possible within the technical

capabilities or limitations of the performers. This notion was so copiously supported by the authorities invoked exhaustively in the literature search (Chapter 2), without a hint of opposition, that its status as a truism was convincingly established. Yet Rachmaninov's dismissive statement, for all the weight of his prestige, that "without technique there is no interpretation" is still merely an assertion and begs the question. Stravinsky once said "instinct is infallible; if it leads us astray, it is no longer instinct" (Stravinsky 1993:31). "Intuition, the sister of instinct, is useful, and may at times be necessary, and correct too, but it is not always sufficient. It stops short, as does Rachmaninov's affronted intuition, at the portals of human enquiry" (Heneghan conversations 2012).

Having shown in Chapter 2 that technique and interpretation are inseparably bound, it is thus arguable that the majority of interpretative challenges are largely technical ones which come under the heading of the pianist's holistic technical training. Therefore interpretative approaches to the pianistically similar music in the Quintet and Sonata must be first and foremost conceived technically to be effective.

In Chapter 3, which is about technical criteria, the following basic thought-line was the result of the writer's research of many different views: technique can be divided into the management, sequentially or simultaneously, of movements in three directions: a) vertical: up and down (fingers [articulation], hands [about the wrist] and arms); b) planar or horizontal: lateral (pitch variation) or along the keyboard; this may involve extension of the fingers, passing of the thumb or moving the hand and/or arm, and c) in-and-out (negotiation of black and white key areas), this being the one technique most publications and many teachers 'understate'. At fundamental level this can be understood to be a movement of the arm from the shoulder to take the fingers and hand to 'where they need to be'. The crucial point is that this movement of the arm is triggered by the mental concept of where the fingers want to be. The identification of a technical profile for the acquisition of skills (Chapter 3) and the examination of the scores (Chapter 4) showed that Brahms's pianism was suited to the needs of the work but that it is not fully exploited in the version of the Quintet.

6.4 Chapter 5 – empiricism justified

To concentrate for a while on Chapter 5, and examine some of this practical method, albeit in an open-ended selectivity from the choices available, seemed a worthwhile exercise to give some idea of the actual physicality of the process. No practical musician, who is the target audience of this study, could be satisfied were this linkage to reality not honoured in a study so redolent of the underlying influence of teachers. The empirical material presented in Chapter 5 is therefore offered as self-justifying. It gives the reader, and particularly the experienced advanced pianist, an immediate picture of, feeling for and linkage with a spectrum of the actual musical difficulties encountered in this Brahmsian work, replacing the generic approach of Chapters 3 and 4 with the specifics.

Bearing in mind the empirical angle of pianism discussed in this thesis, one realizes that the skill of the composer is based upon knowing what is ultimately possible and that the skill of the performer is being able to deliver this dream, all aimed at the production of true masterpieces where the means and end are transcendently matched. Transcendental pianism, for example, is typified in such works as Brahms's *Paganini Variations*, Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*, Stravinsky's *Trois mouvements de Petrouschka*, the Chopin Studies and the Liszt *Transcendental Etudes*. The Brahms Opus 34 Quintet and its Two Piano version Opus 34b were, on the other hand, not written to display ultimate pianism (the strings would limit that inspiration anyway) but nevertheless demand a finished technique, which means that the better the pianist, the more likely the performance is to be definitive.

As a pedagogue the writer has been interested in and concerned with the level of pianism inherent in Brahmsian chamber music (the Quintet and Sonata are sufficient for this) which is still way above simple idiomaticism but not quite at the ultimate stages as defined by the Paganini Variations and the Second Concerto. Advanced pianism (with which the Brahms score is replete and in the context of, arguably, the greatest chamber music work in the repertoire) is about technique without which there is no interpretation. As previously mentioned, since the pianistic demands in the two versions are not appreciably different, this leads to the conclusion that the music is dictated by what the quartet of strings can characteristically deliver. There may be a few instances where the piano adds something that is uniquely pianistic but there is not much scope for doing that. The group of five instruments embody such a huge range and capability for quasi-orchestral colour that their function in seeking to express themselves

