*Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 146/2, 455–489
*doi:10.1017/rma.2021.20*

CAMBRIDGE
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# Between Hoffmann and Goethe: The Young Brahms as Reader

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**Abstract** This article provides a critical account of Brahms's early collection of quotations, aphorisms and poems commonly known as *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein* in the context of the composer's youthful engagement with German literature. Drawing on archival materials housed in Vienna, it evaluates the 1909 publication of the *Schatzkästlein* by the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft and traces Brahms's path in assembling his quotations to reveal borrowings from sources he encountered in the Schumann house in Düsseldorf in 1854. The second section of the article considers the different modes of reading implied by Brahms's collection, while the third reflects on the artistic worldview articulated by the assembled entries. While scholars have viewed the *Schatzkästlein* largely as evidence of Brahms's adolescent infatuation with the writings of the German Romantics, this investigation emphasizes the competing conceptions of artistry present in these fascinatingly messy notebooks and argues that this youthful collection points to the important role played by literature in the development of Brahms's distinctive musical sensibility.

One of the most controversial images in accounts of Brahms's early life became embedded in the composer's biography with the publication of the first volume of Max Kalbeck's influential biographical study in 1904.[1] Kalbeck famously suggested that Brahms had survived an impoverished childhood during which, to aid his family's finances, the young musician had been forced to play the piano in insalubrious drinking houses in his native city of Hamburg. The essential details of this biographical vignette had actually appeared in print seven years previously in a feuilleton Kalbeck had penned for the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*:

> He indeed used to tell friends how, exhorted by his poor father, he would have to play for dancing in disreputable Hamburg taverns and how while there, without paying attention to the indecent activities going on round about, he read his Eichendorff and Jean Paul while his fingers mechanically did their dreaded duty. The Romanticism of these writers and of other favourites such as Novalis, Tieck and Hoffmann was the mysterious sympathetic

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I am grateful to Styra Avins, Scott Burnham, Martin Ennis, Valerie Woodring Goertzen and Nicole Grimes for comments on the material presented here, and to Josef Eisinger for his assistance in deciphering some of Brahms's handwriting. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[1] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms: 1833–1862* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wiener Verlag, 1904). Later (revised) editions of this first volume of Kalbeck's biography were published under the aegis of the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft (see below, n. 17).

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> bond that drew him to Schumann and his music. Though he later turned decisively away from the poetic musical direction, his first compositions nevertheless stand under the spell of the moonlit magical night of Romanticism and he felt such an affinity with the essence of Schumann's beginnings that he dubbed and signed himself Johannes Kreisler II.[2]

In the decades since the publication of Kalbeck's biography a great deal of attention has been lavished on the establishments in which Brahms was thought to have performed, with some later writers embellishing these into full-scale brothels – scenes of sordid activity that caused the composer lasting psychological trauma. Criticism was levelled at this aspect of Kalbeck's biography from very early on, and following the research of scholars such as Kurt Stephenson and Styra Avins, the veracity of the story now appears highly questionable.[3] All this interest in the revelling and lusty dancing apparently taking place around Brahms's piano has, however, had the effect of sidelining his rapt engagement with literature that (in Kalbeck's original version of the tale) was supposed to serve as its antipode. In his biography, Kalbeck reflected that the books perched on the music stand allowed Brahms to lose himself 'in the vivid dreams of Romantic poetry'.[4]

Brahms's youthful passion for reading in general and German Romantic literature in particular is well documented in letters, memoirs and the surviving materials from the composer's estate. Hedwig von Salomon recalled meeting Brahms in Leipzig in December 1853, when the young musician (apparently otherwise introspective) chattered enthusiastically about his favourite writers Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter), Joseph von Eichendorff, E. T. A. Hoffmann and Friedrich Schiller, and implored her to read Schiller's play *Kabale und Liebe*, Hoffmann's *Die Serapionsbrüder* stories, and especially this last author's novellas on musical subjects.[5] Brahms's access to books during his time in Hamburg is likely to have come in large part through borrowing from other people's libraries, including that of his teacher Eduard Marxsen. With income from music publishing and concert tours, though, he soon began to amass a collection of his own. Clara Schumann contributed generously to Brahms's bookshelf, and in August 1854 he wrote to her expressing delight over recent acquisitions:

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[2] 'Freunden pflegte er wohl zu erzählen, wie er, von seinem armen Vater dazu angehalten, in verrufenen Hamburger Häusern zum Tanze aufspielen mußte, und wie er da, ohne sich um das wüste Treiben ringsum zu kümmern, seinen Eichendorff und Jean Paul las, während seine Finger mechanisch die verhaßte Pflicht thaten. Die Romantik dieser und anderer Lieblinge, wie Novalis, Tieck und Hoffmann, war das geheimnißvolle Band der Sympathie, das ihn zu Schumann und dessen Musik hinzog. So entschieden er später auch von der poetisirenden musikalischen Richtung abschwenkte, seine ersten Compositionen stehen dennoch im Banne der mondbeglänzten Zaubernacht der Romantik und er fühlte sich dem Wesen der Schumann'schen Anfängen so sehr verwandt, daß er sich Johannes Kreisler II nannte und unterschrieb.' Max Kalbeck, 'Vom jungen Brahms: Zum 7. Mai', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 7 May 1897, 2.

[3] Kurt Stephenson, *Johannes Brahms in seiner Familie* (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1973); Styra Avins, 'The Young Brahms: Biographical Data Reexamined', *19th-Century Music*, 24 (2000–1), 276–89. Speculation about Brahms's youth, however, continues to fascinate Brahms scholars. See, for example, Laurie McManus, 'Prostitutes, Trauma, and (Auto-)Biographical Narratives: Revisiting Brahms at the *Fin de siècle*', *19th-Century Music*, 42 (2018–19), 225–48.

[4] 'In die blühenden Träume der romantischen Poesie'. Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*: *1833–1862*, 20.

[5] Hedwig von Salomon, 'Erste Begegnung mit Brahms', *Über Brahms*, ed. Renate Hofmann and Kurt Hofmann (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997), 18–22 (p. 19).

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> I bought Aeschylus's 7 tragedies and a volume of Plutarch's *Lives.* Soon I won't know what else there is to buy. I have Shakespeare's and Schumann's complete works, Goethe's poems, Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke* and still more! When I [receive] my next 10 louis d'or, I will again have a hard struggle to stay away from book shops.[6]

Literary references occur with considerable frequency in the letters and memoirs relating to these years. Eduard Hanslick first encountered Brahms at the Lower Rhine music festival in 1855, and later recalled the young musician's distinctive physiognomy: with his long blond hair, forget-me-not eyes and rosy complexion, Brahms seemed to Hanslick to resemble a youth from a Jean Paul novel.[7] After Brahms's death Joseph Joachim recalled that Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), Hoffmann and *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* had been the composer's most constant companions at this time.[8] Back in 1853, the violinist had sent his Christmas greetings, enclosing an image of the first of these writers: 'The picture of Novalis will give your parents pleasure; it's almost your spitting image!'[9] On comparing Novalis's likeness with one of the drawings of Brahms by Jean-Joseph Bonaventure Laurens (see Figure 1), one is inclined to agree.[10] As Kalbeck suggested, during these early years of his career Brahms cultivated the identity of a fictional musician, signing himself as 'Johannes Kreisler' after the kapellmeister who appears in Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* stories and the novel *Kater Murr.*[11] The evidence of Brahms's manuscripts suggests that this practice had actually begun before his momentous meeting with the Schumanns in Düsseldorf in the autumn of 1853.[12]

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[6] *Johannes Brahms: His Life and Letters*, ed. Styra Avins, trans. Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60.

