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Beethoven's String Quintet in C major, Op. 29, and Brahms's String Sextets: A Wallflower Blooms*

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Beethoven's String Quintet, Op. 29, has been described as a 'wallflower' work that, without enough suitors, remains on the sidelines of the string chamber music repertoire. But in the nineteenth century it had a prominent champion, Joseph Joachim, whose performances of the quintet must have attracted the attention of his close friend, Johannes Brahms. The opening theme of Brahms's String Sextet, Op. 18, is clearly reminiscent of the beginning of Beethoven's quintet. Evidence from Donald Francis Tovey's recollections of Joachim, Joachim's correspondence with the Brahms biographer Max Kalbeck, and the manuscript of Op. 18 shows that Joachim influenced an important revision that aligns the beginning of Brahms's sextet closely with the opening of Beethoven's Op. 29 also in terms of texture and formal design.

The striking tremolo opening and virtuosic scale passages in the finale of Beethoven's quintet prefigure similar elements in the last movement of Brahms's Op. 36 sextet. But the deeper relationship between these movements lies in certain shared formal elements: a common emphasis on sound, texture and sharp contrasts between agitato and pastoral elements as defining features of the overall form – and several distinctive similarities of contrapuntal strategy, form and tonal design between the substantial fugatos that dominate the development sections of both movements.

It is often observed that Brahms wrote chamber works in pairs. Scholars have often posited that his two string sextets form such a pair, but the separation of four years in their inceptions and his extensive use of Baroque-style materials composed in the 1850s in the later sextet have made this argument tenuous. It now emerges that an unusual pairing feature of Brahms's string sextets is that both works respond to Beethoven's 'wallflower' masterpiece.

Beethoven's String Quintet in C major, Op. 29, was born in controversy. He wrote it on commission from Count Moritz von Fries and later sold the publication rights to Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig. At about the same time, the Viennese publisher Artaria secured a manuscript copy of the parts – perhaps from Count Fries – and brought out the work, ostensibly without Beethoven's permission. Furious, Beethoven attacked the accuracy of Artaria's edition in the *Wiener Zeitung*, setting in motion a protracted dispute with the publisher that had to be resolved in court.[1]

* I am grateful for support from the Francisco M. Gonzalez, M.D., Endowed Professorship of Loyola University New Orleans, and for close readings and helpful comments from Robert Eshbach, Valerie Goertzen and Stephen Whiting.

[1] See Ferdinand Ries, *Biographische Notizen von Ludwig van Beethoven von Dr. F. G. Wegeler und Ferdinand Ries* (Coblenz: Bädeker, 1838): 120, Donald M. MacArdle, 'Beethoven, Artaria, and the C Major Quintet', *The Musical Quarterly* 34 (1948): 567–74,

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In the introduction to her recent critical edition of the quintet, Sabine Kurth hypothesized that 'Beethoven's published warning against the Artaria print may help to explain why this work, unlike the roughly contemporary string quartets Opp. 18 and 59, has led a wallflower existence otherwise inexplicable in view of its great significance and musical poetry'.[2] The Quintet might also have encountered practical obstacles. In the nineteenth century, adding a second violist to a string quartet was not always easy to do. When one could be found, there would be the temptation to play one of Mozart's popular quintets. But whatever the reasons, Op. 29 did become a wallflower – a work that, without enough suitors, remained on the sidelines.[3]

But there were a few important figures in the history of the string quartet who did not treat it so. Perhaps foremost among them was Joseph Joachim. This was true even in the early years of Joachim's career as a quartet leader, as his letter to Johannes Brahms from Hanover of 20 April 1856 attests: 'Our two quartet [programmes] went over well. In the first: Haydn, Op. 130 by Beethoven, G-minor Quintet by Mozart; in the second, last night: Quartet by Mendelssohn in E flat, Schumann's A minor, Quintet in C by Beethoven.'[4] Later on, as leader of the celebrated Joachim Quartet, he programmed the Beethoven Quintet regularly on that ensemble's important concert series at the Berlin *Singakademie*.[5] The frequency of Joachim's performances of the Quintet in England is especially noteworthy. In an unpublished paper presented at the international conference 'Joseph Joachim at 185', Therese Ellsworth discussed Joachim's participation in the Monday Popular Concerts in London.[6] These concerts were given in St James Hall, built in 1858, which seated 2,000 people. Beginning in 1859, the Monday Popular Concerts, with their inexpensive ticket prices, made classical chamber music

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and *Ludwig van Beethoven: Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis*, ed. Kurt Dorfmüller, Norbert Gertsch and Julia Ronge, 2 vols (Munich: G. Henle, 2014), 1: 170–172.

[2] Ludwig van Beethoven, *Streichquintette. Studien-Edition*, ed. Sabine Kurth (Munich: G. Henle, 2001): VII.

[3] Even today the Quintet is sometimes overlooked; it is not discussed in Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), nor in the *Beethoven Handbuch*, ed. Sven Hiemke (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2009). As recently as 1994 Rudolf Stephan observed that 'The string quintet in C major, Op. 29, ranks among the chamber music works of Beethoven that are scarcely ever to be heard in concert'. See Rudolf Stephan, 'Streichquintett C-dur op. 29', in *Beethoven: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, ed. Albrecht Riethmüller, Carl Dahlhaus and Alexander L. Ringer, 2 vols (Laaber: Laaber 1996), 1: 237–242. All English translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

[4] *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Joseph Joachim*, ed. Andreas Moser, 3rd edn, 2 vols (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908; repr. Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974), 1: 132.

[5] The works performed by the Joachim Quartet in the *Singakademie* concert series are tabulated in the Appendix CD of Beatrix Borchard, *Stimme und Geige: Amalie und Joseph Joachim. Biographie und Interpretationsgeschichte* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005). According to Borchard's tabulations, the Joachim Quartet performed Op. 29 12 times between 1871 and 1905, more frequently than any of Mozart's quintets (K515 five times, K516 – the famous G minor quintet – nine times, K593 four times, and K614 three times). Unlike the Mozart quintets, Beethoven's Op. 29 was always placed last on the programmes. Only Schubert's C Major Quintet, D. 956, was played more frequently (17 times); like Beethoven's Op. 29, it always concluded the programme.

[6] Therese Ellsworth, '"*Caviare* to the Multitude": Joseph Joachim and the Monday Popular Concerts in London'. Paper presented at 'Joseph Joachim at 185: An International Conference', 16–18 June 2016, Boston.

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available to people of ordinary means. During Joachim's many appearances in the series, the three works by Beethoven that he programmed most frequently were: The Kreutzer Sonata, Op. 47, the Septet, Op. 20, and the String Quintet, Op. 29.[7] The popular appeal of the first two works is understandable; the Kreutzer Sonata was Beethoven's best-known work for violin and piano, combining dramatic musical ideas with thrilling virtuosity; the Septet had long been known for its pleasing, serenade-like qualities. But why the Op. 29 Quintet?

Joachim's programming of the Quintet in Bonn provides some clues about how he regarded the work. In his authorized biography of the violinist (which Robert Eshbach aptly calls Joachim's 'veiled autobiography'), Andreas Moser emphasized events of great personal significance to Joachim, including his extensive involvement in raising an endowment for a museum at the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn.[8] The fundraising plan envisioned a series of chamber music festivals that would include the Joachim Quartet. Joachim opened the first festival, in May of 1890, an event of great personal importance to him, with Beethoven's Quintet, Op. 29.[9] Joachim had wanted Brahms and Clara Schumann to participate in the inaugural Bonn festival. Writing to invite Brahms in a letter of 19 December [1889], Joachim noted that the festival would consist of 'about five evenings, always illustrating the three epochs, [with] sonatas, trios, quartets, quintet, septet. Probably the manuscripts will be available for most of the things'.[10] While neither Brahms nor Clara Schumann wound up attending the festival, Brahms sent two Beethoven manuscripts from his personal library to be included in the exhibits. The festival catalogue indicates that Beethoven's manuscript of Op. 29 also was exhibited, and that it was supplied by Joachim himself.[11] This raises the possibility

[7] Some contemporaneous accounts reflected Ellsworth's statistics. The violinist John Matthews noted that Op. 29 was 'almost as often heard at the Monday Popular Concerts as anything of Beethoven's'. See John Matthews, *The Violin Music of Beethoven* (London: E. Shore & Co., 1902), 88.

[8] Robert Eshbach, '"For All are Born to the Ideal": Joseph Joachim and Bettina von Arnim'. Paper read at the North American Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music, Nashville, 7–9 June 2017.

[9] Andreas Moser, *Joseph Joachim. Ein Lebensbild*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1910), 2: 207–211. For the complete programme, see Rainer Cadenbach, 'Joseph Joachims Programme: Die große Zeit die Bonner Kammermusikfeste von 1890 bis 1907', in *1889–1989. Verein Beethovenhaus* (Bonn: Verlag Beethovenhaus Bonn, 1989), 65–90.