ultimately is to find what they have in common technically and to be as complementary as possible to one another, this being the essence of great chamber music. This is further explained by reference to Opuses 35, 56b and the *51 Übungen*, which clearly show that it is the piano which is under-exploited in the Quintet because, as the works named above show, it is capable of so much more virtuosity (pianism) than is being demanded. The conclusion is, thus, that the piano is not fully exploited as to all possible effects of its technique in the Brahms Quintet, but the combination of the piano with strings builds up the so-called soundscape to virtuosic proportions and the technical pianistic palette encapsulated is well exploited. Opus 35 and the *Übungen* can thus be seen as showing ultimate technical potential beyond what is asked for in the piano parts of the Quintet and Sonata.

6.5 The search to define technique as valid progression

Can the elusive though indispensable skill, called technique, with its overtly objective character, be quantified? Can its detail be articulated in words, even, more importantly, in words leading to practical method and independent documented pedagogy which frees it from the traditional influence of, and dependency on, the ministry of specialist teachers alone? Is it amenable to the principles of logic; does it obey the laws of mechanics and physics? Can it be systematized in a matrix which classifies, in generic terms, the countless permutations and combinations addressed in the equally countless number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century study books revealing little more than a 'hit or miss' approach to the myriad problems. The fact that this attempt was made with varying and often questionable degrees of success, at least from the time of J S Bach, culminating in Carl Czerny's more or less 861 Opus numbers (most of them didactic), and the 12 volumes of technical exercises published by his pupil, Liszt, all under the implied inherited patronage of Beethoven, is proof that technique was taken seriously. However, it took more than two centuries for scientific analysis and psycho-musical approaches to replace empiricism.

An examination of this evolution was undertaken in Chapter 3, spanning a period which included Brahms's lifetime. This sparked an enquiry as to how Brahms fitted into this pedagogic milieu, for it is known that, unlike Chopin and Liszt, he was not a celebrated teacher. The inference is that his undoubted forays into the area of piano technique were stimulated by his own needs for technical development and, again by inference, how this could best be exploited in his piano-

related works. This study logically took another turn in looking at how Brahms may have advanced the technical potential of his own time and how these discoveries of his appeared in the scores of the Quintet. This proved to be a rewarding enquiry, in both positive and negative aspects, for it was found that Brahms made ultimate demands in his soloistic works (the Paganini Variations and the Second Piano Concerto amply suffice to illustrate this) while drawing back only slightly from imposing such constraints in the Quintet. Whether this reflected a pragmatism which, in ensemble works, lessened the load on individuals, or merely took into account that ultimate virtuosity was indeed a solo function and to exact it would merely reduce frequent performances of the chamber works, is a point over which there can be disagreement. It also conjectured that the limitations of the stringed instruments, even in ensemble, in trying to mirror the potential bravura of the piano, acted as a contributing factor. Probably this was so, and it did affect certain corresponding aspects of the score as published in its definitive version with strings.

To summarize these related considerations, Chapter 3 also addressed the nature of technique as it evolved from the old finger methodology of the early nineteenth century, which apparently only produced a small number of truly 'musical' pianists (Chopin was a crowning documented example of this creativity and imagination), through the romantic, sound-sensitive school of Leschetitzky and the psycho-technical approach of Neuhaus, to the still more scientific and analytical method of the late twentieth century, which has produced such Chinese phenomena as Lang-Lang and Yuja Wang. How Brahms both wielded the forces of traditional method of the earlier schools and anticipated, at least in his advancing into such uncodified skills as "virtual legato", the developments of later schools, is demonstrated in Chapter 4, which also contrasts Brahms's own status as a virtuoso with what he demands of chamber musicians. This also proved to be a revealing and significant study in its inferences.