[7] 'Der dreiundzwanzigjährige Brahms mit seinem langen blonden Haar, seinen Vergißmeinnichtaugen und einer Gesichtsfarbe wie Milch und Blut glich irgendeinem Jean Paulschen Idealjüngling.' Eduard Hanslick, *Aus meinem Leben* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1987), 165. Hanslick was mistaken about Brahms's age: he was in fact 22.

[8] Joseph Joachim, 'Zum Gedächtnis des Meisters Johannes Brahms', *Über Brahms*, ed. Hofmann and Hofmann, 214–20 (p. 216).

[9] 'Das Bild von Novalis wird Deinen Eltern Freude machen; es gleicht Dir auf ein Haar!' *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Joseph Joachim*, ed. Andreas Moser, 2 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908), i, 25. The pleasure afforded by the picture of Novalis would probably have been lessened through a knowledge of the poet's life: Novalis died from tuberculosis in 1801 at the age of 28.

[10] Laurens (1801–90) made three drawings of Brahms in Düsseldorf in the autumn of 1853. For further information about this music-loving artist, see Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, 'Jean-Joseph-Bonaventure Laurens et ses pèlerinages musicaux en Allemagne 1841–1853', *Musique, Images, Instruments: Revue française d'organologie musicale* (Paris: CRNS Éditions, 2016), 11–54 (pp. 42–50). The drawing of Brahms shown in Figure 1 is dated September 1853, though actually would have been made in October. The musical inscription is from Brahms's Scherzo op. 4, and the marginal annotation reads: 'Brahms / célèbre compositeur / contemporain / âgé de 20 ans.'

[11] The *Kreisleriana* stories appeared in Hoffmann's collection *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814–15), though many had been published earlier in periodicals. *Kater Murr* was published between 1819 and 1821; its full title is *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentischer Biographie des Kapellmeisters Johannes Kreisler in zufälligen Makulaturblättern* (*Life and Opinions of Tom Cat Murr together with a Fragmentary Biography of the Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on Random Sheets of Waste Paper*).

[12] Siegfried Kross, 'Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann', *19th-Century Music*, 5 (1981–2), 193–200 (p. 194).

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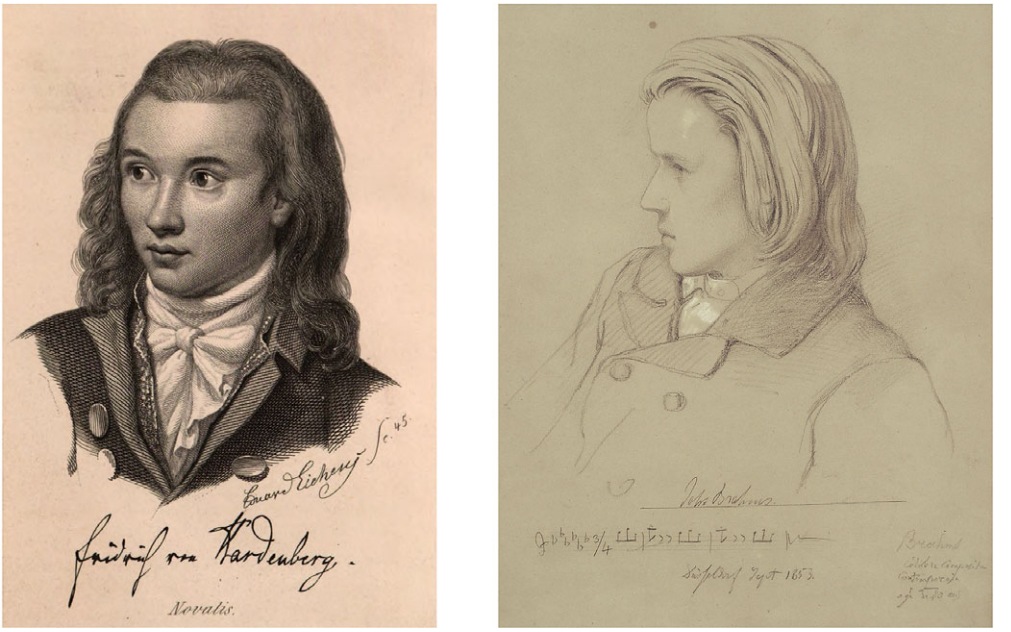



Figure 1 Left: engraving of the writer Novalis by Eduard Eichens (frontispiece to Novalis, *Schriften*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Reimer, 1837–46), iii); right: drawing of the young Brahms by Jean-Joseph Bonaventure Laurens (Carpentras, Bibliothèque-Musée Inguimbertine, DES00006, reproduced by permission).

While it is important to maintain a critical stance towards memoirs and reminiscences about Brahms, such a pile-up of literary references and allusions raises the question of *how* the young composer read, and invites us to think afresh about the ways in which his absorption in literature related to his musical creativity. In response to these questions, this investigation interrogates a fascinating but understudied source as a means of thinking about Brahms's reading habits: the collection of quotations, aphorisms and poems commonly known as *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein.* Comprising four notebooks, the *Schatzkästlein* (*Little Treasure Chest*) was begun by Brahms in his native city of Hamburg, with many of the subsequent entries added in the mid-1850s, when he was a frequent guest at the Schumann house in Düsseldorf. Titled in homage to Johannes Kreisler, these notebooks attest to the young Brahms's enthusiastic engagement with literature, including entries from writers ranging from Cicero and Diogenes, Dante and Tasso, to the nineteenth-century revolutionaries Robert Blum and Ferdinand Freiligrath; the greatest concentration in the collection by far, though, is on German authors from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly Jean Paul, Novalis, Goethe and Schiller. For Kalbeck, the entries seemed to provide the key to Brahms's 'innermost being'.[13] The

[13] 'In seinem Schatzkästlein liegt der Schlüssel zu seinem innersten Wesen.' Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms: 1833–1862*, 188.

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Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft published the notebooks in 1909, but despite this (and the more recent presence of an English translation), the *Schatzkästlein* has received little scholarly scrutiny.[14]

Brahms's early literary entanglements have typically been afforded little attention in considerations of the composer's aesthetics. Most investigations of Brahms's youthful reading thus cast his attraction to German Romantic literature as an early passion that the composer outgrew in the later 1850s – a period during which, in the wake of the death of Robert Schumann and beset by doubts over his own creative abilities, Brahms seemed to recalibrate his own aesthetic priorities. Roger Moseley has provided an exemplary comparative study of the two versions of the op. 8 Piano Trio (1854, revised 1889), noting how the Romantic flights of fancy of the young Brahms tended to be reined in by his older self, the later work being marked by a more reflective engagement with his music-historical inheritance.[15] Shifting focus away from Brahms as a composer of instrumental music, though, recent studies of Brahms's lieder and large-scale choral works by Natasha Loges and Nicole Grimes have demonstrated the ongoing importance of different aspects of literary culture for Brahms's later musical projects, with Grimes arguing persuasively for the 'philosophical weight' of Brahms's major Schiller, Goethe and Hölderlin settings.[16] Such studies help to challenge the critical commonplace that Brahms derived his creative inspiration from a cultural canon that was purely musical.

