



Smithsonian Associates

Johannes Brahms

A brief outline of his life; a complete list of his compositions and related events in the world of music.

- 1833 Brahms is born on May 7 in Hamburg, Germany.
- 1834 Schumann founds *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*
- 1835 Berlioz writes *Harold in Italy*
- 1836 Schumann's *Symphonic Etudes*
- 1839 Schumann unearths Schubert's final symphony (written 1825-25.)
Vienna Philharmonic founded.
Chopin's *Preludes op.28*.
- 1840 Brahms begins piano studies. (Father had already taught him violin & cello, to prepare him for a vocation.)
- 1841 Schumann writes *Liederkreis* among many other songs, and marries the pianist Clara Wieck.
- 1842 Schumann: his first two symphonies
Verdi: *Nabucco*
- 1843 Wagner: *Der Fliegende Hollander*
- 1844 Mendelssohn: *Violin Concerto*
- 1845 Brahms studies piano and music theory with Edward Marxsen
Not yet thirteen, Brahms begins working as a pianist in the Hamburg brothels
Liszt: *Les Preludes*.
- 1846 Mendelssohn: *Elijah*, Berlioz: *The Damnation of Faust*
- 1847 Brahms' first public performance as a solo pianist
Death of Felix Mendelssohn
- 1849 Death of Frederic Chopin
- 1850 Brahms meets and accompanies Hungarian violinist Eduard Remeny
Liszt conducts premier of Wagner's *Lohengrin*
- 1851 First surviving pieces (for piano and lieder) from this year
Schumann: *Third Symphony*
Verdi: *Rigoletto*
- 1852 Brahms and Remeny begin extensive touring through North German cities

Compositions 1851-1852

- Opus #1 *Piano Sonata No. 1 in C Major*
- 2 *Piano Sonata No. 2 in F sharp Minor*
- 3 *Six Songs for Tenor or Soprano and Piano*
- 4 *Scherzo in E Flat minor for Piano*
- 5 *Piano Sonata No. 3 in F Minor*
- 6 *Six Songs for Tenor or Soprano and Piano*
- 7 *Six Songs for Voice and Piano*

- 1853 *Verdi: La Traviata*
 On tour, Brahms meets German-Hungarian violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim and they begin a life-long association as musical partners and close friends. They travel on to Weimar, where Brahms meets Franz Liszt. Brahms then leaves Remenyi for Düsseldorf in October where he meets Robert and Clara Schumann. Schumann's article *Neue Bahnen* (New Paths) praising Brahms appears in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Brahms and the Schumanns establish a deep intimacy that will continue with Clara alone, after the death after her husband. Brahms moves on to Leipzig for performances of his compositions and later returns to Hamburg
- 1854 Accepts a three-month position as Director of Court Concerts and Choral Society for the Prince of Lippe-Detmold. (He returns each Autumn for the next two years. Plays major piano concerti.)
 In February, Robert Schumann attempts suicide and is institutionalized. Brahms returns to Düsseldorf, caring for Clara and her children
 The brochure, *On Beauty in Music*, by Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick is published
- 1855 Liszt: *Sonata in B minor*
 Brahms meets Hanslick
Compositions 1853-1855
 8 *Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major for Piano, Violin and Cello*
 9 *Sixteen Variations for Piano on a Theme by Schumann*
 10 *Four Ballads for Piano*
- 1856 Liszt: *Faust Symphony*
- 1857 Brahms studies major Renaissance masters
 A gift from Clara: the first published volume of the Bach Gesellschaft
 Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsodies*
 Brahms returns home to Hamburg. It continues as his primary residence through 1861.
 Acquires & studies pre-Bach treatises on fugue and counterpoint. His goal: to attain master of the notes, to control every aspect of the compositional process. Simultaneous discovery of Schubert lieder, most of which were unknown up to mid-century
- 1858 Gives up the Lippe-Detmold appointment, after conducting Bach cantatas, Palestrina mass
 Death of Robert Schumann. Clara begins life-long commitment to performing Sch & Brahms
 Brahms spends March and April in Berlin with Clara Schumann, and the summer in Göttingen where he meets Agathe von Siebold. (They become engaged by end of year.)

Compositions 1856-1858

- 11 *Serenade No. 1 in D Major for Large Orchestra.*
- 12 *Ave Maria for Women's Chorus and Orchestra or Organ*
- 13 *Begräbnisgesang - Funeral Song for Chorus and Wind Instruments*
- 14 *Acht Lieder und Romanzen - Eight Songs and Romances for Voice and Piano*
- 15 *Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor*

Compositions without opus: 32 folk song arrangements, collection of 14 orig, children's songs, many Hungarian dances for piano.