What has emerged is the realisation that difficulties in virtuoso music (of which the writer considers the Brahms Quintet/Sonata to be an example) seldom come singly. It is only when they are impossibly multiplied/combined within a single passage that virtuosity is defined and pianism reaches a limit which has to be respected by the composer (otherwise he/she is not writing pianistically). In the Quintet Brahms cannot put in all the virtuosity of the solo music (such as the Paganini Variations) because the strings could not imitate it, so the complementarity of the 'chamber music' element would be destabilized.

Last conclusions are that when the technical and interpretational difficulties are combined, one begins to define virtuosity, pianism and transcendence, and one reaches the threshold that one has been looking for – the point where it becomes patently obvious that the art is constrained by the craft (of both the composer and the performer, and they are two different aspects). Stated differently, Brahms (the artist) had to know how far his musical imagination and originality could go without placing the executants under impossible constraints. Most of the examples in Chapter 5 are of this multi-dimensional form. The training of musicians in a physical sense can be isolated from the academic and cerebral, but for ideal training the “optimal intelligence of physical movements” is a dimension that one should be at pains to stress; the mental powers required to be a good musician are supporting intuition/instinct with intelligence. Technique/skill is a component of art (composition and interpretation) but a largely objective one, which involves the physical side, and therefore is a time-intensive skill in its acquisition.

6.6 The role of teacher

Musicians are familiar with the claim that any musical performance is defined by the activities of the composer (even in improvised music), the performer and the listener. These three distinct roles may sometimes coalesce in one person, and a valid thought would be which of these roles needs to be challenged or enlarged. Isaac Newton’s famous expression comes to mind here: “dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, *nani gigantum humeris insidentes*” (the words of Isaac Newton as quoted in Redfern 1986:40). There is a hidden presence in every musical performance of distinction, “an unsung heroic figure in all this artistic utterance” (Heneghan conversations 2012). This is the teacher, often even more degraded in the hierarchy than in the ancient Greek view of performers as inferiors. This ongoing injustice requires correction.

It is known that Beethoven studied with Haydn, that Haydn paradoxically both taught and learned from Mozart; and Liszt was a pupil of Czerny, though he outshone him. Brahms, a Viennese composer by adoption, is the natural successor to the former distinguished Viennese trio. In his composition he is the kingpin who reconciles classicism with the refined classic-romanticism of Chopin, the definitive romanticism of Schumann, the larger-than-life pianistic outpourings of Liszt leading to the epic pronouncements of Wagner, and all this in spite of Hanslick’s (1950:83) eloquent attempts to distinguish them one from the other. It is all the more fitting that this supreme example of his eclectic art should act as the vehicle of technico-pianistic

and pedagogic enquiry. And the most cultured listeners, too, are those who do not disdain the teaching and learning functions.

It is time to recognise, in the hands-on teaching of instrumentalists, that practical skills are as much dependent on academic and mental clearness of thought, as they are on intuitive physicality; and in the vast majority of cases, even more so. Following this line of reasoning it occurred to the researcher that an investigation of technique and an attempt to define its parameters in a systematic way could benefit from a coda, born of empiricism, from what the celebrated teachers of the twentieth century had to teach about the failures of the old 'hit and miss' methodology and the curative potential of analytical method. The works of Brahms, as typified by the scores of his Opus 34 in f minor, are a veritable treasury of examples of pianistic wizardry, the cultivated mastery of which is feasible against the odds, so to speak.

6.7 Recommendations for further research

Of the questions posed at the end of chapter 2 (which the writer endeavoured to answer in the course of Chapters 3, 4 and 5), there is, however, still much scope for expansion in answering the following:

Is there a difference between 'standard' technique and Brahmsian technique?

What gives Brahms's piano music (and technique) the heroic character it demands and evinces in, for example, the Piano Concerti, the Paganini Variations, and, most particularly in the chamber music, of which Opus 34 might lay claim to being the most perfect and heroic piece of chamber music in existence (Schumann, Dvořák, Franck, and Shostakovich Quintets arguably not having the same galaxy of comprehensive virtues to quite the same exalted extent)?

May technique and pianism be considered as a static unchanging corpus of knowledge?