Drawing on archival materials housed in Vienna and my own transcription of the surviving *Schatzkästlein* sources, this article provides a critical account of Brahms's collection in the context of the composer's youthful passion for reading, and considers the complex role played by literature in the development of Brahms's distinctive musical sensibility. The first section of the investigation examines sources for the *Schatzkästlein*, offering a brief evaluation of the 1909 Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft publication and retracing some of Brahms's paths in gathering his quotations. While scholars have conventionally assumed that Brahms acquired his entries from first-hand encounters with the individual authors, I note here that around a quarter of the surviving *Schatzkästlein* quotations derive from extant literary collections and publications of Robert Schumann. The later sections of the investigation turn away from documentary aspects of Brahms's notebooks to reflect on the different approaches to reading evidenced by the *Schatzkästlein* and the artistic world view that the assembled

[14] Johannes Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein: Aussprüche von Dichtern, Philosophen und Künstlern: Zusammengetragen durch Johannes Brahms*, ed. Carl Krebs (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1909). Krebs's edition of Brahms's quotation collection was subsequently translated into English and Italian: *The Brahms Notebooks: The Little Treasure Chest of the Young Kreisler: Quotations from Poets, Philosophers, and Artists: Gathered by Johannes Brahms*, ed. Krebs, trans. Agnes Eisenberger (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2003); *Album letterario o Lo scrigno del giovane Kreisler*, trans. Artemio Focher (Turin: EDT, 2007).

[15] Roger Moseley, 'Reforming Johannes: Brahms, Kreisler Junior and the Piano Trio in B, op. 8', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 132 (2007), 252–305.

[16] Natasha Loges, *Brahms and his Poets: A Handbook* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017); Nicole Grimes, *Brahms's Elegies: The Poetics of Loss in Nineteenth-Century German Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

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entries articulate. Although our knowledge about this fascinating collection must in some respects remain provisional, I suggest that the *Schatzkästlein* offers a valuable window onto Brahms's use of literature as a means of exploring competing conceptions of artistry. As such it bears witness to one individual's enraptured reading and to the ongoing, creatively productive relationship between music and German Romantic literature in the mid-nineteenth century.

## Sources for the *Schatzkästlein*

Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* notebooks were among the handwritten items found in the composer's apartment after his death that he had stipulated should be destroyed.[17] The original publication of the notebooks, edited by the Berlin-based musicologist Carl Krebs (see above, note 14), was a handsomely produced pocket-sized volume with marbled boards. Like the volumes of letters and Kalbeck's biography which also appeared under the aegis of the Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, this edition was intended not just for scholars, but also for a wider circle of readers interested in Brahms's life and works. In September 1907 Krebs had corresponded with Kalbeck over the edition and expressed his opinion over the merits of and justification for publication:

> As you perhaps know, Herr Simrock had asked me if I thought it appropriate to publish this quotation collection, and after looking through the material I have come to the conclusion that a printed copy would certainly interest all Brahms admirers, particularly because the selection made by the young artist from his reading is very characteristic of him as a person and of his artistic worldview.[18]

Kalbeck had three of the four notebooks in his personal possession and advised Krebs over certain textual and biographical details.[19] Krebs's edition presented Brahms's admirers with the entries from the four notebooks as a continuous flow of 645 quotations and – so as to aid the comprehensibility of the collection – also included a short introduction, a thematic index and some brief biographical comments on the featured authors. Krebs's somewhat casual editorial approach falls short of modern scholarly standards, but there are many useful details that can be inferred from his publication,

[17] Brahms expressed this wish in the so-called 'Ischl Testament' from May 1891. See Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, 4 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908–14), iv, 228–30. One reason for the neglect of Brahms's wishes was that the testament was not treated as legally binding – a situation that also led to protracted legal battles over the estate. In his introduction to the 1909 *Schatzkästlein* edition, Krebs suggested that Brahms's notebooks were saved by the lawyer Dr Josef Reitzes from being burnt (Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, ed. Krebs, x). For further information about the legal battles over Brahms's estate, see Otto Biba, 'New Light on the Brahms *Nachlass*', *Brahms Studies 2*, ed. Michael Musgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 39–47.

[18] 'Wie Sie vielleicht wissen, hatte mich Herr Simrock gefragt, ob ich es für angebracht hielte, diese Zitatensammlung herauszugeben, und nach Durchsicht des Materials bin ich zu der Überzeugung gekommen, daß ein Abdruck gewiß alle Brahmsverehrer interessieren würde, eben deshalb, weil die von dem jungen Künstler getroffene Auswahl aus seiner Lektüre für ihn als Menschen wie für seine Kunstanschauung sehr charakteristisch ist.' Carl Krebs, letter to Max Kalbeck, 7 September 1907 (Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, H.I.N.212799; unpublished).

[19] How the notebooks came to be in the possession of Max Kalbeck is unclear.

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particularly when it is taken together with an account of the materials provided by Kalbeck in his Brahms biography.[20] Such inferences are necessary, as the first three notebooks (those formerly in Kalbeck's possession) are now in private ownership or lost and the last of the four notebooks survives only as a photocopy (see Table 1).[21]

When Brahms began his *Schatzkästlein* cannot be determined precisely, but both Kalbeck and Krebs record that the place given in the first notebook was 'Hamburg', suggesting that the collection was begun before Brahms left his native city for a lengthy concert tour in the month of April 1853.[22] This first notebook, which carried the title 'Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreisler', contained a total of 371 numbered quotations, and its place and date of completion are recorded as 'Düsseldorf' and 'March 1854'.

TABLE 1
OVERVIEW OF *SCHATZKÄSTLEIN* SOURCES

| *Full title (from Kalbeck)* | *Dates and places (from Kalbeck)* | *Present location* |
|---|---|---|
| 'Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreisler' | Begun in Hamburg (no date); completed March 1854, in Düsseldorf | Unknown; formerly in the possession of Max Kalbeck |
| 'II. Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein' | Begun March 1854 | Unknown; formerly in the possession of Max Kalbeck |
| 'Schöne Gedanken über Musik' | Begun in Düsseldorf, September 1853; completed July 1854 | Unknown; formerly in the possession of Max Kalbeck; sold by Sotheby's in London, 2 August 1935, as 'The Property of Herr Paul Kalbeck'; purchased by 'Beck' for £27 |
| 'Schöne Gedanken über Musik, Heft II: Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreisler' | Begun Düsseldorf, July 1854; final entries added later, possibly in last years of Brahms's life | Original notebook lost; photocopy survives (Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Ia 79562, H.I.N.55729); for colour photographs of selected pages, see below, n. 21 |
| 'Deutsche Sprichworte' | Dated March 1855 | Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Ia 79561, H.I.N.55728 |

[20] Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms: 1833–1862*, 185–91.

[21] For a more detailed account of the fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook, see my 'Brahms as Reader' (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2019), 14–27. For the most part, Krebs reproduced Brahms's entries in the order in which they occurred. Ten entries were omitted, some of which were duplicates or entries that had subsequently been scored out. Orthography was modernized by Krebs, and Brahms's different styles of attribution were standardized. In several cases, Krebs introduced errors not present in the original source. For example, Brahms quoted Shakespeare's Sonnet no. 8 in the standard German translation by Ernst Ortlepp; while this was headed 'Sonnett von Shakespeare' in Brahms's notebook, Krebs headed the entry 'Sonnet an Shakespeare' (suggesting that the sonnet was addressed to Shakespeare, rather than having been written by him). The original of this notebook was lost in the twenty-first century; colour images of selected pages, however, appear in Matthias Kornemann, *Johannes Brahms* (Hamburg: Ellert & Richter, 2006), 47, 169.

[22] Kalbeck considers 1849 as the earliest possible start date for the collection, on account of a quotation from Freiligrath's *Die Todten an die Lebenden*, which was published in this year.