1859 Breaks off engagement to Agathe

Conducts and composes music for The Hamburg Women's Choir, through 1861

Wagner: *Tristan und Isolde* (First performance, 1865)

1860 Brahms and Joachim write a 'manifesto' critical of Franz Liszt and his followers.

Compositions 1859-1861

- 16 *Serenade No. 2 in A Major for Small Orchestra*
- 17 *Four Songs for Female Chorus, Two Horns and Harp*
- 18 *String Sextet No. 1 in B Flat Major for 2 Violins, 2 Violas, and 2 Celli*
- 19 *Five Poems for Voice and Piano*
- 20 *Three Duets for Soprano and Alto with Piano*
- 21/1 *Variations for Piano on an Original Theme in D Major*
- 21/2 *Variations for Piano on a Hungarian Song, in D Major*
- 22 *Sieben Marienlieder (Seven Songs of the Virgin) for mixed Chorus a cappella*
- 23 *Variations for Piano Four Hands on a Theme by Schumann*
- 24 *Variations and Fugue for Piano on a Theme by Handel*
- 25 *Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor*

1861 Visits Vienna for the first time. Takes up temporary residence and becomes the Conductor of the Weiner Singakademie.

Meets Richard Wagner

Kochel catalogue of Mozart's complete works is begun

1862 Leaves Vienna for Hamburg for his 30th birthday. Another musician, Julius Stockhausen, is offered the directorship of the Hamburg Philharmonic (a position Brahms desired)

1863 By the end of May he is back in Vienna for the Singakademie

Meets J. Strauss, son

1864 Resigns his post as Director of the Singakademie

Compositions 1862-1864

- 26 *Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major*
- 27 *The 13th Psalm for Three-voice Women's Chorus with Organ or Piano*
- 28 *Four Duets for Alto and Baritone with Piano*
- 29 *Two Motets for Five-voice mixed Chorus a cappella*
- 30 *Geistliches Lied (Spiritual Song) for Four-voice Chorus with Organ or Piano*
- 31 *Three Quartets for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass and Piano*
- 32 *Nine Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 33 *Romanzen (Magalone-Lieder) - Romances (Magelone Songs) for Voice and Piano*
- 34 *Piano Quintet in F minor .*
- 35 *Studies for Piano in A minor - Variations on a Theme by Paganini*
- 36 *String Sextet No. 2 in G Major for 2 Violins, 2 Violas, and 2 Celli*
- 37 *Drei Geistliche Chöre - Three Spiritual Choruses for Women's Chorus a cappella*
- 38 *Cello Sonata No. 1 in E Minor for Cello and Piano*
- 39 *Waltzes for Piano*
- 40 *Horn Trio in E Flat Major for Horn (or Cello or Viola), Violin and Piano*

1865 Premier of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

Schubert's '*Unfinished Symphony*' (written in 1822) discovered and premiered in Vienna

1867 Johann Strauss: *Blue Danube*

Verdi: *Don Carlo*

Compositions 1865-1867

- 41 *Five Songs for Four-part Male Chorus*
- 42 *Three Songs for Six-part mixed Chorus a cappella*
- 43 *Four Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 44 *Zwölf Lieder und Romanzen - Twelve Songs and Romances for Four-part Women's Chorus a cappella or with Piano ad libitum*

1868 Settles permanently in Vienna, after having toured with Joachim throughout Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Denmark and the Netherlands. In May he travels again to Hamburg.

Berlin establishes The Institute for Musicology

Wagner: *Die Meistersinger*

1869 Death of Hector Berlioz

Compositions 1868-1870

- 45 *Ein deutsches Requiem - A German Requiem for Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra*
- 46 *Four Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 47 *Five Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 48 *Seven Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 49 *Five Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 50 *Rinaldo (Cantata) for Tenor, Male Chorus and Orchestra*
- 51 *Two String Quartets - No. 1 in C minor, No. 2 in A Major*
- 52a *Liebeslieder Waltzes for Four Voices (SATB) and Piano Four Hands*
- 52b *Liebeslieder Waltzes for Piano Four Hands (no Voices)*
- 53 *Alto Rhapsody for Alto, Male Chorus and Orchestra*
Hungarian Dances (first set published)
- 1871 Verdi: *Aida*
- 1872 Brahms accepts a position as Conductor of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna
- 1873 Bruckner: *Third Symphony*

Compositions 1871-1873

- 54 *Schicksalslied (Song of Destiny) for Chorus and Orchestra*
- 55 *Triumphlied (Song of Triumph) for Eight-part Chorus and Orchestra*
- 56a *Variations for Orchestra on a Theme by Haydn*
- 56b *Variations for two Pianos on a Theme by Haydn*
- 57 *Eight Songs for Voice and Piano to texts by Daumer*
- 58 *Eight Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 59 *Eight Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 60 *Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Minor*
- 1874 Meets future biography, Max Kalbeck
J. Strauss: *Die Flendermaus*
- 1875 Resigns as conductor of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde
Brahms meets and encourages Antonin Dvorak
Bizet: *Carmen*
- 1876 First Wagner festival in Bayreuth with complete *Ring des Nibelung* performed.