[10] *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Joseph Joachim*, 2: 250.

[11] See *Katalog der mit der Beethoven-Feier zu Bonn am 11.–15. Mai 1890 verbundenen Ausstellung von Handschriften, Bildnissen, Reliquien Ludwig van Beethoven's sowie sonstigen auf ihn und seine Familie bezüglichen Erinnerungen* (Bonn: Verlag des Vereins Beethoven-Haus, 1890): Nr. 215. It is generally assumed that in 1890 Joachim owned the autograph of Op. 29 based on the Bonn exhibition catalogue entry. See *Ludwig van Beethoven: Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis*, 1: 172–3. But it is possible that Joachim only had the manuscript on loan. It belonged to Paul Mendelssohn-Bartholdy in 1868 and was later acquired by the Preussische Staatsbibliothek from Ernst Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (Paul's son) in 1908. It seems odd to me that Joachim would have purchased the manuscript from Ernst Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and then sold it back to him; if Joachim had ever come into possession of such a precious document, it is difficult to believe he would have relinquished it. On the other hand, Joachim's artistic stature and his closeness to the Ernst Mendelssohn-Bartholdy family would have made a loan of the manuscript easy to arrange. For Joachim's relationship to the family of Ernst

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that Joachim gave Op. 29 pride of place at the opening of the 1890 festival partly because he had arranged to have its manuscript exhibited there. But his prominent featuring of the Quintet in this way would have been impossible if he had not regarded it musically as a masterwork, fully representative of Beethoven at his best.

Joachim's reference to 'three epochs' reflects the influence of Wilhelm von Lenz, who advocated for a tripartite division of Beethoven's works and provided the first thoroughgoing analytical survey of all of Beethoven's principal compositions.[12] Reflecting the three-period schema, many of Joachim's Bonn concerts were organized chronologically; for example, the second concert of the first festival comprised the String Quartet in C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4, the 'Eroica' Variations, Op. 35, the 'Ghost' Trio, Op. 70, No. 1, and the String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131.[13] Since Joachim placed Op. 29 at the beginning of the opening concert, he may have regarded it as an exceptionally important 'first-period' work, replete with progressive tendencies. (The Quintet fell early in Lenz's Second Period, which encompassed Op. 21 through Op. 100.) Joachim also arranged each of the five-day Bonn festivals according to a coherent aesthetic plan. Rainer Cadenbach has observed that Joachim placed the weightiest concert of each festival on the fourth evening.[14] On the fifth and final concert of each festival, which always took place as a matinée on *Himmelfahrtstag* (Ascension Day), the chronological ordering of style periods was usually reversed. For example, the final concert of the 1890 festival consisted of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Op. 106, *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98, the Cello Sonata in A major, Op. 69, two Scottish Lieder, and the Septet, Op. 20. Apparently, Joachim intended to close each festival with a work for a large chamber ensemble that featured an exuberant conclusion. So it is significant that he placed the Op. 29 Quintet at the end of the last programme of the fourth Bonn festival, held 7–11 May 1899. Evidently he believed the Quintet, with its exciting finale, would conclude the festival in an exuberant and brilliant fashion. This treatment would be consistent with his programming of the Quintet only at the ends of concerts at the Berlin *Singakademie* (see note 5 for details). Lenz noted the great importance of the first violin part in the finale of Op. 29, comparing the virtuosity required to that of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Op. 61, and

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Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, see Borchard, *Stimme und Geige*, 568–71. The manuscript is now located in the Biblioteka Jagiellonska in Kraców.

[12] See Wilhelm von Lenz, *Beethoven et ses trois styles* (St Petersburg: Bernard, 1852), in which, however, analytical remarks are focused only on Beethoven's piano sonatas. Joachim is more likely to have known Lenz's work through later publications: *Beethoven: Eine Kunst-Studie*, 4 vols, 2nd edn (Hamburg: Hofmann & Campe, 1860), or *Kritischer Katalog sämmtlicher Werke Ludwig van Beethovens mit Analysen derselben*, 4 parts (Hamburg: Hofmann & Campe, 1860). In the latter work Lenz examined all of Beethoven's principal compositions. The Quintet is discussed at length in the *Zweiter Teil. II. Periode op. 21 bis op. 100. Erste Hälfte op. 21 bis op. 55*: 94–121.

[13] This practice was an extension of Joachim's long-time habit of beginning all-Beethoven quartet concerts with one of the Op. 18 quartets, followed by middle-period and late-period quartets. His only exception to this practice was equally consistent: when the late-period quartet to be featured was the relatively slight Op. 135, he placed it in second position on the programme and concluded the evening with a middle-period quartet, usually Op. 59, No. 1 or 3. I am grateful to Valerie Goertzen for allowing me to study her transcription of the large collection of Joachim Quartet programmes housed at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

[14] Cadenbach, 'Joseph Joachims Programme', 70–72.

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remarking on impressive performances of the movement that he had heard from Henri Vieuxtemps.[15] So it is also possible that Joachim programmed Op. 29 prominently in part because of the wide scope it provided him individually as a performer. Doubtless, Joachim also loved the lyricism of the first movement's quiet and dignified opening theme, which Bathia Churgin suggests foreshadows that of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, and perhaps, especially in England, Joachim wanted to build an audience for a work that he felt was unjustly neglected.[16] But the evidence from the Bonn festivals suggests that the attractive musical qualities of the Quintet, and especially those of its virtuosic, exhilarating finale, played an important role in Joachim's persistent advocacy for the work.

Exactly when Brahms came to know Beethoven's Op. 29 is not clear. Given Joachim's enthusiasm for the Quintet, Brahms probably got familiar with it simply owing to the closeness of their relationship. In the mid-1850s, the itinerant Brahms divided his time predominantly between Düsseldorf, where Clara Schumann lived, his home town of Hamburg, and Joseph Joachim's residence in Hanover.[17] It is most likely at one of the informal chamber music gatherings that Joachim hosted in his home on Sundays that Brahms might have heard the Beethoven quintet played. That these gatherings focused on string chamber music is indicated by Joachim's letter to Robert Schumann of 17 November 1854, in which he referred to their personnel as 'my colleagues from the Sunday quartet'.[18] According to Georg Fischer, Joachim continued to host such informal gatherings in his home, 'where all the musical eminences that Hanover touched upon were to be found', even after he had established a regular series of string quartet concerts in public venues.[19]

It is therefore reasonable to believe that Brahms had heard Beethoven's Op. 29 quintet by 1860, when he was at work on his first String Sextet, Op. 18 in B-flat major. Several commentators have noted how few works in the sextet genre Brahms might have known at this time. Sextets had been written by Luigi Boccherini, Ignaz Pleyel, Bernhard Romberg and Louis Spohr, among others. Ferdinand David, Joachim's teacher at the Leipzig Conservatory, was working on a sextet for three violins, viola and two cellos at about the same time Brahms was writing Op. 18.[20] But none of the great masters had produced a string sextet.

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[15] See Lenz, *Kritischer Katalog*, 109, 114–16 and 119–20.

[16] See Bathia Churgin, *Transcendent Mastery: Studies in the Music of Beethoven* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2008), 9.

[17] For a general overview of Brahms's whereabouts between 1853 and 1856, see Renate Hofmann and Kurt Hofmann, *Johannes Brahms: Zeittafel zu Leben und Werk* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1983), 14–30.

[18] *Briefe von und an Joseph Joachim*, ed. Johannes Joachim and Andreas Moser, 3 vols (Berlin: Julius Bard, 1911–13), 1: 228. The date of this letter shows that Joachim had been hosting private chamber music gatherings in his Hanover residence well before he initiated more formal Sunday matinées in the hall of Hanover's Künstlerverein in April of 1855 (see *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild*, 2: 72–4). The other members of Joachim's Hanover quartet were Theodor Eyert, second violin, Karl Eyert, viola, and August Lindner, cello.

[19] See Georg Fischer, *Musik in Hannover: Zweite vermehrte Auflage* (Hanover: Hahn'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), 239–40 and 244.

[20] See Hanns-Werner Heister, 'Sextett für zwei Violinen, zwei Violen und Zwei Violoncelli No. 1 B-dur', in *Johannes Brahms: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, ed. Claus Bockmaier and Siegfried Mauser, 2 vols (Laaber: Laaber, 2013), 1: 119–28, and Michael Kube, 'Brahms' Streichsextette und ihr gattungsgeschichtlicher Kontext', in *Die Kammermusik von Johannes Brahms: Tradition und Innovation: Bericht über die Tagung Wien 1997*, ed. Gernot Gruber (Laaber: Laaber, 2001), 149–74.