What is the relationship between art (subjective consciousness) and craft (objective technique), and what is the necessary craft that empowers/enables the art of interpretation?

If this is such a vast and comprehensive field of study, cannot technique and pianism, if treated subjectively, eventually replace or merge with the idea of interpretation, since they are together *sui generis* a unique combination and have no separate existence or other form?

6.8 A final recommendation

Since this mini-thesis has focused an enquiring lens on the whole spectrum, or rather the history, of the evolution of piano technique, it offers encouraging scope to other researchers to scrutinize its content selectively and add to the organization of knowledge and expertise which it attempts to address. However, since the most recent analysts have faithfully taken into account the comprehensive discoveries of the past, it might be more appropriate to recommend that further research could be undertaken to refine and add to the documented 'state of the art' as in present time. There can never be a time when the ministry of words alone to give instruction, cannot be questioned. On the other hand, the very absence of words (the reliance on teacher interventions only and the lack of elucidation as to the method of practising the myriad *études* of the nineteenth century, leading often to more problems than they solved), or the failure of words to convey their effective meaning, have caused the confusion and the ignorance which have dogged the progress of amateurs and professionals alike.

A last recommendation can thus embody advice to prospective researchers and to those who simply wish to apply the fruits of this research to their own and their students' benefit. It is to take seriously the fact that at the beginning of this twenty-first century the health of piano technique in its ultimate virtuosity has never been so impressive, convincing enough proof and a logical deduction that current pedagogy is working. It is recommended therefore that any reader, in whatever role, who finds the outcomes of this thesis stimulating, should take its message as embodying the principle that a healthy technique, simply stated and above all, aims at the avoidance of muscular tension, fatigue and pain, and proceed from there to further productive perusal of the literature in relation to this topic.

It may be assumed that neither Chopin nor Liszt, the Olympian composer/pianists of the nineteenth century, would have written a single note that was not within their physical comfort zone, simply because they had the genius for alternative solutions of equal musical effect married to perfect idiomaticism. It is a pleasurable chance-happening of the late twentieth century mania for recording 'the complete works of,' that the Brahms *Übungen* (a monument, though a useful one, of musically-barren virtuoso exercises), were recorded on CD by the Turkish pianist, Idil Biret (herself a pupil of distinguished pedagogues Alfred Cortot and Wilhelm Kempff), proving that such challenges could be overcome with *élan* by a pianist with the

coordinated physical adaptability to deliver them transcendently. So, Brahms's name may be safely added to the list of those promoting stress-free pianism. The strategies that seek to achieve this physical state are still open to question (not only as to their absolute effectiveness in all cases, but particularly as to the terminology used to get the message across, the two being mutually dependent). Conscientious address of the most respected modern thinking is mandatory for those who would advance the art, through the easiest route of objectivity, which is open to all minds, even the most limited in creativity. Victor Zuckerkandl (1956:6) has epitomized this challenge with surpassing eloquence:

To be sure, music is a miracle. What miracle wants of us is not that we, as thinking beings, shall capitulate to it, but rather that we shall do justice to it in our thinking. Precisely because music is a miracle, incomprehensible in the framework of the dominant mode of contemporary thinking, impossible to fit into the current conception of the world- a miracle not only in its greatest and most splendid, its most exceptional, manifestations, but in its plain fundamentals, precisely because of all this it is our duty to think about it. The purpose is not a rationalization, a setting aside of the miraculous. Thought that is true to its subject does not annul miracles. It penetrates the fog around them; it brings them out of darkness into the light.

Appendix

The unabridged lists

1) F. Heneghan

A general set of criteria to use can be the 'STICK' mnemonic (Heneghan 2001, doc 608) namely, *Sound, Technique, Imagination, Communication, Knowledge*.

1.1 S. Use of *Sound* (and *Silence*). Sound in itself is a huge area and opens up the relationship between sound (interpretation) and technique (the coordination of the body) leading to:

1.2 T. The *Technical* mastery and challenge to produce the sounds intended.

1.3 I. *Imagination*. This refers not so much to the imagination of the composer in attempting to convey certain meanings, as to the skill of the performer in finding them (and others over and above what the composer may have intended) and 'realizing' them in the performance.