Compositions 1874-1876

- 61 *Four Duets for Soprano and Alto with Piano*
- 62 *Seven Songs for Mixed Choir*
- 63 *Nine Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 64 *Three Quartets for Soprano, Alto, Bass and Piano*
- 65a *New Liebeslieder Waltzes for Four Voices and Piano Four Hands*
- 65b *New Liebeslieder Waltzes for Piano Four Hands (no Voices)*

- 66 *Five Duets for Soprano and Alto with Piano*
67 *String Quartet No. 3 in B Flat Minor*
1877-78 Attends and conducts concerts of his work in Leipzig and Hamburg
1878 Offered Meinigen court orchestra as a 'rehearsal orchestra'

Compositions 1876-1879

- 68 *Symphony No. 1 in C minor*
69 *Nine Songs for Voice and Piano*
70 *Four Songs for Voice and Piano*
71 *Five Songs for Voice and Piano*
72 *Five Songs for Voice and Piano*
73 *Symphony No. 2 in D Major*
74 *Two Motets for Mixed Chorus a cappella*
75 *Vier Balladen und Romanzen - Four Ballads and Romances
for Two Voices and Piano*
76 *Eight Piano Pieces*
77 *Violin Concerto*

Compositions 1880-1882

- 78 *Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Major*
79 *Two Rhapsodies for Piano*
80 *Akademische Festouvertüre - Academic Festival Overture for
Large Orchestra*
81 *Tragische Ouvertüre - Tragic Overture for Orchestra*
82 *Nänie for Chorus and Orchestra*
83 *Piano Concerto No. 2 in B Flat Major*
84 *Fünf Romanzen und Lieder - Five Romances and Songs for
One or Two Voices with Piano*
85 *Six Songs for Voice and Piano*
86 *Six Songs for Low Voice and Piano*
Hungarian Dances, (2nd set published)

- 1882 Wagner: *Parsifal*
1883 Death of Wagner
1885 October in Meinigen for the rehearsal of his *Fourth Symphony*.
Immediately after, he takes a tour through Germany and the
Netherlands

Compositions 1883-1885

- 87 *Piano Trio No. 2 in C Major for Piano, Violin and Cello*
88 *String Quintet No. 1 in F Major*
89 *Gesang der Parzen - Song of the Fates for Six Voice Chorus
and Orchestra*
90 *Symphony No. 3 in F Major*
91 *Two Songs for Alto Voice, Viola and Piano*
92 *Four Quartets for SATB and Piano*

- 93a *Six Songs and Romances for Four Voice mixed Chorus a cappella*
- 93b *Tafellied - Table Song for Six-part mixed Chorus and Piano*
- 94 *Five Songs for High Voice and Piano*
- 95 *Seven Songs for Voice and Piano*
- 96 *Four Songs for Voice and Piano*

Compositions 1886-1888

- 97 *Six Songs for Voice and Piano*
 - 98 *Symphony No. 4 in E minor*
 - 99 *Cello Sonata No. 2 in F Major*
 - 100 *Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Major*
 - 101 *Piano Trio No. 3 in C minor for Piano, Violin and Cello*
 - 102 *Double Concerto in A Minor for Violin, Cello and Orchestra*
 - 103 *Eleven Gypsy Songs for Middle Voice and Piano*
 - 104 *Five Choruses for Mixed Chorus a cappella*
 - 105 *Five Songs for High Voice and Piano*
 - 106 *Five Songs for Voice and Piano*
 - 107 *Five Songs for Voice and Piano*
 - 108 *Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor*
 - 109 *- Four Songs for Eight-part Chorus a cappella*
- 1887 Verdi: *Otello*
- 1888 Mahler: *Symphony #1*
- 1889 Brahms appointed a "Freeman of Hamburg"
- Richard Strauss: *Don Juan*
- Hugo Wolf: *Spanisches Liederbuch*.
- 1890 Brahms begins 'cleaning house,' destroying incomplete works or abandoned compositions.
- R. Strauss: *Death and Transfiguration*
- 1891 Brahms meets (and hears) the clarinetist Richard Muhlfeld
- Wolf: *Italianisches Liederbuch*

Compositions 1889-1891

- 110 *Three Motets for Four and Eight-part Chorus a cappella*
 - 111 *String Quintet No. 2 in G Major*
 - 112 *Six Quartets for SATB and Piano*
 - 113 *Thirteen Canons for Women's voices*
 - 114 *Clarinet Trio in A Minor for Clarinet (or Viola), Cello and Piano*
 - 115 *Clarinet Quintet in B Minor for Clarinet and String Quartet*
- 1892 Bruckner: *Symphony #8*
- Humperdinck: *Hansel und Gretel*
- 1893 Dvorak: *New World Symphony*
- Verdi: *Falstaff*
- 1894 Mahler: *Symphony #2*

Compositions 1892-1894

116 *Seven Fantasies for Piano*

117 *Three Intermezzi for Piano*

118 *Six Piano Pieces*

119 *Four Piano Pieces*

120 *Two Sonatas for Clarinet (or Viola) and Piano*

1896 Deaths of Clara Schumann and Anton Bruckner

Mahler: *Symphony #3*

In September, Brahms goes to Karlsbad for treatment of liver cancer

1897 March 26: Brahms is bedridden (for the first time in his life) and dies in Vienna on April 3

Compositions 1895-1897

121 *Four Serious Songs for Bass Voice and Piano*

122 *Eleven Choral Preludes for Organ*