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Marie Sumner Lott has suggested that Brahms might have looked to the string quintet literature when contemplating writing a sextet.[21] She situates Brahms's Op. 18 in a tradition of quintet writing that includes works by George Onslow and Louis Spohr. These quintets 'privileged long, lyrical themes that are frequently repeated in their entirety several times in the work', and sometimes opened with textural treatments similar to the beginning of Brahms's sextet.[22] However, the close relationship between the opening bars of Beethoven's Op. 29 Quintet and those of Brahms's Op. 18 suggests that it was Beethoven's work in particular that had caught Brahms's ear.[23]

Beethoven's Quintet begins in trio texture. Its restrained initial motive, shown as 'x' in Example 1, starts on the down-beat with a long tone (dotted minim) on the tonic, followed by simple, *legato* crotchets that feature a persistent neighbour-tone motion around the tonic. Beethoven's sophisticated sentential construction combines the second presentation of the head-motive ('x'' in Example 1) with the initiation of a sequence that drives to the elided PAC at bar 9. In effect, we hear the neighbour-dominated x and x'' motives circle around the tonic twice before the melody moves upward toward scale degree 5. The cello's line mirrors the melody in contrary motion, so that one can hardly speak of a rhythmically differentiated bass. Between these voices lie undulating quavers in the first viola. All three instruments lie in dark registers – the first violin on the G string, the viola on the C string, the cello as low as the integrity of its line will permit.[24] The second phrase (bars 9–17) reiterates the first one in an expanded texture, with the undulating quavers now doubled in octaves and the melody lying an octave higher in the second violin. Initially the first violin is withheld, but it joins the texture with a fourth real part in bar 11.

Rudolf Stephan regards Beethoven's exploration of sound and texture at the beginning of the Op. 29 Quintet as an important distinguishing feature of the work, contrasting it with the motive-based openings of the Op. 18 quartets. He notes especially the restrained quality of the opening idea, 'entirely without

[21] Marie Sumner Lott, 'Domesticity in Brahms's String Sextets, Opp. 18 and 36', in *Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall: Between Private and Public Performance*, ed. Katy Hamilton and Natasha Loges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 43–94.

[22] Lott, 'Domesticity in Brahms's String Sextets', 49–50.

[23] I am aware of only one other suggestion of a connection between Beethoven's Op. 29 and Brahms's Op. 18 in the literature. Angus Watson recently observed that 'Brahms … was surely inspired by [Op. 29] when he wrote the opening theme and flowing accompaniment for his Sextet in B flat major'. See Angus Watson, *Beethoven's Chamber Music in Context* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 117.

[24] The passage calls to mind a moment in the second subject of the first movement of Beethoven's 'Pastorale' Sonata, Op. 28 (bars 77–82 and following), which was written around the same time as Op. 29. There the homorhythmic parts in minims and crotchets moving in neighbour-note motion in the outer voices and the luminous, undulating quavers in the centre of the texture anticipate the opening of Op. 29 to a remarkable degree. In the Sonata, this music pulls away from the local tonic, i.e., it is harmonically disruptive, whereas in the Quintet a similar idea establishes the tonic at the outset of the work. It is almost as if Beethoven, entranced by the texture he had invented in Op. 28, wanted to try beginning a piece with such an idea. It is worth noting that Brahms was familiar with Beethoven's Op. 28 at least from the summer of 1857, when Clara Schumann was studying the work. In a letter to Joachim of 21 August she wrote: 'Johannes has told me all his thoughts about the Pastoral Sonata, and now I play it differently'. See Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben*, 3 vols (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1920), 3: 22.

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Ex. 1 Beethoven, Quintet in C Major, Op. 29, mvt I, bars 1–17

characterizing rhythmic profiling', and the contrary motion between melody and bass, so that 'the melody accompanies itself'.[25] In Stephan's view, in its fuller, rounder, more peaceful opening, the Quintet anticipates Schubert.[26] In a similar vein, Ludwig Finscher stresses that Beethoven's emphasis on sheer sound at the opening of Op. 29 distinguishes it from the more contrapuntally conceived quintets of Mozart.[27] The long tradition of comparing Beethoven's Op. 29 to Mozart's quintets began with Wilhelm von Lenz, who believed that the work was related to Mozart's '*Kassationstyl*', or serenade style. He based this unusual argument on an observation in Otto Jahn's widely read Mozart biography, first published in 1856, in which Jahn imputed a light, serenade-like quality to Mozart's early quintets.[28] Lenz heard such qualities in the *concertante* writing in

[25] Stephan, 'Streichquintett C-dur op. 29', 1: 238.
[26] Stephan, 'Streichquintett C-dur op. 29', 1: 238.
[27] Ludwig Finscher, 'Streichquintett', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Zweite, neubearbeitete Ausgabe*, 21 vols in 2 parts, ed. Ludwig Finscher, *Sachteil 8: Quer-Swi* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1998), 1990–2006, esp. 1999.
[28] Otto Jahn, *W. A. Mozart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1856), 588.

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Ex. 1 Continued.

the last movement of Op. 29, with its emphasis on a virtuosic first violin part, and on the looseness of the form in that movement, with the two interpolated *Andante con moto e scherzoso* sections.[29] While modern critics tend to lay aside Lenz's comments about Op. 29, in the 1860s his emphasis on the serenade-like qualities of its finale would have contributed to a view of the work that was consistent with the way Joachim used it in concerts, for, despite its restrained, Schubertian opening, it provided a rousing, brilliant conclusion.

[29] Even though Lenz associated Op. 29 with the rather straightforward Mozartian 'cassation style', he was by no means blind to the forward-looking elements in the quintet on which modern critics have focused. He noted, for example, that the first movement of Op. 29 is the first major-key sonata form in which Beethoven used a second key a third away from the tonic, with a second key of A major/minor for the second subject of the C major movement. Lenz claimed that Op. 29 presented the first use of this tonal strategy not only in Beethoven's works, but in the entirety of music literature. See Lenz, *Kritischer Katalog*, 104.

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Like Beethoven's Op. 29, Brahms's Op. 18 sextet begins in a dark-hued trio texture. The first cello's initial motive, shown as 'x' in Example 2, starts with a long tonic note (a minim) on the downbeat that continues in simple, *legato* crotchets. As in Beethoven's Op. 29, the motive begins with a prominent lower-neighbour motion around the tonic, and the second presentation of the motive ('x'' in example 2) partially echoes the same neighbour motion, but with the initiating long tone removed, at the same time shifting the motive's beginning from downbeat to upbeat. Taken together, motives x and x′ circle around the tonic twice before springing up to scale degree 5. Because of their subtle rhythmic organization, x and x′ in both cases combine to yield an initial unit of five rather than four bars, causing the first phrase-level cadence to fall on bar 9 rather than bar 8. The middle of the texture is filled out by gently undulating quavers in the first viola. At bar 11, Brahms presents the same material again in an expanded texture, with the melody now an octave higher in the first violin, doubled an octave lower by the first viola. The bass is still supplied by the second cello, while the undulating quaver middle is



Ex. 2 Brahms, Sextet, Op. 18, mvt I, bars 1–43

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Ex. 2 Continued.

now doubled in octaves between second violin and first cello. The second viola is initially withheld from this expanded texture, leaving the second phrase essentially scored for string quintet. After an exploration of the flatted mediant key (D-flat major) in bars 20–30, during which the second viola joins in, Brahms closes this lengthy first subject with a PAC at bar 43.

The many commonalities of melodic idea, pitch register, accompaniment figuration and texture between these two passages leave the strong impression that the opening of Brahms's sextet was written under the sway of Beethoven's Op. 29. The double presentation of the opening phrase in a dark trio texture and then in a warm, expanded scoring is especially persuasive to the ear. But the relatedness of the two passages is more complex than it appears to be, for in an earlier version Brahms's sextet did not begin in trio texture. In his biography of the composer, Max Kalbeck reported: 'Originally the sextet began with the eleventh bar; the first violin took the theme. Joachim was of the opinion that the beautiful melody would come into play even

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Ex. 2 Continued.

more if it was first assigned to the cello and then was repeated by the violin.'[30] Donald Francis Tovey, who knew Joachim well late in the violinist's life, reported this information somewhat differently:

> Joachim, to whom Brahms at this time sent all his compositions to be criticized movement by movement, found that the opening theme moved in its twelfth bar too abruptly to the rather remote key of D flat, and suggested to Brahms that instead of beginning at once with all six instruments it would be better to announce the first nine bars … in the violoncellos and viola, letting the violins sail in with the connecting tenth bar so as to take up the theme in their own octave

[30] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, 4th edn, 4 vols (Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1904–21), 1: 419.