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Kalbeck suggested that Brahms added entries while giving concerts in the cities of Weimar and Hanover, a detail supported by the presence of 18 quotations from Brahms's friend Joseph Joachim.[23] The Joachim entries, which were apparently made in the violinist's own hand, were identified by his motto *frei aber einsam* ('free but lonely'), either in the form of the initials F.A.E. or through music notation. Brahms's second *Schatzkästlein* notebook appears to have been started promptly on completion of the first. It was entitled 'II. Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein', and the date and place are recorded as 'March 1854' and 'Düsseldorf'. Kalbeck believed that this second volume of the *Schatzkästlein* contained the first fruits of Brahms's studies in the Schumann library.

Already in September 1853 Brahms had begun the process of ordering some of his accumulated quotations, selecting those specifically about music and recopying them together with new entries into another book. This volume was titled 'Schöne Gedanken über Musik' ('Fair Thoughts about Music'). Kalbeck speculated that Brahms's motivation in putting together his entries on musical subjects came from a contemporaneous project of Robert Schumann's entitled *Ein Dichtergarten für Musik* (*A Poets' Garden for Music*) – an anthology that was to include quotations about music from a wide range of writers. At the end of his third notebook Brahms had started an index ordering the entries by number under different headings: 'Schöne Bilder', 'Über Studium, Form und Technik', 'Über Kritik' and 'Publikum'. This notebook spilled over into a further volume, begun in Düsseldorf in July 1854, and was graced with the lengthier title 'Schöne Gedanken über Musik. Heft II. Schatzkästlein des jungen Kreisler' (see Figure 2). There are 134 numbered quotations in this fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook, the last of which comes from Goethe's conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann (*Gespräche mit Goethe*, 1836). The final seven pages of entries in the notebook are unnumbered and occur in a noticeably different, messier style of handwriting. These later quotations, which include extracts from the speeches of the German chancellor Otto von Bismarck, clearly postdate the 1850s. In his introduction Krebs suggested that Brahms made the final entries in this fourth notebook 'shortly before his death, when, sick and exhausted, he could no longer spend evenings in the accustomed merry company of the tavern'.[24] Though widely accepted by biographers, this point now seems hard to substantiate; the extracts from Jean Paul in these final pages are, however, consistent with Brahms's ongoing enthusiasm for this writer in the 1890s.[25]

Kalbeck's account of the *Schatzkästlein* in his biography made mention of an additional, incomplete notebook that was not included in the 1909 publication. This book

[23] Brahms met Joachim in Hanover in April 1853. See Renate Hofmann and Kurt Hofmann, *Johannes Brahms: Zeittafel zu Leben und Werk* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1983), 12. For the Joachim aphorisms, see Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, ed. Krebs, entries 225, 226, 228–31, 234–44 and 250 (hereafter 'Krebs 225, 226', etc.).

[24] Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, ed. Krebs, ix. Krebs cited Kalbeck's notes as a source for this anecdote, though Kalbeck himself does not make the same claim in his biography.

[25] For Brahms's enthusiasm for Jean Paul, see Richard Heuberger, *Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1976), 83.

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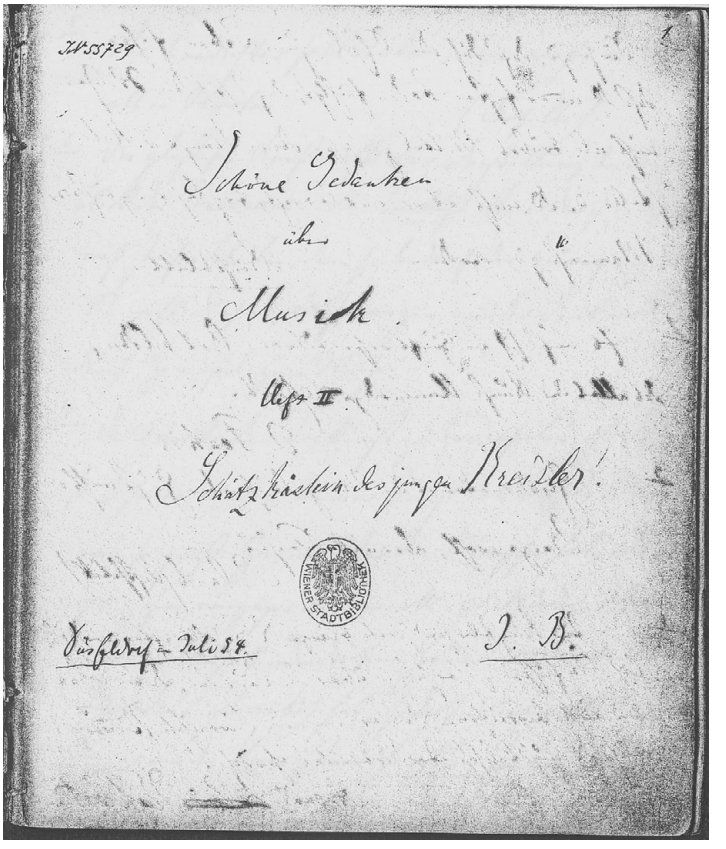



Figure 2 Title page of Brahms's fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook (Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Handschriftensammlung, Ia 79562, H.I.N.55729, reproduced by permission).

contained German proverbs and was of a different format from the others. Whereas the first four *Schatzkästlein* notebooks were 'small paper volumes in octavo of the type that school students use', Kalbeck suggested that the additional volume, bound in green leather, was likely to have been a present.[26] The notebook was dated 'March 1855', and thus postdated the bulk of Brahms's work on the *Schatzkästlein.* Perhaps because of the later date and different format, Kalbeck seems to have felt that the collection of proverbs was not directly related to the other *Schatzkästlein* materials, and he provided little commentary on its contents. This notebook survives in Vienna (see Figure 3).[27] The spine of the attractively bound volume is stamped with both Brahms's initials 'J. B.' and the one-word title 'Schatzkästlein'. Given the fine binding of this notebook, it is possible

[26] 'Das dritte Heft, in grünes Leder gebunden, war offenbar ein Geschenk; die beiden anderen sind gewöhnliche kleine Pappbände in Oktav, wie sie die Schüler haben.' Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms: 1833–1862*, 186.

[27] The contents of the notebook have since been transcribed. See George Bozarth, 'Brahms's Collection of Deutsche Sprichworte', *Brahms Studies*, ed. David Brodbeck, 3 vols. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994–2001), i, 1–29.

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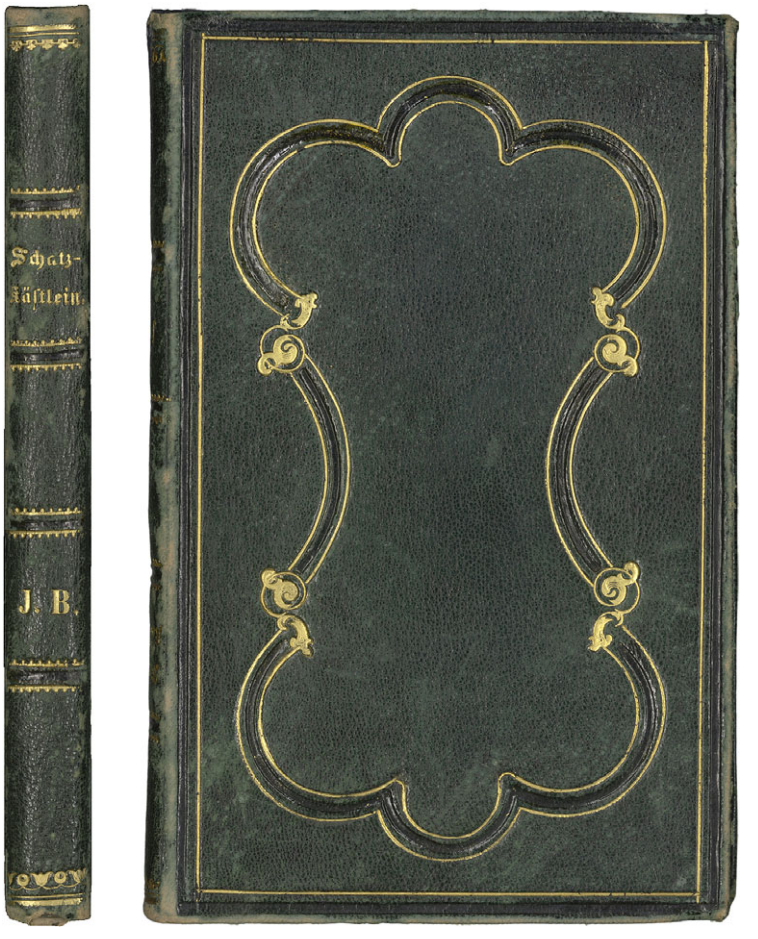



