



Johannes BRAHMS

Hungarian Dances No. 1 in G minor

Johannes Brahms (7 May 1833 – 3 April 1897) was a German composer and pianist. Born in Hamburg into a Lutheran family, Brahms spent much of his professional life in Vienna, Austria. His reputation and status as a composer is such that he is sometimes grouped with Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven as one of the "Three Bs" of music, a comment originally made by the nineteenth-century conductor Hans von Bülow. Brahms composed for symphony orchestra, chamber ensembles, piano, organ, and voice and chorus. A virtuoso pianist, he premiered many of his own works. He worked with some of the leading performers of his time, including the pianist Clara Schumann and the violinist Joseph Joachim (the three were close friends). Many of his works have become staples of the modern concert repertoire. An uncompromising perfectionist, Brahms destroyed some of his works and left others unpublished. Brahms has been considered, by his contemporaries and by later writers, as both a traditionalist and an innovator. His music is firmly rooted in the structures and compositional techniques of the Classical masters. While many contemporaries found his music too academic, his contribution and craftsmanship have been admired by subsequent figures as diverse as Arnold Schoenberg and Edward Elgar. The diligent, highly constructed nature of Brahms's works was a starting point and an inspiration for a generation of composers. Within his meticulous structures is embedded, however, a highly romantic nature.

The ***Hungarian Dances*** (German: *Ungarische Tänze*) by Johannes Brahms (WoO 1), are a set of 21 lively dance tunes based mostly on Hungarian themes, completed in 1869. They vary from about a minute to five minutes in length. They are among Brahms's most popular works, and were certainly the most profitable for him. Each dance has been arranged for a wide variety of instruments and ensembles. Brahms originally wrote the version for piano four hands and later arranged the first 10 dances for solo piano. Only numbers 11, 14 and 16 are entirely original compositions. The most famous *Hungarian Dance* is *No. 5 in F#minor*, which was based on the *csárdás* by Béla Kéler titled *Bártfai emlé* which Brahms mistakenly thought was a traditional folksong. The *Hungarian Dances* bear many resemblances to, and may have influenced, the *Slavonic Dances* of Antonín Dvořák