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> by way of repetition; after which the modulation to D flat would sound as welcome as it is rich.[31]

The manuscript of the sextet, now in the Library of Congress, confirms that the opening was revised. In James Webster's words:

> the title page and first three pages of music are written on different paper from most of the remainder, and the blank space at the end of this bifolium, the third page of music, implies that Brahms must have rewritten the opening of the movement after the fourth page of music and the following pages already existed (otherwise there would have been no reason not to fill p. 3 to the end) … .This is compatible with the fact that the autograph [page] number 3 appears on the fourth page of music, which implies that originally only two pages preceded [it].[32]

Writing in 1983, Webster lamented that he had found nothing in the Brahms–Joachim correspondence related to this revision.[33] But we now know that Kalbeck received his information directly from Joachim in the form of a written answer to one of several questions Kalbeck posed to him while working on Brahms's biography. Joachim wrote simply: 'The first eight bars of the B-flat major sextet were added at my request.'[34] There is, then, a significant difference between what Joachim wrote to Kalbeck and what Kalbeck reported in his biography; Joachim revealed nothing to Kalbeck about why he had recommended the revision. Unless Kalbeck received further information from him on this point, the notion that Joachim wanted more exposure for the first theme at the beginning of the sextet must be imputed to Kalbeck, not to Joachim himself. Tovey's assertion, probably based on a conversation with Joachim, that the revision sprang from harmonic considerations also contradicts Kalbeck's account. Left hanging in the air is the question of whether, in suggesting a revision to the opening of Brahms's sextet, Joachim may have drawn, either deliberately or intuitively, on his own intimate knowledge of Beethoven's Quintet, with its double statement of an opening theme at first in trio texture and then in an expanded scoring – a theme that was already strikingly similar in gesture and expression to Brahms's first subject. Whatever the case may be, Brahms's allusion to Beethoven's Op. 29 at the

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[31] Donald F. Tovey, 'Brahms, Johannes', in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, ed. Walter Willson Cobbett, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1963, originally published 1923), 158–82.

[32] *Johannes Brahms Autographs: Facsimiles of eight Manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, Introduction by James Webster, Notes about the Manuscripts by George S. Bozarth (New York: Garland, 1983), xi.

[33] *Johannes Brahms Autographs*, xv.

[34] Constantin Floros, 'Max Kalbecks "neugeirige Fragen eines wissensdurstigen Brahms-Biographen": Die Fragebögen für Joseph Joachim und Albert Dietrich', in *Internationaler Brahms-Kongress Gmunden 1997: Kongreßbericht*, ed. Ingrid Fuchs (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2001), 359–75. Clearly Joachim meant the first ten bars, not the first eight bars. His laconic response to Kalbeck also gives no hint that Brahms experimented with another instrumentation of the new opening in which the melody was assigned to the first viola and the quaver inner part to the first cello, something that was revealed by the discovery of the engravers' models of the parts. See Michael Struck, 'Johannes Brahms' kompositorische Arbeit im Spiegel von Kopistenabschriften', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 54 (1997): 1–33.

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beginning of his first sextet surely owes part of its force and effect to Joachim's suggestion.

Joachim famously despised virtuosic display in performance, but that does not mean he was not a dazzling executant.[35] J.A. Fuller-Maitland recalled 'a kind of ethereal quality to his execution of rapid passages, such as the semiquavers at the beginning of the finale of Beethoven's String Quintet in C, Op. 29'.[36] Clearly Joachim's performance of this remarkable finale made a strong impression on Fuller-Maitland, and it may also have made a strong impression on Brahms, considering the broad similarities between the finale of Beethoven's Op. 29 and that of Brahms's Second Sextet, Op. 36.[37]

The last movement of Op. 29 is one of the most distinctive finales Beethoven wrote before the *Eroica* Symphony. The six-eight *presto* sonata form opens with the passage Fuller-Maitland described, in which the first violin dashes up and down the scale in short, frantic bursts, supported by tremolo in the lower strings, as shown in Example 3.[38] The following transition and second subject in flowing quavers sound almost calm by comparison. They have been described by Walter Riezler as a 'pastoral middle passage' contrasting sharply with a demonic first subject.[39] Writing in 1912, Paul Bekker, who may have heard Joachim play Op. 29, described the first theme as a thunderstorm, with the first violin's octaves in bars 7–8 as flashes of lightning, and the second group as a contrasting 'undulating quaver theme'.[40] This unhurried second group (bar 55), soon gives way to the tremolo motive again, especially in the retransition to the repeat of the exposition (bars 96–104). As shown in the overview of the form in Table 1, the shape of the exposition as a whole is that of a lively pastoral or gigue-like centre framed by intense tremolo passages.

The development section is very distinctive. After a short, post-cadential transition to D minor using the tremolo-based first subject, Beethoven lets loose a fugato

[35] Concerning Joachim's views on the subject of virtuosity, see Karen Leistra-Jones, 'Virtue and Virtuosity: Brahms, the Concerto, and the Politics of Performance in the Late Nineteenth-Century Austro-German Culture' (PhD diss., Yale University, 2011).

[36] J.A. Fuller-Maitland, *Joseph Joachim* (London: John Lane, 1905), 36–7.

[37] By the time he composed the last movement of his Op. 36 sextet in May of 1865, Brahms would have been able to hear a performance of Beethoven's Op. 29 Quintet by the Hellmesberger Quartet in Vienna on 24 January 1864. For a complete tabulation of the Hellmesberger Quartet's performances of Op. 29, see Borchard, *Stimme und Geige*, Appendix (CD).

[38] Beneath this racing passagework lies fundamentally the same harmonic structure found at the beginning of the first movement: (I–V–I) – (ii–V/ii–ii)–IV–V–I, forging a strong connection between Beethoven's outer movements that is entirely independent of their melodic surfaces. For further consideration of structural connections within and between the movements of Op. 29, see Christopher Hatch, 'Thematic Interdependence in two Finales by Beethoven', *The Music Review* 45 (1984): 194–207.

[39] See Walter Riezler, *Beethoven, Achte, teilweise umgearbeitete und wesentlich erweiterte Auflage* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1951), 131. It is reasonable to believe that Riezler, who was born in 1878 in Munich and had many educational advantages, would have heard Joachim play.

[40] Paul Bekker, *Beethoven* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1912), 488. That Bekker heard Joachim play is clear from his article 'Joachim', in Paul Bekker, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3 vols (Stuttgart & Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1922), vol. 2, *Klang und Eros*: 215–19. Associating the opening of the Finale with 'storm-music' entered the Beethoven literature early on; for a summary of this hermeneutic connection, see Kurth, *Beethovens Streichquintette*, 83–5.

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Ex. 3 Beethoven, Quintet, Op. 29, mvt iv, bars 1–34

in that key, the first substantial development-section fugato in his output.[41] As outlined in Table 2, it is comprised of a complete exposition in all five parts (bars 112–140), a short modulatory episode, a pair of stretto-like entries in C major (bars 144–151), and an episodic transition leading to a dominant preparation

[41] See comments in Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, 2nd edn, trans. Margaret Bent and Bathia Churgin (Durham: Duke University Press, 1979), 231. In design this fugato bears comparison with the one in the second movement of the *Eroica* Symphony, which also has a complete exposition in five voices, uses two counter-subjects, presents a truncated statement of the subject in the major mode after an episode, and dissolves into an elaborate dominant preparation. For a close analysis of the Op. 29 fugato, see Ludwig Misch, 'Ein unbemerktes Stück Beethovenscher Fugenkunst', in *Neue Beethoven-Studien und andere Themen* (Munich: G. Henle, 1967), 51–5.

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Ex. 3 Continued.

of A major (bars 158–177).[42] This dominant preparation ushers in the remarkable interpolation of a little minuet, marked *Andante con moto e scherzoso*, in the by-then-antiquated early classical style (bars 177–195). It is an almost comical moment of courtly decorum separating the intense, preceding fugato from the storm of *tremolo* semiquavers that ensues with the recapitulation (bar 202).[43] This

[42] Bathia Churgin regards the C major subject statements as 'partial entries'. See Churgin, *Transcendent Mastery*, 444. I regard them as 'stretto-like' entries because they provide closer imitation than that found in the fugato's exposition – imitation at a distance of four bars rather than six. The effect is like stretto, even though the entries do not overlap.