Figure 3 Binding of Brahms's collection of 'Deutsche Sprichworte' (Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Handschriftensammlung, Ia 79561, H.I.N.55728, reproduced by permission).

that Brahms originally planned to use it as a repository for his earlier *Schatzkästlein* entries; the majority of pages in the book were, however, left unused.

For musicologists today, the inaccessibility of the original *Schatzkästlein* source materials is frustrating; however, in other respects, in the early twenty-first century we are well placed to make sense of this collection. Kalbeck and Krebs, like most subsequent writers who have discussed the *Schatzkästlein*, took the range of entries as evidence of the breadth of Brahms's reading, and it was assumed that the young musician extracted passages having encountered them directly in longer texts by the quoted authors. The digitization of German-language books and music periodicals and the recent publication of important Schumann source materials allows for a significant reassessment of the ways in which Brahms put together his collection. Some of the most frequently cited entries from the *Schatzkästlein* are on the subject of form in art, and it becomes clear that Brahms did not acquire these entries directly from Goethe and Eckermann, but rather through an article on musical form that had appeared in an issue

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of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in October 1846.[28] Similarly, a sizeable group of poetic epigrams in Brahms's notebook appears to derive from an anthology of German poetry – *Poetischer Hausschatz des deutschen Volkes* (*Poetic Household Treasures of the German People*), first published in 1839. Edited by O. L. B. Wolff and issued by the publisher Wigand in Leipzig, this popular collection had by 1850 already run to some 14 editions, and it is possible that Brahms would have had access to it while a schoolboy in Hamburg.[29] In addition to the epigrams by writers such as Schiller, Goethe and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, the volume contains the text for *Postillons Morgenlied* by Wilhelm Müller, a poem that the young Brahms used in the composition of a partsong in the late 1840s.

The most significant groups of quotations in the *Schatzkästlein* that are readily traceable to earlier collections and publications relate to Schumann sources. These entries were probably amassed by Brahms in 1854 when, following Robert's attempted suicide at the end of February, he took up lodgings in Düsseldorf near the Schumann home in Bilkerstraße. As is well known, during the ensuing months Brahms assisted Clara Schumann with the running of the household.[30] He probably consulted many of the abundant volumes of music and literature in the Schumann library at this time, and it is clear that one of his main interests in 1854 was Robert's own music and writings. Some 120 entries spread across the third and fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebooks were harvested from the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, the influential music periodical that Robert Schumann founded back in 1834 and edited for the following decade.[31] Most of these items comprise the short poetic mottos that appeared on the title page of the newspaper. In many cases the mottos in the *Neue Zeitschrift* were chosen for their relation to the subject of a leading article. In July of 1838, for example, the paper carried an essay on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, above which was printed a quotation from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (see Figure 4):

> A person who is ordained by nature as a model of intellect and spirit
> Is what he is through himself – without rules he becomes great,
> He treads boldly, has surety without instruction,
> He creates out of himself, serves as his own school and books.[32]

[28] 'Excerpte: Form', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 14 and 21 October 1846, 693–5 and 708–10; Krebs 482–4.

[29] Oskar Ludwig Bernhard Wolff, *Poetischer Hausschatz des deutschen Volkes: Vollständigste Sammlung deutscher Gedichte nach den Gattungen geordnet*, 14th edn (Leipzig: Wigand, 1850), 1155–66. Many of the epigrams quoted by Brahms are present in the same order in this source. See Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, ed. Krebs, 45–51.

[30] The entries believed to be by Brahms run from late February until December 1854. Brahms's handwriting was identified by a slip of paper pasted into the household book by Ferdinand Schumann, son of Robert and Clara, and former owner of this source. Robert Schumann, *Tagebücher*, ed. Georg Eismann and Gerd Nauhaus, 3 vols. (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1971–82), iii/2 (1982), 649–55.

[31] The entries that appear in the published edition of the *Schatzkästlein* are Krebs 381–413 and 486–561.

[32] 'Ein Geist, den die Natur zum Mustergeist beschloß, / Ist was er ist durch sich, wird ohne Regeln groß, / Er geht so kühn, er geht auch ohne Weisung sicher, / Er schöpfet aus sich selbst, er ist sich Schul' und Bücher.'

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Neue
Zeitschrift für Musik.

Im Vereine
mit mehren Künstlern und Kunstfreunden
herausgegeben unter Verantwortlichkeit von R. Schumann.

Neunter Band. № 7. Den 24. Juli 1838.

Ueber Beethoven's neunte Symphonie (Fortsetzg.). — Aus Riga (Fortsetzg.) — Tagesbegebenheiten. —

Ein Geist, den die Natur zum Mustergeist beschloß,
Ist was er ist durch sich, wird ohne Regeln groß,
Er geht so kühn, er geht auch ohne Weisung sicher,
Er schöpfet aus sich selbst; er ist sich Schul' und Bücher.
Lessing.

**Beethoven's neunte Symphonie.**

(Fortsetzung.)

Das Scherzo (Seite 45)

ist bis Seite 52 mit Geist durchgeführt, leidet aber von da an, gleichfalls aus Schuld des Themas, Mangel an mannigfaltiger Erfindung, was der Componist durch Abwechselung in der Instrumentation *) zu verdecken gesucht hat. Das Trio (S. 66) mit Posaunenbegleitung beruht auf einem sehr einfachen aber interessanten Gedanken mit doppeltem Contrapuncte, welche beide in verschiedene Instrumente verlegt werden. Mit Ausnahme des 1sten Theils des Trios sollte man weder von diesem, noch vom Scherzo die Theile wiederholen, um den Hörer nicht durch die Einförmigkeit beider, in Hinsicht auf ihren Inhalt zu lang ausgesponnenen Stücke zu ermüden.

Das Adagio (Seite 75) beginnt nach kurzer Einleitung durch Fagotten und Clarinetten damit, daß die 1ste Violine unter Begleitung der Streichinstrumente (ohne Contrabaß) abschnittsweise das einfache, nicht gerade bedeutsame Thema angiebt, während die Clarinette, unterstützt von den tiefern Blasinstrumenten, dasselbe stets mit der Wiederholung des Ausganges vor jedem Abschnitte unterbricht.

*) Auch im Rhythmus. D. Red.

Clarinett.
Violino.
etc.