1.4 C. *Communication*. How the performer (in this case the pianist) uses his/her body and gesture to convey the essence of the music. This applies in particular to rhythm, voicing, melodic shaping, texturing, breathing and phrasing. The use of *rubato* (and *agogic*) is a major element here, and how an understanding of ensemble/synchronization/*colla parte* is developed between the participants.

1.5 K. *Knowledge*. This is a 'comprehensive' criterion and includes all the sense of period and style, familiarity with the conventions of romantic pianism, contrapuntal techniques, academic devices (canon, inversion, rhythmic metamorphosis; see the end of the finale in the Brahms Quintet and countless examples in the first movement and elsewhere). Other academic devices are, for example, augmentation, diminution and phrase extension.

2. Other possible general criteria (Heneghan conversations 2006) for examining the scores could use the following approaches:

2.1 **Harmonic** subtlety and how this is facilitated by the piano.

2.2 **Melodic** qualities and how these add to the effect, in particular how the piano contributes to this facet and equals or surpasses the strings, i.e. the 'singing piano' question (see the Taubman lists).

2.3 **Rhythmic** complexity. In Chapter 5 the writer points out that, for example, the Scherzo of the Brahms is perhaps one of the most exciting examples of rhythmic effect in the whole literature of music; also the functional tied note in the piano at the start of this movement and the positivity and contrast of the 'unison' (rhythmic) statement that follows it, add to the abundance of excitement.

2.4 **Textural** subtleties and how the piano is used to enhance the effect. Texture plays a very important part in this examination, as a problem and/or as an achievement.

2.5 **Structural** strengths. Brahms's special gift as composer can be seen as always recognizing the bigger picture concerning form and structure.

2.6 The role of **Gesture**.

3. Another summary of essential technical accomplishments, according to Heneghan (conversations 2007), is:

3.1 The complete or rounded technique required to deliver the classical repertoire satisfactorily, and from which all else can evolve.

3.2 The separate appreciation of melody, rhythm, harmony and texture.

3.3 The relationship of key speed to dynamic level.

3.4 The role of a co-ordinated or balanced arm in facilitating a spectrum of tonal quality.

3.5 The active/passive concept in action.

3.6 The use of phrasing and touch.

3.7 The recognition of the fading quality of piano sound.

3.8 Independence of the hands.

3.9 The principle of agogic and *rubato*.

2) Writer's view

To analyse the technical approaches within the chosen Quintet and Sonata, the first approach could be to ask:

2.1 where are the noticeable sections in the score (such as octave work, trills or other ornamentation figures, large leaps, fast passage work, chords, staccato work, etc.) which could cause problems? When these sections have been identified, which prototype of technique is required for each section can be analysed, and the solutions then provided.

2.2 the other approach could be to first establish certain prototypes of typical technical difficulties, then apply them to the score to find matching pairs, and then make recommendations on how to solve the technical difficulties.

Keeping approach 2.2 in mind, technical problems can be isolated which relate to functions of the body, such as the use of:

2.3 flexor, extensor, abductor, adductor muscles, etc;

2.4 rotation around a point (fingers around the knuckles, thumb and hand around the wrist, forearm around elbow);

2.5 rotation around an axis, as in the elbow joint when turning a door handle;

2.6 the process of dealing with sources of power (the weight of the arm used as a reactionary downward force [gravity] against which the fingers push).

Alternatively particular forms of technical development and problem-solving can be isolated such as:

2.7 strength and independence of the fingers,

2.8 extensions,

2.9 passing of the thumb in scales and arpeggios,

2.10 vertical wrist action (detached chords and octaves), with the wrist as fulcrum.

All the above can be extended to include the use of the hanging upper arm, which can move in and out to assist the fingers in placing the notes efficiently,

2.11 coping with the black keys and the general variables in the shape of the keyboard and the manual physicality,

2.12 also coping with fingers of different lengths, and the thumb operating differently.

