

*Studies 1*, ed. Alan Tyson (New York, 1973), 172), Tyson revised this opinion, concluding that the Lavenu edition 'is authentic and is textually independent of the Viennese edition of Artaria'. Kurth has been able to take advantage of this later research.

Welcome though it should be to players, this new edition may prove somewhat frustrating to scholars. The critical notes at the end of the study-score are useful and informative, but they are by the author's own admission (see p. VII) incomplete relative to the *kritischer Bericht* she has provided to Herzog's edition. But that *Bericht* (which was unfortunately unavailable to this author at the time of writing) refers to an edition which in certain cases (most obviously op. 29) chooses *Hauptquellen* other than Kurth's own, which will presumably make for complications if one tries to read it against Kurth's new edition. A better, if more costly, solution, might have been to redo the *kritischer Bericht* complete in association with Kurth's edition. As for the notes themselves, there are some slight errors and unclarity to be negotiated. On p. VIII, 1807 is given as the date for op. 104; the correct year, 1817, is given in the German and French translations. The suggestion (p. 146) that source B for op. 137 'was obviously copied from an earlier autograph score that has survived intact' leaves one wondering whether that score is presumed to be Kurth's source A (the Paris autograph score) or whether we are to assume the existence of a third autograph no longer extant, or lost. (The commentary to *Beethoven: Briefe*, vol. 4, no. 1194 suggests that B was indeed copied from A; much earlier, Kinsky–Halm<sup>1</sup> had erroneously reversed the relationship of these two sources.) The description on p. 134 of 'a third set of handwritten parts' for op. 4 gives the impression that this presumed *Stichvorlage* is extant, an impression that is reinforced by the remarks on the Trio II at the bottom of p. 135; only on p. 136 is clear reference made to 'the lost engraver's copy'. Finally, the English translation claims that this lost set of parts 'was prepared at the same time [as the original edition by Artaria]'; the German text, however, refers to 'ein dritter, gleichartiger handschriftlicher Stimmensatz' (emphasis mine): not quite the same thing.

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Johannes Brahms, *Klavierquintett f-moll Opus 34* (Piano Quintet in F minor op. 34) edited by Carmen Debryn and Michael Struck, fingering of piano part by Hans-Martin Theopold (G. Henle Verlag, Munich, 2001), 77pp. £24.75

After the death in 1894 of Philipp Spitta, one of the pioneers of the emerging discipline of musicology, Brahms wrote to Joachim lamenting the loss to 'your beautiful undertaking, to clean up our classic composers – from so much rubbish! – for the schools'. The production of source-critical editions, free of the extraneous performance instructions or editorial amendments that had sometimes supplemented and sometimes obscured the composer's original text, was seen as a pious duty by many serious-minded musicians in the second half of

<sup>1</sup> Georg Kinsky, *Das Werk Beethovens. Thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen*, ed. Hans Halm (Munich, 1955), 417.

the nineteenth century. The legacy of those musicians who wholeheartedly embraced the notion of a sacred canon of great musical art is still with us, despite a substantial shift in our attitude towards the canon and the idea of 'great' music in general. Indeed, modern musical scholarship has resulted in a more refined and more thoroughly documented approach to the preparation of editions that aim to transmit the text, as far as is humanly possible, at the stage it had reached when the composer ceased to be concerned with it. The term 'Urtext', despite all its contradictions and unsatisfactory connotations, has been widely adopted (as it is in this case) to describe such editions.

This edition of Brahms's Piano Quintet in F minor op. 34 is a typical example of a careful modern 'Urtext' edition in which all the available sources have been analysed and their significance in the process of composition determined. Careful detective work has shed light on the composer's involvement in the correction of proofs, and a number of unwarranted additions and alterations that occurred in early twentieth-century editions have been rectified. The present edition, intended primarily for performers, has been extracted from the Brahms *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke* and, as explained in the preface (helpfully given in German, English and French), the abbreviated editorial commentary included at the end of the volume (in German and English) is 'largely limited to basic information on the sources and to especially serious problems in the musical text'. Asterisks in the musical text draw attention to the presence of an entry in the commentary.