Darauf führt S. 77 die 2te Violine in D-Dur den gleichfalls nicht sehr interessanten Gedanken:

ein, welchen die Blasinstrumente mit ergreifen. S. 78 hat die Clarinette das erste Thema etwas erweitert wieder, wozu die erste Violine einen entsprechenden sanften Gegensatz in Sechzehntheilen angiebt. In G-Dur 4/4, S. 81 haben die Blaseinstrumente nochmals die 2te Figur. Nach einer kurzen Episode in Es 4/4, S. 85 wiederholt die Flöte B-Dur 12/8 das erste Thema, wozu die 1ste Violine in Sechzehntheilen einen neuen Gegensatz hat. Auf solche Weise wird mit einigen Nachsätzen, welche weiter zu verfolgen unnöthig, das Ganze bis zum Schluß S. 95 fortgeführt.

Figure 4 Title page of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 24 July 1838. Austrian Newspapers Online, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://anno.onb.ac.at>.

When Brahms wrote out these words as entry 36 in his fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook he also jotted down Beethoven's name. The other entries on the double-page spread in his notebook come from issues of the newspaper that appeared in July and August 1838 (see Figure 5).

Brahms's copying of these poetic mottos suggests his interest in Robert Schumann's major musical-literary project of the 1830s and early 1840s, but it is equally apparent that the young Brahms had knowledge of some of Schumann's more recent and planned publications. In June 1854 Clara Schumann presented Brahms with a copy of Robert's collected writings which had very recently been issued by the Leipzig-based

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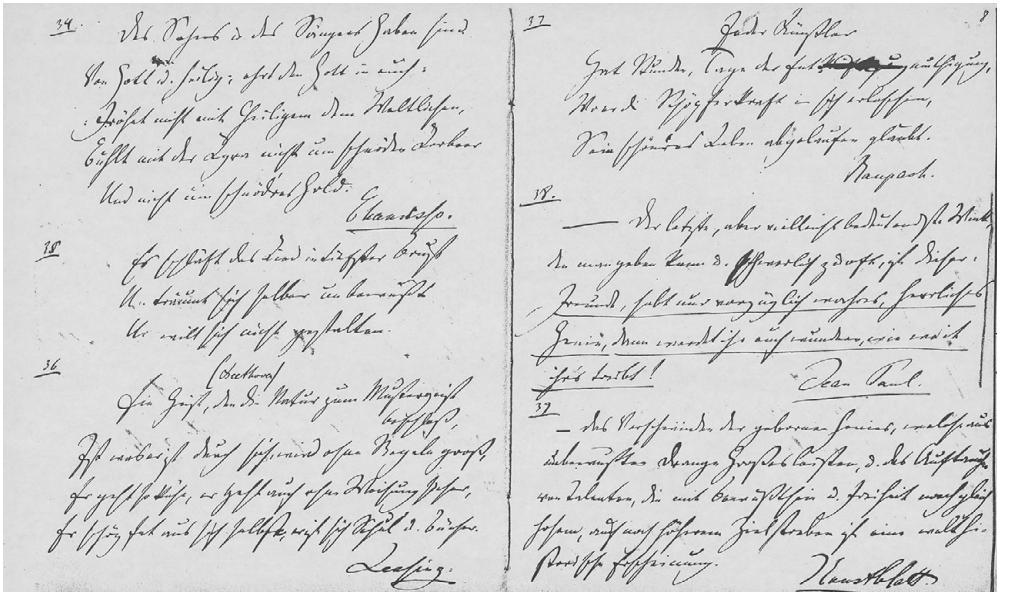


Figure 5 Poetic mottos from the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in Brahms's fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook, entries 34–9 (Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Handschriftensammlung, Ia 79562, H.I.N.55729, reproduced by permission).

publisher Georg Wigand.[33] The majority of the material that appeared in the four volumes of *Gesammelte Schriften* comprised the essays that Robert had originally penned for the *Neue Zeitschrift*. In the fourth volume of the writings, though, were a few pages of aphorisms of his own devising:

> To send light into the depths of the human heart – the artist's calling!
>
> Nobody can do more than he knows. Nobody knows more than he can do.
>
> In literary spheres whoever doesn't know the most significant recent publications counts as uneducated. In musical spheres we should also have reached this stage.[34]

These sentences, together with two other aphorisms printed on the same page, were copied out by Brahms into his fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook.[35]

Another of Robert Schumann's literary projects during his Düsseldorf years was a large compendium of quotations about music drawn from world literature – the *Dichtergarten für Musik* that was mentioned by Kalbeck in conjunction with Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* back in 1904. Schumann did not live to complete the ambitious

[33] Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Georg Wigand's Verlag, 1854).

[34] 'Licht senden in die Tiefe des menschlichen Herzens – des Künstlers Beruf!'; 'Niemand kann mehr, als er weiß. Niemand weiß mehr als er kann'; 'Wer in der Literatur nicht das Bedeutendste der neuen Erscheinungen kennt, gilt für ungebildet. In der Musik sollten wir auch so weit sein.' Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften*, iv, 278.

[35] Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Ia 79562, entries 98–102; Krebs 484–8.

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undertaking, but he continued to work on it right up until his suicide attempt. Thoughts about the *Dichtergarten* also occupied him until at least May 1855, when, from the asylum at Endenich, he wrote about the project to Bettina von Arnim.[36] Given the period of Brahms's acquaintance with the Schumanns, it is likely that he would have been privy to conversations about the *Dichtergarten*, though whether or not he sought to assist Robert with the project (as was suggested by Kalbeck) is hard to assess. The *Dichtergarten* materials were finally published in 2007 in an edition by Gerd Nauhaus and Ingrid Bodsch.[37] Brahms seems to have copied out quotations from the manuscript for his own collection: a group of lengthy excerpts from Jean Paul, Novalis and Shakespeare are among the entries belonging to the third of the four *Schatzkästlein* notebooks on which Brahms worked between September 1853 and July 1854. Other entries in the *Schatzkästlein* that Brahms seems to have harvested from the *Dichtergarten* were by Joseph Christian von Zedlitz and Elisabeth Kulmann.[38]

To some extent, the identification of Brahms's repurposing of Schumann sources highlights the provisionality of our knowledge about the *Schatzkästlein.* It is likely that some of the other entries in Brahms's notebooks might also come from pre-existing collections, though the identification of such borrowings is reliant on a combination of luck, the digitization of the original printed materials and the accessibility of handwritten sources. Robert Eshbach has noted that Joachim also maintained a short collection of aphorisms. Information about Joachim's collection, entitled 'Kleine Sätze für mich', derives solely from a 1929 auction catalogue, but as Eshbach makes clear, Joachim's aphorisms align with several of those marked with the violinist's motto 'F.A.E.' in Brahms's notebooks.[39] The inaccessibility of original *Schatzkästlein* source materials is a particular hindrance here, as it is quite possible that Krebs's transcriptions will have omitted details that would facilitate our identification of Brahms's borrowings. When the third *Schatzkästlein* notebook was sold in London in 1935, the auction catalogue made mention of Brahms's frequent quotation of Shakespeare.[40] Given the relatively small number of Shakespeare entries in Brahms's collection, it seems likely that some of these were omitted by Krebs when he prepared the 1909 publication.

While such unknowns are frustrating, these fresh discoveries about Brahms's notebooks are valuable in the light of our pre-existing knowledge of his broader interests and self-directed education in the mid-1850s. Brahms's artistic response to Schumann's musical and poetic legacy during this period has been understood in terms

[36] 'Robert Schumann and Bettina von Arnim', trans. Frederick Niecks, *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 (August 1923), 230–1.

[37] Robert Schumann, *Dichtergarten für Musik: Eine Anthologie für Freunde der Literatur und Musik*, ed. Gerd Nauhaus and Ingrid Bodsch (Bonn: Stadt Museum, 2007).