[43] Churgin regards this interpolated music as an adaptation of the *da capo* overture form. See *Transcendent Mastery*, 445. The close relationship between this music and the third

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Table 1 Form and Idea in Beethoven's Op. 29, mvt iv and Brahms's Op. 36 mvt iv

Beethoven, Op. 29, iv: Presto, 6/8	Brahms, Op. 36, iv: Poco Allegro, 9/8
EXPOSITION	
	Introduction (I^V, bars 1–6): tremolo; Motive y3b
First Subject (I, bars 1–31): tremolo; rushing scales in semiquavers	First Subject (I, bars 7–22): pastorale in flowing quavers
Transition (I→V^V, bars 31–54): flowing passages in quavers	Transition[1] (I→iii^V, bars 23–29): pastorale in flowing quavers
Second Subject[1] (→VI→V, bars 55–82): flowing passages in quavers	**Transition[2] (iii^V→V^V, bars 29–33): tremolo; Motive y3b**
Second Subject[2] (V, bars 82–96): flowing passages in quavers; cadential	**Second Subject (V, bars 34–49): swirling waltz with rushing scales in semiquavers**
Retransition (V→I, bars 96–103): tremolo; rushing scales in semiquavers	Retransition (I^{ii}, bars 49–51): static ii^6 chord
DEVELOPMENT	
Post-cadential Transition (I→ii, bars 104–112): tremolo, rushing scales in semiquavers	
Fugato (ii and vi→vi^V, bars 112–158♭: combines 6/8 and 2/4; S in martial dotted halves and dotted quavers plus semiquavers; CS[1] in rushing semiquavers from First Subject; CS[2] in syncopated crotchets	**Fugato (ii and vi→I^V, bars 52–68): S in semiquavers using y3c; S treated in stretto (bars 61–65) after three-voice fugato exposition**
Dominant Lock (vi^V, bars 158–177): angular octave passages in quavers	
Interpolation (VI, bars 177–195): Minuet	
Retransition (IV→I, bars 196–201): tremolo; rushing scales in semiquavers	Retransition (I^V →I, bars 70–79): based on pastorale combined with tremolo motive in octaves
RECAPITULATION AND CODA	
	NB: Introduction is not recapitulated !!!
First Subject (I, bars 203–224): compare bars 1–31	First Subject (I, bars 80–95): compare bars 7–22
Quasi Transition (I→I^V, bars 224–247): compare bars 31–54	QuasiTransition[1] (I→I^V, bars 96–102): compare bars 23–29
Second Subject[1] (bII→I, bars 248–275): compare bars 55–82	*NB: Transition[2] is not recapitulated !!!*
Second Subject[2] (I, bars 275–289): compare bars 82–96	Second Subject (I, bars 103–118): compare bars 34–49
Quasi Retransition (I→cadential six-four, bars 289–298): compare bars 96–103	Quasi Retransition (I→cadential six-four, bars 118–134): newly composed on pastorale material
Coda[1] (I, bars 299–316): interpolated minuet, compare bars 177–195	**Coda[1] Fugato: (I and V→I, bars 135–157): S in semiquavers using y3c: compare bars 52–68; S in stretto (bars 147–149): compare bars 61–65**
Coda[2] (bVI→I, bars 317–353): tremolo; rushing scales in semiquavers	**Coda[2] (I, bars 157–174): combines pastorale with Motive y3c.**

Tremolo-based sections are given in bold type.

reprise is unremarkable, but in the coda the interpolated minuet reappears in the tonic key before the movement closes by returning to its dazzling first-subject material. The form as a whole leaves the impression of a continuous swinging back and forth between intense, tremolo-based passages and more refined ideas

movement of Beethoven's *Creatures of Promethius*, Op.43, is noted by Kurth in *Beethovens Streichquintette*, 85. Beethoven's '*scherzoso*' directive suggests that this material might also have been intended to have an ironical effect, somewhat like the emotively incongruous coda in the last movement of the *Quartetto Serioso*, Op. 95. See Mark Evan Bonds, 'Irony and Incomprehensibility: Beethoven's "Serioso" String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95, and the Path to the Late Style', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70 (2017): 285–356.

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Table 2 Fugato of the development sections of Beethoven, Op. 29, mvt iv and Brahms, Op. 36, mvt iv

Fugato from the development section of Beethoven's Op. 29, mvt iv

	Exposition					Episode 1	Stretto	Episode 2
Keys:	d→a	a→d	d→a	a→d	d	d→C	C	C → A^{V} .....
Vn1	CS2_____	CS1_____		S_____	CS1_____		S_____	
Vn2	CS1_____		S_____	CS2_____	CS1_____		S_____	
Vla1		S_____	CS2_____				S_____	
Vla2	S_____	CS2_____	CS1_____				S_____	
Vc				CS1_____	S_____			

112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157

Fugato from the development section of Brahms's Op. 36, mvt iv

	Exposition			Episode 1	Stretto			Episode 2
Keys:	a	e	a	b→f#	f# b	a	g	G ^{V7} .....
Vn1		S_____	CS_____		S___	S___	S___	
Vn2	S_____	CS_____						
Vla1			S_____					
Vla2								
Vc1			S_____		S___	S___	S___	
Vc2								

52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70

in a 'pastoral' mood, with an impressive fugato dominating the central development section.

Table 1 also outlines the form of the last movement of Brahms's Op. 36 sextet, a movement that has been parsed in a remarkable variety of ways. Among recent analysts, Malcolm MacDonald regards its form as 'a species of sonata design with a single (but bi-partite) subject', with the first subject consisting of two parts, the first beginning in bar 1 and the second in bar 7.[44] Wolfgang Ruf posits that the form is 'a subtly shaped mixture of sonata form and rondo. This results from the framing of both themes with a *ritornello* that is subjected to its own developmental processes.'[45] For Ruf, then, the *tranquillo* theme beginning in bar 7 is the first subject of the sonata form, with the second theme beginning in bar 34. The semiquaver *tremolo* material in bars 1–5 and 29–33 has a framing function analogous to the *tutti* sections in a baroque concerto. In Arno Mitschka's similar analysis, the semiquaver material in bars 1–5 is designated as a motto theme – according to Mitschka the earliest use of such a device in Brahms's works.[46]

[44] See Malcolm MacDonald, *Brahms* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 173.

[45] Wolfgang Ruf, 'Die zwei Sextette von Brahms: eine analytische Studie', in *Brahms-Analysen: Referate der Kieler Tagung 1983*, ed. Friedhelm Krummacher and Wolfram Steinbeck (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1984), 121–33.

[46] Arno Mitschka, 'Der Sonatensatz in den Werken von Johannes Brahms' (PhD diss., Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität zu Mainz, 1961), 251. Both Ruf and Mitschka evidently elaborate the view expressed by Karl Geiringer in *Brahms: His Life and Work*, 2nd edn, trans. H. B. Weiner and Bernard Miall (London: Allen & Unwin, 1948), 230–31: 'The Finale [of Op. 36] exhibits an interesting mixed type; the original sonata form approximates

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Hanns-Werner Heister contributes yet another perspective: 'Within the meaning of sonata-like contrasts of the themes, corresponding to that of refrain and couplet, Brahms combined and confronted the first theme, almost hectic because of its continuous semiquaver motion, including many repeated notes, with a steady second [theme] emphasizing a *tranquillo* quality'.[47] All these analyses, and Heister's in particular, respond to the strong contrast of motivic surface between the tremolo-based ideas and the *tranquillo* material. As shown in Table 1, these contrasts suggest a broad connection between Brahms's finale and that of Beethoven's Op. 29.

The function of the first five bars, shown in Example 4, is at issue in all the analyses cited above. Their continuous tremolo and flashes of rushing scale passages are somewhat reminiscent of the opening of Beethoven's Op. 29 finale, despite their somewhat slower tempo and more contrapuntal texture. But how does this unusual music function in the form? Friedhelm Krummacher maintains that these bars are 'no mere introduction', but that subsequently their tremolo motive 'comes back with many variants in all parts of the form and functions just as much as a germ-motive of the themes as their adversary'.[48] Besides raising the possibility of an introductory function for the opening bars, Krummacher points out that their head-motive appears without tremolo in bars 15–18.[49] This 'plain' statement of the motive is critical to my own analysis, which differs from Krummacher's primarily in that I regard the plain statement as the germ from which the semiquaver version was derived, and not the other way around.[50] Accordingly, my analysis begins with a consideration not of the opening bars, but of the material that begins at bar 7.

Brahms's tendency in many previous works was to cast the first themes of final movements in various kinds of binary form. Table 3 describes Brahms's treatment of these binary themes up to and including Op. 36. In his Op. 1, the first binary part

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to the Rondo by repeating, in the manner of a ritornell, the same idea (b. 1–6) throughout all parts of the movement. Here we find already the idea of a "motto", which plays an important part in the work of the mature Brahms'.

[47] Hanns-Werner Heister, 'Sextett für zwei Violinen, zwei Violen und zwei Violoncelli Nr. 2 G-dur Op. 36', in *Johannes Brahms: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, ed. Claus Bockmaier and Siegfried Mauser, 2 vols (Laaber: Laaber, 2013), 1: 242–50.

[48] Friedhelm Krummacher, 'Kammermusik für Streichinstrumente', in *Brahms Handbuch*, ed. Wolfgang Sandberger (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2009), 382–407, esp. 387–8.

[49] See also Werner Czesla, 'Studien zum Finale in der Kammermusik von Johannes Brahms' (PhD diss., Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn, 1968), 139. Czesla regards the first six bars as an introductory 'varied anticipation-motive' of the first theme.