These technical approaches can in turn lead to the phenomenon of shaping or phrasing, which introduces the question of musicality and interpretation as proceeding directly from the objectivity of technical expertise.

3) Muzio Clementi: *Gradus ad Parnassum*

3.1 Five-finger-groupings with different combinations than 1,2,3,4,5

3.2 Broken chords left-hand

3.3 Quintuplets in unbroken, very fast passages

3.4 Extensions between the weak fingers

3.5 Mixing of arpeggios and scales

3.6 Chords on the outside with tremolandos in the middle

3.7 Strengthening of 4th and 5th fingers in the right hand

3.8 Mixing chromatic runs with scales and arpeggios

3.9 Quick triplets in the right hand with differing fingers

3.10 Passing under and over of the thumb

3.11 Quick two note phrasings

3.12 Appoggiaturas at the same time in both right and left hands

3.13 Double thirds in the left hand

3.14 Presto and staccato rotation

3.15 Tenuto and staccato at the same time in the same hand

3.16 Jumps in the left hand and scales in the right hand

3.17 Octaves and broken octaves

3.18 Trills in the left hand and staccato and legato in the right hand

3.19 Scales in thirds with different fingerings.

4) Carl Czerny: *Kunst der Fingerfertigkeit* (The Art of Finger Dexterity), Opus 740

4.1 For finger action with quiet hand

4.2 The passing under of the thumb

4.3 Clearness in velocity

4.4 Evenness in double passages

4.5 Clearness in broken chords

4.6 Changing the fingers on the same key

4.7 Delicate skips and detached notes

4.8 Exercise in thirds

4.9 Flexibility of the left hand

4.10 The utmost velocity

- 4.11 Passages in broken chords
- 4.12 Extension, with great strength
- 4.13 Minor scales in rapid tempo
- 4.14 Crossing the hands quietly and with delicate touch
- 4.15 Double octaves
- 4.16 The same movement in both hands
- 4.17 Trill study
- 4.18 The thumb on the black keys, with the hand perfectly quiet
- 4.19 Velocity in chord passages
- 4.20 Independence of the fingers
- 4.21 Exercise on the mordent
- 4.22 To acquire a firm touch
- 4.23 Practice in the passing under of the thumbs
- 4.24 Uniformity in raising the fingers
- 4.25 Light arm and flexible fingers
- 4.26 Clearness in great strength
- 4.27 Light breaking off or detaching of chords
- 4.28 Action of the fingers of the left-hand
- 4.29 Legato melody with broken chords

4.30 Bravura in touch and action.

5) Rafael Joseffy: *School of Advanced Piano Playing*

5.1 Five finger exercises

5.2 Three finger exercises with supporting finger

5.3 Passing under and over scale exercises

5.4 Trills

5.5 Arpeggios

5.6 Thirds

5.7 Sixths

5.8 Octaves

5.9 Chromatic exercises

5.10 Changing fingers on one key

5.11 Repetitions without changing fingers

5.12 Paired notes for developing independence and strength of the fingers

5.13 Chords and wrist exercises

5.14 Alternation and interlacing of the hands

5.15 Various styles of touch

5.16 Thumb exercises

5.17 Sliding from the black keys

5.18 The glissando

5.19 Skips

5.20 Embellishments

5.21 Extended chords and figures

5.22 Stretches

5.23 Exercises in *piano* and *pianissimo*

5.24 Rhythmical studies.

6) Alfred Cortot: *Rational Principles of Piano Technique*

6.1 Equality, independence and mobility of fingers

6.2 Passing under of the thumb in scales and arpeggios

6.3 Double notes and polyphonic playing

6.4 Extensions

6.5 Wrist technique and execution of chords.

7) Josef Gát: *The Technique of Piano Playing*

7.1 The laws of legato and staccato

7.2 Naturalness of movements

7.3 Slow practicing of fast playing

7.4 The role of various joints

7.5 Structure and form of the hand

7.6 The technique of octaves and chords

7.7 The tremolo, skips and glissandi

7.8 The playing of scales and chromatic passages

7.9 Trills and the technique of repetition

7.10 Last, but most important, fingering.

8) Heinrich Neuhaus: *The Art of Piano Playing*

8.1 The playing of one single note, with all the different shadings of feeling, dynamics and imagination that are possible, using different fingers, with or without pedal.