It is questionable, however, whether such an approach is entirely appropriate for an edition that is intended primarily for performers, rather than for scholarly reference. Many of the additions in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions, prepared by editors and performers for practical use, provide an immense amount of information about how some of the composer's own contemporaries would have understood the notation, which is, after all, a quite imperfect means of conveying many aspects of what was in the composer's mind. In this case, indeed, editorial fingering has been added to the piano part by Hans-Martin Theopold, though without an explanation of the principles that have guided him. Is it informed by late nineteenth-century usage, or is it merely for the convenience of a modern pianist? Other matters of performance are not addressed. What, for instance, is the pianist to make of the arpeggiation sign in the left hand and its absence in the right hand in bar 11 of the first movement? Should the left hand alone be arpeggiated, or might an error be involved? What is the role of arpeggiation in Brahms performance and how much might be implied though not indicated? Recordings of Brahms himself, and many of the pianists associated with him, certainly suggest that disjunction between the hands (in various ways) was far more widespread than the notation, or even the written instructions of his contemporaries, might indicate. In the case of the string parts no guidance about bowing or fingering (historical or otherwise) has been provided, although a performance faithful not merely to the letter of the text but also to its spirit (surely as important an aspect of the composer's conception if, admittedly, a more speculative one) demands the consideration of such matters as portamento and vibrato, which are intimately connected with the fingering and bowing employed. Furthermore, the vital matter of articulation requires a knowledge of the use of the bow that can readily be deduced from the editions of Joseph Joachim and others of Brahms's contemporaries. It is all very well to be clear about the accent and articulation signs that Brahms employed, but this is of little use to performers unless they have

some idea of what they might have meant to the composer. Clearly such matters cannot be fully explored in the compass of a single edition, but it would undoubtedly be valuable for editors of scholarly editions to direct their users' attention towards these issues and towards possible sources of information.

The abbreviation of the commentary on source critical matters is entirely appropriate for a practical edition; a few of the comments however, are questionable. The discussion of bar 136 of the Scherzo reveals, perhaps, the hazards of too diligently expunging any editorial amendments to the work that did not demonstrably derive from the composer. The commentary informs us that, in the autograph, Brahms deleted *f* here from the viola and cello, that the *f* was absent in the original edition, and that 'Later issues (possibly posthumously) retain the *f*, possibly due to an editorial error'. So far so good; but the remark that 'as a result the previous *p* continues to apply' is surely misleading. Brahms may have had any of a number of reasons for removing the *f* (and possibly for asking later for its reinstatement), but it certainly was not to indicate that the previous *p* should continue. The crescendo sign in bars 134–5 is not negated in bar 136, where the piano has *ff* and the strings are *f* (from the last note of 135), and a further crescendo sign for all strings in 136–7 presumably increases the general volume to a louder level before piano, viola and cello are again marked *p* in 138, where the four-bar pattern begins again, this time without *f* being marked in any of the strings. Perhaps Brahms wanted to avoid too prominent an entry from the lower strings in 136, but he certainly cannot have wanted a continuing *p* or he would have marked it. Another detailed comment, on bars 46–7, 62–3 and 161–89 of the finale, leaves the performers in the lurch. It is carefully and clearly explained that, as a result of Brahms's instruction to remove the slashes not being fully implemented by the engraver, the grace notes are inconsistently notated in the original edition, some with and some without slashes, and that the slashes were reinstated on all grace notes in later issues. Yet at no point do the editors hazard a guess about what the significance of the appoggiaturas being with or without the slash might have been. For the sake of accuracy, of course, it is necessary to know what Brahms intended, but the considerable effort of determining and explaining this is essentially academic unless there is some informed discussion of what he might have meant to convey. The user is left without any idea whether the editors thought that this was merely a cosmetic matter or whether it had performance implications.

While editions such as this are to be welcomed on account of their scholarly precision, they are surely not ideal for the performer who wishes not merely to know what the composer wrote, but also to go beyond the notation to gain insight into the kinds of musical sounds that the composer imagined. At a time when period performance is part of the musical mainstream we are surely ready for editions that stimulate our thinking about the sound and spirit of our great musical heritage as well as informing us about the physical appearance of the notation.

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