[38] I have identified 54 entries in the published edition of the *Schatzkästlein* that appear to have been copied from Schumann's *Dichtergarten*: Krebs 352–64, 369–73, 376–80, 415–17, 419–22, 424, 430–7, 447, 454, 456–7, 460–7, 469, 477–8.

[39] Robert Whitehouse Eshbach, '"For All Are Born to the Ideal": Joseph Joachim and Bettina von Arnim', *Music and Letters*, 101 (2020), 713–42.

[40] Sotheby & Co., *Catalogue of Valuable Printed Books, Illuminated and Other Manuscripts, Autograph Letters and Historical Documents, Oriental Miniatures, etc.* (London, 1935).

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of his contemporaneous piano compositions and study of counterpoint. As has frequently been observed, in his op. 9 *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, Brahms did not just take up a Schumann theme, but also modelled a number of Robert's own piano compositions and followed the older composer's pattern of attributing alternate numbers to contrasting compositional personae. David Brodbeck has suggested that, through the counterpoint studies conducted in correspondence with Joachim, Brahms sought in earlier decades to emulate the activities of Robert and Clara, and Virginia Hancock has observed that during his time in Düsseldorf Brahms copied out vocal compositions, thought to have been by Palestrina, that he found in the Schumann library.[41] The large number of entries from Schumann sources in Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* demonstrates the crucial role of literature in Brahms's attempts to understand and assimilate aspects of the older composer's artistic world.

## Modes of reading

> Whenever you read a book and come across any wonderful phrases which you feel stir or delight your soul, don't merely trust the power of your own intelligence, but force yourself to learn them by heart and make them familiar by meditating on them, so that whenever an urgent case of affliction arises, you'll have the remedy ready as if it were written in your mind. When you come to any passages that seem to you useful, make a firm mark against them, which may serve as lime in your memory, lest otherwise they might fly away.
>
> (Augustine, as imagined by Petrarch in his *Secretum meum*)[42]

Beyond the environment of the Schumann house in Düsseldorf and the culturally sophisticated world it represented, Brahms's passionate commitment to reading and his playful identification with Hoffmann's Kreisler figure might helpfully be understood in the context of 'bookish' activities that flourished in the German-speaking world in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of course, the notion that one might copy out or memorize important passages from books was not new (see the Petrarch quotation above and the commonplace books of Erasmus and John Locke).[43] But the rapid increase in literacy in German lands in the late eighteenth century brought with it a veritable mania for reading that led in turn to a newly elevated importance of novels, plays and poetry. In 1828 Wolfgang Menzel would comment that, 'If a citizen of the next century were to look back at the current moment in German history, he would say

[41] David Brodbeck, 'The Brahms–Joachim Counterpoint Exchange; or, Robert, Clara, and "the Best Harmony between Jos. and Joh."', *Brahms Studies*, ed. Brodbeck, i, 30–80 (p. 32); Virginia Hancock, 'The Growth of Brahms's Interest in Early Choral Music, and its Effect on his Own Choral Compositions', *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, ed. Robert Pascall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 27–40 (p. 28).

[42] Quoted in Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (London: Harper Collins, 1996), 63.

[43] For a general study of the practice of keeping commonplace books in an eighteenth-century context, see David Allan, *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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that we had slept and dreamt in books.'[44] For those who sought to belong to the educated middle class a familiarity with canonic writers was integral to one's *Bildung*, and Brahms's reading must be viewed partly in relation to such aspirations – as an attempt to gain admittance to a social world removed from his own more modest background and potentially also as a means of compensating for his lack of a university education. Perhaps more interestingly, though, the practice of gathering quotations and Brahms's strong desire to dwell in the fictional spaces of literature suggest the extent to which for him – as for many other young German readers – literature had come to represent what the critic Rüdiger Safranski has described as 'a medium of existential guidance'.[45]

If Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* implies a belief in the potentially transformative powers of the written word it pays to think more closely about the distinctive modes of reading that this commonplace book might imply. In an insightful study of reading culture in the early nineteenth century Andrew Piper has drawn attention to the way that an engagement with books was itself often a subject in works of Romantic fiction; bibliographic fantasies, he notes, could be 'a product of the very narratives and symbolic operations' contained within books themselves.[46] We can observe something of this in Jean Paul's *Leben des vergnügten Schulmeisterlein Maria Wutz* (1793). The impoverished schoolmaster Wutz, being too poor to purchase printed reading matter, writes books for himself according to the titles he finds in the Leipzig book catalogue (these include Johann Kaspar Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*, Immanuel Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* and Schiller's *Die Räuber*). As a Jean Paul enthusiast, Brahms is likely to have known this novella; the powers of the book and the activity of reading more generally figure as the subject of several of Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* entries and appear in writings by many of his quoted authors.

The notion that an engagement with books might help to fashion the consciousness of a reader was a fairly common theme in the German literature that was devoured by Brahms as a young man. Significantly, the young protagonist of Eichendorff's *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826) decides to venture out into the wider world to seek his fortune after gorging himself on adventure stories and chivalric romances. Some 50 years earlier, at the start of another novella known to Brahms, Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774), the narrator had commended Werther's story to readers as a source of consolation: 'And you, worthy soul, you who also feel the same urge as him, draw comfort from his suffering and let this little book be your friend, when owing to

[44] Quoted in Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1.

[45] Rüdiger Safranski, *Goethe: Life as a Work of Art*, trans. David Dollenmayer (New York: Liveright, 2017), 372. In his study of German Romanticism, Safranski notes that between 1750 and 1800 the literacy level in German-speaking lands doubled and that between 1790 and 1800 approximately 2,500 novels appeared on the market – as many as in the 90 years preceding. See Safranski, *Romanticism: A German Affair*, trans. Robert E. Goodwin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 25–8.

[46] Piper, *Dreaming in Books*, 4.

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circumstances or faults of your own you can find no better one.'[47] Goethe was later alarmed by the number of German youths who turned to suicide in emulation of his protagonist. But two decades after the publication of the hit novella he was still capable of demanding receptivity in his readers. 'What type of reader do I desire?' Goethe asks. 'The most uninhibited, the one who forgets me, himself and the world and lives only in the book.'[48]

Brahms included these words by Goethe in his notebook, but probably the most striking commentary on the power of literature to be found in the *Schatzkästlein* comes from Eichendorff's novel *Ahnung und Gegenwart* (1815), a Romantic *Bildungsroman* that thematizes, among other things, the activity of reading. In a lengthy autobiographical confession, the novel's protagonist, Friedrich, looks back on his discovery of books as a decisive moment of childhood: 'It was', he notes, 'as if these books had given me the golden keys to the wondrous treasures and the hidden splendour of nature.'[49] Friedrich goes on to describe his youthful enthusiasm for popular folk tales, such as the story of the beautiful Magelone; at the end of the novel, his decision to enter a monastery is made in response to his reading of scripture.

The ideas about reading articulated throughout Eichendorff's richly evocative and rambling novel derive from two obvious sources. In the final portion of the narrative it becomes clear that the mystical high regard that his characters have for the printed page relates partly to the centrality of reading within the Christian tradition: the Bible together with the natural world serve as the means through which Eichendorff's characters consider the mysteries of the Creation. The novel's other ideas about reading can be understood in relation to Eichendorff's earlier allusion to one of literature's most famous readers. In chapter 10, the assembled characters encounter a half-crazed knight riding around on horseback, whom they humorously liken to Don Quixote, the star of Cervantes's early seventeenth-century novel.[50] In Cervantes's telling, Don Quixote had been a figure of fun who addled his mind through overexposure to novels, coming to believe in the fantastical happenings about which he had read; for Eichendorff, though, this kind of enchanted reading was to be admired rather than mocked. Friedrich thus proclaims that the attitude of the ideal reader is not cynicism, but a childlike openness:

> These are the true readers, those who poeticize with and about the book. For no poet gives a finished heaven; he merely erects a Jacob's Ladder from the beautiful earth.