[50] The accent marks in bars 1–4 of Example 4 make explicit the relationship between the plain version of the motive and its tremolo version. They are not found in the first edition of the score or parts of Op. 36 and are also missing from the copyist manuscripts of the parts that were used as engraver's models for the first edition of the parts. The accent marks do appear in Brahms's autograph, which was used as the engraver's model for the first edition of the score, and they are entered by hand, presumably by Brahms, in his personal copy of the first edition of the score. They were included in the old Brahms complete edition: Johannes Brahms, *Sämtliche Werke*. Ausgabe der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien, 26 vols, vols 1–10 ed. Hans Gál, vols 11–26 ed. Eusebius Mandyczewski (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1926–27), 7: 82. However, the first-edition reading, without accents, has been restored in the new Brahms complete edition: Johannes Brahms, *Streichsextette Nr. 1 B-dur op. 18 und Nr. 2 G-dur op. 36*, ed. Katrin Eich, Johannes Brahms Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke, Serie 2, Band 1 (Munich: G. Henle, 2017), 105.

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Ex. 4 Brahms, Sextet, Op. 36, mvt iv, bars 1–7

was literally repeated, making the theme's binary design explicit. He later began to write out the repeat of the first part in order to rescore it, as in Opp. 11, 15, 16, 18 and 26. Most of the 12 binary themes listed in Table 3 conclude in the tonic key, often emphatically, but beginning with the First Piano Concerto, Op. 15, Brahms started cultivating a more efficient practice: slipping into the transition area of the sonata or sonata-rondo expositions shortly after the point of rounding in the first theme's second binary part. This procedure, coupled with the non-repetition of the first part, disguises the binary-form underpinnings of the theme beginning at bar 7 in the finale of Op. 36. The theme's binary design emerges clearly, however, in a hypothetical reconstruction that shows it to resemble a keyboard suite movement in the style of a pastorale, shown in Example 5. The mordents that appear here and there favour this impression, as does the aperiodicity of the melodic writing, the tonal plan and especially the launching of the second binary part with material derived from the opening motive. In a Bach keyboard suite, this derivation might typically involve melodic inversion, change of texture or embellishment.

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Table 3 Binary-Form First Themes in Brahms's Early Finales

Sonata, Op. 1
First Part (repeated): bars 1–12 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 13–24 | Rounding and Conclusion: bars 26–39

Sonata, Op. 2
First Part (not repeated): bars 26–33 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 34–44 | Rounding and Conclusion: bars 45–61

Sonata, Op. 3
First Part (not repeated): bars 1–15 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 15–25 | Tonic Return and Conclusion: bars 25–38

Trio, Op. 8
Not in binary form

Serenade, Op. 11
First Part (with written-out repeat): bars 1–8 and 9–16 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 17–28 | Rounding and Conclusion: bars 29–37

First Piano Concerto, Op. 15
First Part (with written-out repeat): bars 1–8 and 9–16 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 17–31 | Rounding and Merger into Transition: bars 32–46

Serenade, Op. 16
First Part (with written-out repeat): bars 3–10 and 11–18 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 19–29 | Rounding and Conclusion: bars 31–42

String Sextet, Op. 18
First Part (with written-out repeat): bars 1–16 and 17–32 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 32–40 | Rounding and Conclusion: bars 41–56

Piano Quartet, Op. 25
First Part (not repeated): bars 1–30 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 31–60 | End Rounding and Conclusion: bars 61–79

Piano Quartet, Op. 26
First Part (with written-out repeat): bars 1–16 and 17–32 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 33–52 | Head Rounding and Merger into Transition: bars 53–83

Piano Quintet, Op. 34
Not in binary form

String Sextet, Op. 36
First Part (not repeated): bars 7–15 | | Second Part: Continuation Section: bars 15–22 | Head Rounding and Merger into Transition: bars 23–29

Continuation Section: after the binary division, a section usually characterized by motivic development, sequence and exploration of secondary key areas; sometimes new ideas may appear in the continuation section.
Rounding: the recapitulation of material from the first binary part within the second binary part simultaneously with or after the return of the tonic key. Variants: Head Rounding – rounded material comes from the beginning of the first binary part; End Rounding – rounded material comes from the end of the first binary part
Conclusion: A concluding cadence, usually a PAC, that ends the second binary part.
Merger into Transition: The second binary part does not end with a concluding cadence after rounding, but begins the process of modulating to the key of the next section. In this case the binary design is 'open-ended'.

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Ex. 5 Brahms, Sextet, Op. 36, mvt iv, bars 1–25: first subject realized as a keyboard suite movement

Here a more Brahmsian process involves motivic transformation, or developing variation, traced by the bracketed material labeled y^0, y^1, y^2 and y^3 in Example 5. Y^0, the opening motive of the first theme, presents an ascending scale from scale degree 1 to scale degree 4, followed by stepwise descent to scale degree 3. In its first stage of transformation, y^1, the rhythm of the motive is held constant, but the motive is transposed upward so that its opening scale moves from scale degree 5 up to scale degree 1; simultaneously, in a critical reshaping of the motive, the descending step from y^0 is widened to a descending leap of a fourth. Y^2 holds fast to all the pitch elements of y^1, but now the motive begins to undergo a process of rhythmic contraction, with its last two notes expressed as a crotchet and quaver rather than as two dotted crotchets, as in y^1. This process of rhythmic contraction is intensified in y^3, where the ascending scale that begins the motive is removed, leaving only the ascending fourth from scale degree 5 up to scale degree 1 (now in the

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*From here to the end of m. 23 the upper voice is doubled an octave higher in the sextet version.

Ex. 5 Continued.

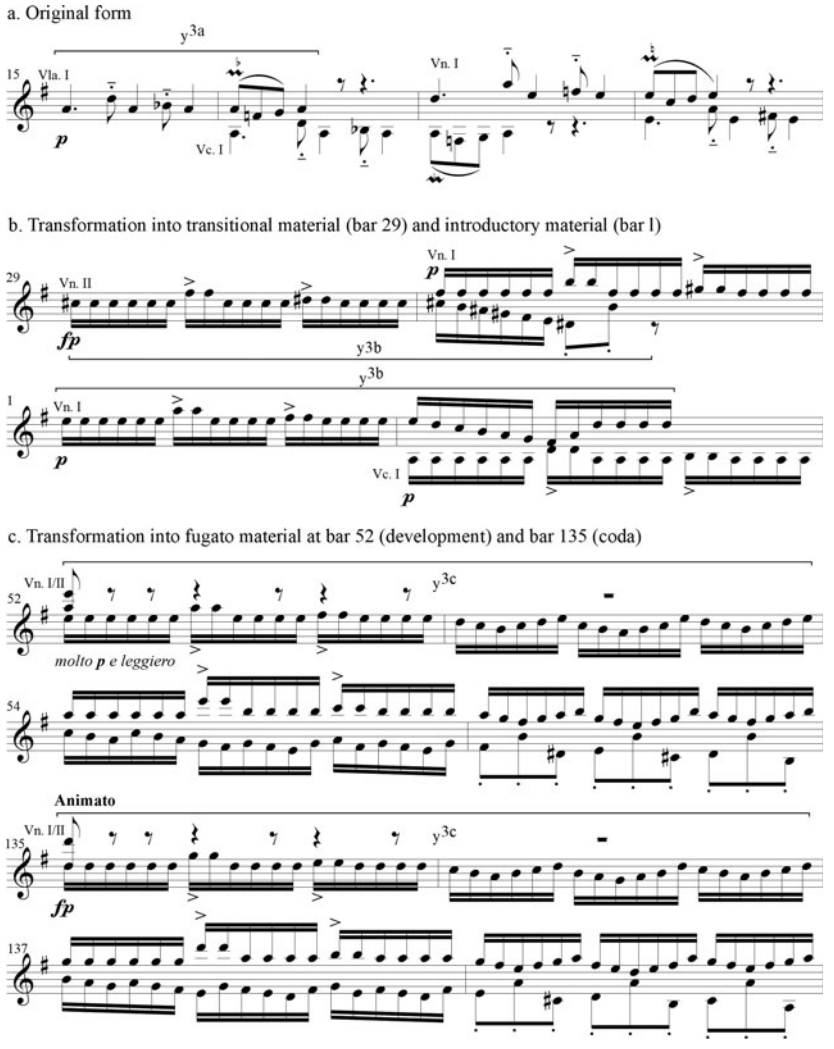
key of the dominant); at the same time, the rhythm of the descending fourth at the end of y^3 is intensified through syncopation. During the overall transformation process, the motive has been reduced from five notes, spread out over three beats, to three notes, spread out over two beats. Most particularly, the introduction of syncopated rhythm in y^3 allows the second binary part to commence with a fresh rhythmic impulse. Since, by this time, the opening motive had been worn down to a single interval melodically, it had to be replenished with new pitch material in order to launch the second binary part. Characteristically, Brahms chose to extend the newest element, the rhythmic syncopation, in that process.[51] Since much of the material in the third movement of the G major sextet can be traced to Brahms's study of Bach suite movements in 1855, it is tempting to connect this theme with the same preoccupation.[52]

Because of its key and its binary structure, it is clear that the pastorale beginning at bar 7 constitutes the first theme of the sonata form, but, unlike Krummacher, I view bars 1–7 as primarily introductory, not as a prototype for further development. Their motivic material is derived from Motive y^3, which, because of its important location at the beginning of the second part of the binary form, likely constitutes the prime form of all related motives in the movement. Example 6 presents y^3 with three different continuations, or 'suffixes'. The quaver suffix in parallel thirds at bar 16, forming y^{3a}, conforms to the rhythmic profile of the

[51] For a related reading of this passage, see Czesla, 'Studien zum Finale in der Kammermusik von Johannes Brahms', 139–44.