8.2 The playing of two, three, four and five notes (as in the Chopin formula, see Chapter 2), with trills included as the frequent (manifold) repetition of two notes. Evenness and finger independence are included here.

8.3 All manner of scales, the turning of the thumb under or passing the whole hand over the thumb.

8.4 The arpeggio (broken chord) in all its forms (triads and every possible chord of the seventh). Flexibility, foresight and evenness.

8.5 Every kind of double note, from the second to the octave, ninths and tenths. Accurate movements with minimum effort and maximum economy.

8.6 The whole of chord technique, three, four and five note combinations played simultaneously with one hand. Constant alternation of effort and rest.

8.7 The transfer of the hand over a large distance, so-called “jumps and leaps”: the shortest path between two points on the keyboard is a curve. One should rather speak of transferring, carrying, flying across, descending, etc.

8.8 The element of polyphony; in demanding of the piano the impossible, one will achieve on it what is possible.

9) Georgy Sandor: *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression*

9.1 Coordination of the small and large muscles – extensors, flexors, biceps and triceps – fingers, hand, forearm, and upper arm – the shoulder – torso, back and chest muscles, and the diaphragm – sitting positions – the feet and the bench.

Sandor lists five basic motion patterns:

9.2 Free fall: gravity and our muscles – the role of weight – lifting, drops, landing, and rebound.

9.3 Five fingers, scales and arpeggios: anatomy of the fingers and thumb – horizontal and vertical adjusting motions – use of the thumb – the upper arm and body – shifting in arpeggios – note groupings and legato – use of the damper pedal – phrase endings.

9.4 Rotation: anatomy of the arm – pronation and supination – axial rotation – fingers, forearm and elbow – lateral motions.

9.5 Staccato: the wrist staccato – roles of the fingers, hand, forearm and upper arm – lift and rebound – white and black keys – staccato and legato octaves.

9.6 Thrust: thrust versus free fall – when to use thrust.

10) The Taubman Piano Techniques

The Taubman Tapes (www.golandskyinstitute.org) lay out all the technical and interpretative considerations that need to be taken into account in any pianistic appraisal (including chamber/ensemble music). The Taubman Piano Techniques Video tapes, Volumes 1-10, is presented by Edna Golandsky with commentary by Dorothy Taubman.