[52] See Robert Pascall, *Brahms Beyond Mastery: His Sarabande and Gavotte and Its Recompositions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), and William Horne, 'Through the Aperture: Brahms's Gigues, WoO 4', *The Musical Quarterly* 86 (2002): 530–81. It is worth noting in this regard that a great deal of the reconstructed pastorale in Example 5 can be played comfortably on the keyboard.

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Ex. 6 Brahms, Sextet in G major, Op. 36, mvt iv: motivic transformations of y^3

pastorale and, through a process of semi-inversion, provides the basis for the canonic episode that begins in bar 19. Y^{3b}, found at bar 29, is intensified with tremolo and appends a new suffix, a scalewise descent in semiquavers followed by an ascending leap of a sixth in quavers. The use of a closely related variant of y^{3b} at bar 1, including its distinctive imitation at the subdominant, suggests that the material in the introduction was drawn from the transitional episode in bars 29–32, and not the other way around. The conversion of the quaver leaps in the y^{3b} suffix (bars 30–32) into a semiquaver tremolo version (bar 2) in particular indicates the transformation of a simpler form of an idea into a more complex one. The introductory function of the first five bars and the transitional function of bars 29–33 is consistent with the fact that none of this material appears anywhere in the recapitulation,

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where an introduction would no longer be necessary and the omission of the modulating element of the transition would be a common occurrence.[53]

It is possible that Brahms composed the introduction for harmonic reasons. It serves as a modulatory bridge from the end of the previous movement in E major to the beginning of the last movement's sonata form proper in G major (E: I → iv = G: ii → V → I). If movement IV were to begin with the octave Ds in bar 5, their tritone relationship to the third of the previous movement's final E major chord would have been jarring, and perhaps unacceptable to Brahms. This reading of the form implies that the introduction was added after the movement as a whole was at least partially composed, since it would have been motivically dependent on the preexistence of y^3 in bar 15. It also raises the question of why introductory material is included within the repeat of the exposition. In fact, the unusual, cadentially open ending of the exposition was originally designed to lead directly into the development. Brahms's autograph manuscript of the score (Paul Sacher Stiftung) and the copyist's manuscript of the parts (Brahms-Institut an der Musikhochschule Lübeck) both show that the repeat of the exposition was added by Brahms at a very late stage of composition, and unquestionably after the introduction was already in place.[54] So it was not Brahms's original intention that bars 1–5 should be repeated at all. In this scenario their introductory function would have been perfectly clear.

Beginning in bar 52, the tremolo form of y^3 is extended into the subject of a fugato by means of yet another suffix, dominated by a turning figure in semiquavers, yielding y^{3c}. This form is found again where the fugato reappears in the coda, beginning in bar 135. In both cases y^{3c} is treated strictly as a fugue subject would be in the tradition of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, with tonal answers in the dominant key and third entries recurring in the tonic. By comparison, the looser treatment of the imitation at bars 1–4 (real imitation at the fifth below) is designed to support modulation, and the real imitation at the subdominant in bars 29–32 supports a transitional harmonic process. Neither of these imitation clusters can be regarded as fugal.

So there are two distinct tremolo versions of y^3, distinguished both by their suffixes and by their imitative treatments. While y^{3c} is reserved for strict fugal writing, the scalewise descending semiquavers of y^{3b} subsequently reappear beginning at bar 38, creating spritely runs that dominate the second subject, especially in the first-violin part. Here the music takes on a level of virtuosic brilliance similar to that found in the finale of Beethoven's Op. 29, which is replete with turning motives and scalewise passages in semiquavers in the first violin. These figures eventually extend into long, downward-plunging scales. In both works these plunging scales lead toward cadences near the ends of formal units – the first subject in Beethoven and the second group in Brahms. In both cases the scales rush downward twice and arrive at a first-inversion ii chord of the original tonic key, revealing an unexpected degree of connectedness between the two movements in terms of gesture and idea.

[53] Czesla relates the omission in the recapitulation of the tremolo-based introduction and transition to the substantial use of similar material in both the development and the coda. See Czesla, 'Studien zum Finale in der Kammermusik von Johannes Brahms', 148.

[54] See Johannes Brahms, *Streichsextette Nr. 1 B-dur op. 18 und Nr. 2 G-dur op. 36*, 140 and 206.

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The central developmental feature of both movements is fugato. Table 2 indicates several similarities of overall design between the two fugatos. Each exposition is followed by a modulatory episode that leads to contrapuntally intensified statements built from the first part of the fugue subject. Each of these statements extends into a second episode that leads out of the fugato toward a dominant preparation.

Some aspects of the two fugatos differ significantly. Beethoven employed a five-voice exposition with two countersubjects. Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, who gave Beethoven extensive lessons in counterpoint not long after Beethoven arrived in Vienna, referred to this procedure as 'triple invertible counterpoint at the octave' (*dreifacher Contrapunkt in der Octave*), the contrapuntal basis of 'triple fugue' (*dreifache Fuge*). This procedure constituted the culmination of Beethoven's studies in fugue with Albrechtsberger.[55] Beethoven employed a triple-fugue exposition for the first time in any of his published compositions in the Op. 29 fugato – a remarkable display of erudition in the midst of a high-spirited finale. By contrast, Brahms's three-voice exposition employed one countersubject, a common procedure in simple fugues in J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. The contrapuntally intensified statements in the two fugatos also differ in detail. In Beethoven's fugato, a four-bar segment (bars 144–147) presents, with modifications, the three elements of the exposition's triple-invertible counterpoint, but now with a fourth part added. In the next four bars (bars 148–151) these four parts recur in a different contrapuntal combination, yielding *quadruple*-invertible counterpoint. The music also has a stretto-like effect because the headmotive of the subject is imitated at a distance of four bars rather than six, as in the exposition. Brahms's contrapuntally intensified statement is a true stretto that presents the first half of the subject in close canon between the upper voice and the bass (bars 61–4).

However, the two fugatos also present significant design similarities. Both use minor-key subjects and remain resolutely in the minor mode until, with the arrival of the quadruple counterpoint in Beethoven and the final episode in Brahms, the tonic key of each movement returns. In both cases the contrapuntally intensified statements use only the first part of the fugato subject. Both fugatos begin in the minor key a step higher than the original tonic, so that Beethoven's fugato proceeds from D minor to C major, while Brahms's fugato proceeds from A minor to G major. There is also irony of a sort: Beethoven's subject is a rhythmic simplification of his principal theme, with the semiquaver element removed, whereas Brahms based his subject on a portion of his principal theme (Motive y^3), intensified and transformed by the addition of semiquaver tremolo. Brahms's fugato appears again, thoroughly reworked and in the tonic key, in the *animato* coda (bars 135–53), corresponding roughly to Beethoven's tonic-key presentation of the interpolated minuet. So a major feature of the development reappears tonally 'resolved' in the coda of both works – for Beethoven the minuet, for Brahms the fugato. Altogether, the developmental fugatos add significantly to the impression that

[55] See Gustav Nottebohm, *Beethoven's Studien. Erster Band: Beethoven's Unterricht bei J. Haydn, Albrechtsberger und Salieri*, ed. Julia Ronge, Quellenkataloge zur Musikgeschichte 47 (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel, 2009), 176–91. Beethoven wrote two complete triple fugues under Albrechtsbergers's tutelage. The first of these is in the same key as the fugato in Op. 29, D minor. Perhaps coincidentally, Albrechtsberger's assigned subject for this study-fugue bears some resemblance to the subject in Op. 29. Beethoven would not employ a triple-fugue exposition again until the fugato of the second movement of the Third Symphony, Op. 55.

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the two finales are broadly connected.[56] While the motivic ideas in the movements are only occasionally related, the fixation on tremolo textures, contrasting pastoral ideas and developmental fugatos in both movements produces so many similarities of overall shape and content that it is hard to avoid the impression that Brahms was responding to Beethoven's finale when composing his own.

The points of contact between Beethoven's Op. 29 quintet and Brahms's two string sextets are intrinsically interesting, but they also have something to say about Brahms's chamber music in broader outline. It is often observed that Brahms tended to write chamber works in pairs. The Piano Quartets, Op. 25 and 26, the two string quartets in Op. 51, and the two clarinet sonatas in Op. 120 come immediately to mind. Like the examples mentioned above, the two string sextets exemplify the pairing of opposites. Certainly both works reflect Schubertian breadth in their first movements, although, as James Webster points out, the first movement of Op. 36 already bends back toward a more restrained formal organization, with its second group hewing resolutely to the dominant key.[57] The oppositional relationship between the two sextets is more apparent in their inner movements. The genial scherzo and trio in Op. 18 could easily have appeared in one of Brahms's Serenades, Op. 11 or 16. Its clever, Haydnesque features include the transfer of the scherzo's opening motive into the bass of the trio and the old-fashioned subdominant rounding of the trio's binary form (bar 73). Above all, its uncomplicated homophony stands in stark contrast to the contrapuntal complexity of the scherzo in Op. 36, in which a complete, three-voice gigue exposition appears in the dominant-key area of the first binary part, with an inversion of the opening theme serving as a countersubject to the gigue motive. The opening theme of this movement, as Robert Pascal has pointed out, was developed from a keyboard gavotte in baroque style that Brahms penned in the 1850s, so the scherzo might be considered a compilation of two proto-baroque dances.

The classical manner of the variations in Op. 18's *Passamezzo*-inspired slow movement is apparent from their progression of surface rhythms through semiquavers, triplet semiquavers, and demisemiquavers, followed by a variation in crotchet and quaver rhythms. Only the ingenious musette-like fifth variation separates this overall plan from that of the variation movement in Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 18, No. 5. By contrast, the theme of the Adagio variations in Op. 36 is built up from a four-bar fragment that Brahms had sent to Clara Schumann in a letter of 7 February 1855.[58] It is possible that this fragment also existed in canonic form in the 1850s.[59] Should this be true, then both of the interior movements of Op. 36 were developed from proto-baroque composition exercises that Brahms

[56] The use of developmental fugatos also link the finales of Brahms's First Piano Concerto, Op. 15, and Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto, Op. 37, two movements whose close structural connections are widely accepted in the literature. For a summary, see Jacquelyn E. C. Sholes, *Allusion as Narrative Premise in Brahms's Instrumental Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 134–5.

[57] James Webster, 'Schubert's Sonata Form and Brahms's First Maturity', *19th-Century Music* 2 (1978): 18–35, and 3 (1979): 52–71. Webster (Part II, p. 70) notes in particular structural parallels between the first movement of Op. 36 and that of Schubert's String Quartet in G Major, D. 887.

[58] *Clara Schumann: Johannes Brahms. Briefe aus den Jahren 1853–1896*, ed. Berthold Litzmann, 2 vols (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1927), 1: 73–76.

[59] See Dietrich Kämper, 'Ein unbekanntes Brahms-Studienblatt aus dem Briefwechsel mit F. Wüllner', *Die Musikforschung* 17 (1964): 57–62.

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first sketched a decade before writing the sextet. The ensuing variations achieve extraordinary levels of contrapuntal complexity. In particular, large stretches of the imitative, gigue-like third and fourth variations are written in six independent parts. In the manner of the gigues in Bach's keyboard suites, the leading motives of these two variations are freely related by inversion.

However, it is in their finales that the oppositional relationship between Op. 18 and Op. 36 is most sharply drawn. The sprawling theme of Op. 18's closing rondo has the phrase form: *aa′aa′baa″*, with each phrase eight bars in length and the paired *aa′* phrase groups forming periods. It is a melodic statement that exudes regularity, presenting its headmotive no less than six times. Reflecting Schubertian practice, Brahms presents a generously proportioned B theme twice, with the first statement leading to a local-tonic close and the second one modulating back to the original tonic for the return of A (bars 78–102 and 102–137). The central developmental section (based on the *b* phrase of the opening theme) likewise is organized into two large parts, related broadly by sequence after the manner of Schubert (bars 180–207 and 207–277). The extensive harmonic digression in the third appearance of A to the key B major (enharmonically the Neapolitan) and its subdominant is likewise Schubertian.[60] Except for brief imitative forays in the development section, homophonic writing dominates the movement.

The contrast with the finale of Op. 36 could hardly be more striking. The play of imitation in its modulatory introduction announces from the outset that contrapuntal procedures will feature prominently in the movement. The indebtedness of the sonata form's first subject to baroque dance music has already been discussed here. The irregularity of the first subject's phrase structure places it far indeed from Op. 18's square-rigged rondo theme. Its second binary part begins with two canons following close on one another (bars 15–18 and 19–20), the first at the octave and the second at the tenth. The second subject offers relief from the writhing counterpoint, but its terseness, utter lack of closed cadences, and tenacious, though somewhat ambiguous, adherence to the dominant key make it the antithesis of a Schubertian second group. Brahms's brilliant ploy of letting the end of the exposition linger on a ii^6 chord in G major makes the formally disruptive repeat of bars 1–5 sound plausibly like part of a 'first ending' and emphasizes the second-group's complete lack of cadential closure. (Compare the similar effect made by the return of tremolo-based material in the 'real' first ending of Beethoven's Op. 29.) In fact, except for the somewhat irregular authentic cadence at bar 6, there is not a single PAC in the tonic key in the entire movement until bar 169, six bars from the end. This astonishing withholding of tonic closure might help account for the feeling of high energy and restlessness that pervades this movement.

Looking at the long view of Brahms's chamber music output, if the Op. 18 sextet marks the point at which he turned toward Schubert as a source for organizational and expressive strategies, the Op. 36 sextet is the work in which he turned decisively in a new direction. Except for the first movement, which, as Webster points out, indeed possesses many Schubertian characteristics, the rest of the work emphatically embraces baroque-inspired counterpoint, terseness of form, and a more reticent harmonic palate as a path forward. The ramifications of this approach extend to the first cello sonata, Op. 38, in which the fugue-like finale is

[60] See Webster, 'Schubert's Sonata Form' for an extensive discussion of Brahms's adaptation of Schubertian compositional devices in the chamber works of his 'first maturity'.

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related to Contrapunctus 13 in J.S. Bach's *Art of Fugue*; to the First String Quintet, Op. 88, with its appropriation of a sarabande and gavotte written in the 1850s in the second movement and its fugue-laced finale; or to the tightly woven outer movements of the First String Quartet, replete with imitation, invertible counterpoint, and restless PAC avoidance.

In this context, it is remarkable that Brahms's two sextets, so opposed in compositional technique and expressive trajectory, should be connected by their interactions with Beethoven's 'wallflower' masterpiece, the Quintet, Op. 29. But perhaps this unlikely scenario is explained by the remarkable qualities of Beethoven's work, which in many ways was unlike anything he had written before. In Op. 18, Brahms's indebtedness to the opening of Op. 29 lay in the realms of motive, texture and idea. Here Rudolf Stephan's observations about the Schubertian character of Op. 29's opening, with an understated melody not far in character from that of, for example, the Sonata in B flat, D. 960, are trenchant. Moreover, Brahms certainly would have observed the remarkable tonal plan of the quintet's exposition (C Major–A major–A minor), Beethoven's first foray into the Schubertian three-key designs Brahms favoured during his first maturity. So both the opening theme of Op. 29 and its first-movement structure were Beethovenian harbingers of the very Schubertian characteristics that were so attractive to Brahms when he undertook his First Sextet.

Of the many points of contact between the finales of Brahms's Op. 36 and Beethoven's Quintet, perhaps the most important is the idea of presenting impressive fugatos in their central development sections. In Op. 29 we find not the genial, almost *pro forma* fugal writing of, say, the opening of the slow movement in Beethoven's First Symphony, but fugue that is dense, challenging, intellectually rigorous – a triple-fugue exposition that represented the point of highest attainment in his studies with Albrechtsberger. The central fugato of Brahms's finale in Op. 36 is forged from dense, almost frantic counterpoint, with its close strettos demonstrating an especially impressive command of the terse subject. Combined with the related fugato in the coda, in which the material is further developed, Brahms presents in this movement for the first time a thoroughgoing commitment to fugue as a decisive force in a large form.[61] It is interesting that he wrote the finale at an eight-month remove from the rest of the sextet.[62] One might conjecture that after writing the two middle movements, so strongly influenced by baroque traditions, he paused, sensing that a more conventional finale would not follow them well. It was at just this point, where Brahms was ready to try a new path in his chamber music, that Beethoven's astonishingly original Op. 29 Quintet had something more to offer him.

[61] Brahms's double presentation of the fugatos in Op. 36 in itself reflects Beethovenian practice. Brahms was intimately familiar with Beethoven's Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110, which contains two fugues in its last movement. Beethoven's second fugue in Op. 110 is a complete reworking of the first one, with the subject inverted. Brahms retained the original version of the subject in his second fugato, but infused it with inversion of another kind: the descending stepwise sequence in the stretto of the first fugato is rewritten as an ascending stepwise sequence in the stretto of the second one.

[62] See Margit L. McCorkle, *Johannes Brahms: Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis* (Munich: G. Henle, 1984), 130.

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