10.1 Introductory Principles and Concepts

10.1.1 Principles of coordinated movement

10.1.2 Mechanics of the piano

10.1.3 The leverage system

10.1.4 The muscles involved in piano playing

10.1.5 Finger movements analysed

10.1.6 How to determine height of bench

10.1.7 Cause of injuries

10.1.8 An evaluation of exercises.

10.2 Forearm Rotation

10.2.1 Why "forearm rotation" for finger work, speed

10.2.2 Double rotation and single rotation

10.2.3 Use of the thumb in the Taubman Techniques

10.2.4 Forearm rotation in scales, chords, arpeggios, repeated notes, double thirds

10.2.5 Working with the injured pianist

10.2.6 Tobias Matthay and forearm rotation.

10.3 In and Out Arm Movements

10.3.1 In and Out Arm Movements

10.3.2 Backward and forward shifts for different finger lengths from white to black key area and vice versa

10.3.3 Forearm rotation combined with in and out arm movements

10.3.4 Scales & arpeggios

10.3.5 Solution for wide fingers in the black key area

10.3.6 Double note tremolos.

10.4 The Walking Arm & Hand Movements

10.4.1 Lateral and vertical forearm adjustment

10.4.2 Synchronization of fingers, hand and forearm

10.4.3 Forearm and hand weight for chords

10.4.4 Legato chords and intervals

10.4.5 Negotiating distances

10.4.6 Combining walking arm with rotation

10.4.7 Broken octaves

10.4.8 Alternating from double intervals or chords to single notes.

10.5 Shaping and Octaves

10.5.1 Shaping to combine all movements via curvilinear motion

10.5.2 Technical and interpretative aspects of shaping

10.5.3 Handling chords, intervals, legato and dynamics

10.5.4 Rotation and octaves

10.5.5 Free fall and rebound of forearm

10.5.6 Legato and speed in octaves.

10.6 Grouping

10.6.1 How principles of grouping can help organize passages for ease of execution

10.6.2 Grouping to avoid stretching

10.6.3 Grouping for different densities of notes

10.6.4 Grouping to facilitate changes of direction

10.6.5 Grouping to facilitate leaps with complex metric designs

10.6.6 Grouping for long running passages.

10.7 Leaps

10.7.1 How to play leaps without missing

10.7.2 Legato leaps

10.7.3 Staccato leaps

10.7.4 Minimizing the distance of a leap

10.7.5 When both hands must leap at the same time

10.7.6 Repeated leaps.

10.8 Interdependence

10.8.1 Interdependence vs. independence of the hands

10.8.2 Pitfalls of practising the hands separately

10.8.3 Vertical learning and horizontal learning

10.8.4 Interdependence of Rotation, In and Out movements and Shaping

10.8.5 Alternating hands

10.8.6 Security in complex metric designs

10.8.7 Timing broken chords and ornaments

10.8.8 Playing legato in one hand and staccato in the other

10.8.9 Memorisation

10.8.10 Different components involved in memorising

10.8.11 Causes for memory slips

10.8.12 Explanation and instructions for security in memorising.

10.9 Fingering

10.9.1 What is good fingering and why

10.9.2 Fingering to place you at the best advantage for fluent execution of passages

10.9.3 How to avoid fingering that causes stretching, twisting or crowding

10.9.4 When and why to redistribute a passage between the two hands

10.9.5 Avoiding the pitfalls of some traditional dogmas.

10.10 Tone, Legato and Enslavement to Notation

10.10.1 Uses and misuses of legato

10.10.2 Does physical legato always lead to musical legato?

10.10.3 How to make octaves, chords and passages with stretches that cannot be physically connected, sound connected

10.10.4 Role of shaping and pedalling in legato playing

10.10.5 Physical components of tone production

10.10.6 Interpreting the score to realize the composer's intention

10.10.7 How musical results depend on technical means.

List of Sources

The sources used for this mini-thesis comprise books, theses and journal articles, informal consultations as well as compact discs/recordings/videos.

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2 Informal consultations

2006 (June) with Dr Frank Heneghan (Ireland)

2007 (August) with Dr Frank Heneghan (Ireland)

2008 (April) with Prof Wolfgang Wagenhäuser (BRD)

2008 (April) with Prof Hendrik Hofmeyr (UCT)

2008 (September) with Dr Pierre van der Westhuizen (USA)

2009 (February) with Prof Nicol Viljoen (UOFS)

2009 (July) with Luis Magalhães (US)

2010 (March) with Dr Ruth Goveia (UP)

2011 (May) with Jeaneane Dowis (USA)

2012 (March) with Antonio Pompa-Baldi (Italy)

2012 (April) with Robert Weirich (USA)

2012 (May) with Dr Frank Heneghan (Ireland)

3 Compact discs

Quartetto Italiano with Maurizio Pollini (Deutsche Grammophon) 474839-2

Kodály Quartet with Jenő Jandó (Naxos) 8.550406

The Emerson Quartet with Menahem Pressler (Deutsche Grammophon) 1057494

Janáček Quartet with Eva Bernáthová (Deutsche Grammophon) DGS 712002

Quintetto Chigiano with Sergio Lorenzi (Decca/ Pristine Classical) PACM010

Emmanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman two-piano Sonata Opus 34b (Sony) SK89868

Martha Argerich and Lilya Zilberstein two-piano Sonata Opus 34b (EMI) 57504