[47] 'Und du gute Seele, die du eben den Drang fühlst wie er, schöpfe Trost aus seinem Leiden, and laß das Büchlein deinen Freund seyn, wenn du aus Geschick oder eigener Schuld keinen näheren finden kannst.' Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (Leipzig: Weygand, 1774), 4.

[48] 'Welchen Leser ich wünsche? Den unbefangensten, der mich, / Sich und die Welt vergißt und in dem Buch nur lebt.' Krebs 151. These words come from Goethe's poem *Vier Jahreszeiten* (1796). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Gedichte in zeitlicher Folge* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1982), 418.

[49] 'Es war, als hätten mir diese Bücher die goldnen Schlüssel zu den Wunderschätzen und der verborgenen Pracht der Natur gegeben.' Joseph von Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart* (Berlin: M. Simion, 1841), 61.

[50] This work would have been known to Eichendorff and other Romantic writers through Ludwig Tieck's translation of 1799–1801.

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> Whoever is too lazy and listless and doesn't feel the courage to climb the golden rungs, to him the mysterious letters remain eternally dead, and he would do better to burrow or to plough than to continue pointlessly with unprofitable reading.[51]

What is to be celebrated is the ability of readers such as Don Quixote to lose themselves in a fictional creation and to come to believe (be it just temporarily) in the mentally constructed literary world. Brahms entered Friedrich's words into his *Schatzkästlein*, and with his devotion to the stories of Eichendorff and Hoffmann he could deservedly count himself as among the best readers of Romantic literature.

For Brahms, the appeal of a novel such as *Ahnung und Gegenwart* probably lay in the invitation it offered to project himself into the narrative. Also included in the *Schatzkästlein* were passages from Eichendorff's *Dichter und ihre Gesellen* (1833) and two earlier Romantic *Bildungsromane*: Ludwig Tieck's *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* (1798) and Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802). All of these stories feature artistically inclined male protagonists who leave home in search of experience and enlightenment, and by tracing the existence of these young artists, be they painters, poets or musicians, Eichendorff, Tieck and Novalis meditate on the relationship between art and life. Most obviously, these authors set out to aestheticize a recognizable reality, enclosing the life narratives of their protagonists in the cultural form of the novel. But the movement between art and reality also runs in the opposite direction, and the radical message of these stories reaches out from pages of fiction. The injunction felt by the archetypal Romantic male protagonist – that he strives to give ethical coherence and aesthetic form to his earthly existence – also forces itself on the novels' readers. While one could reduce this to metaphor (the novel standing in for human life), underlying these ideas is a powerful view of human subjectivity. As Friedrich Schlegel observed in one of his *Kristische Fragmente*, 'Every person who is educated and continues to develop and educate himself contains within him a novel. That he reveals it and writes it down is not necessary.'[52]

This faith in a 'novelistic' understanding of the human subject can help to make sense of life's confusions and uncertainties. Like the details of a novel's plot that conforms to a coherent plan but in any given moment may seem haphazard and disorderly, the purpose and meaning of individual human lives is most easily understood in retrospect. For writers such as Novalis, the coherence underlying life's surface confusions could be related to an omniscient creator – a divine authorial presence. Novalis takes up this idea in one revelatory moment in his unfinished novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen.* In the course of a journey to Augsburg, the novel's title character

[51] 'Das sind die rechten Leser, die mit und über dem Buche dichten; denn kein Dichter gibt einen fertigen Himmel; er stellt nur die Himmelsleiter auf von der schönen Erde. Wer, zu träge und unlustig, nicht den Mut verspürt, die goldenen, losen Sprossen zu besteigen, dem bleibt der geheimnisvolle Buchstabe ewig tot, und er täte besser, zu graben oder zu pflügen, als so mit unnützem Lesen müssig zu gehen.' Krebs 277.

[52] 'Auch enthält jeder Mensch, der gebildet ist, und sich bildet, in seinem Innern einen Roman. Daß er ihn aber äußere und schreibe, ist nicht nötig.' Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Fragmente* (Munich: Schöningh, 1988), 245.

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ventures into the abode of a hermit and discovers a mysterious tome in a strange library of books. The images Heinrich encounters in its pages recapitulate the previously narrated events of the novel:

> Eventually a book fell into his hands that was written in a foreign language that seemed to him to have a certain similarity with Latin and Italian. He desired most eagerly to know the language because the book pleased him enormously, without his being able to understand a single syllable. It had no title, but on searching he found several pictures. To him they seemed strangely familiar and, as he looked closer, he discovered his own person discernible among the figures. He was startled and thought he was dreaming, but on repeated examination he could no longer doubt the perfect similarity. He barely trusted his senses when he soon discovered in one picture the lair, the hermit and the old man beside him. Gradually, in other pictures, he found the oriental woman, his parents, the Landgrave and Landgravine of Thuringia, his friend the court chaplain, and many other of his acquaintances; but their clothes were altered and seemed to come from another age […] He saw his likeness in different locations. Towards the end he seemed taller and nobler […] He saw himself at the imperial court, aboard a boat, and in a warm embrace with a slender and charming girl, in a battle with savage-looking men, and in friendly conversations with Saracens and Moors […] The last pictures were dark and unintelligible; but, with the most heartfelt delight, he beheld some figures from his dreams; the ending of the book seemed to be missing.[53]

In writing this striking passage Novalis provided a counterpart to an episode that had occurred at the end of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–6). Whereas for Goethe's protagonist, Wilhelm, the equivalent passage has the character of a dénouement, resolving the previous mysteries of the plot, significant in Novalis's writing are the devices of distance and uncertainty built into Heinrich's encounter with the book: the unknown language, the unfamiliarity of the depicted acquaintances, the missing ending to the story and the likening of the encounter to a dream. Heinrich's life is represented as having a coherence in a book of life, but this divine plan can be only

[53] 'Endlich fiel ihm ein Buch in die Hände, das in einer fremden Sprache geschrieben war, die ihm einige Ähnlichkeit mit der lateinischen und italienischen zu haben schien. Er hätte sehnlichste gewünscht, die Sprache zu kennen, denn das Buch gefiel ihm vorzüglich, ohne daß er eine Silbe davon verstand. Es hatte keinen Titel, doch fand er noch beim Suchen einige Bilder. Sie dünkten ihm ganz wunderbar bekannt, und wie er recht zusah, entdeckte er seine eigene Gestalt ziemlich kenntlich unter den Figuren. Er erschrak und glaubte zu träumen, aber beim wiederholten Ansehen konnte er nicht mehr an der vollkommen Ähnlichkeit zweifeln. Er traute kaum seinen Sinnen, als er bald auf einem Bilde die Höhle, den Einsiedler und den Alten neben sich entdeckte. Allmählich fand er auf den anderen Bildern die Morgenländerin, seine Eltern, den Landgrafen und die Landgräfin von Thüringen, seinen Freund den Hofkaplan, und manche andere seiner Bekannten; doch waren ihre Kleidungen verändert und schienen aus einer andern Zeit zu sein […] Er sah sein Ebenbild in verschiedenen Lagen. Gegen das Ende kam er sich größer und edler vor. […] Er sah sich am kaiserlichen Hofe, zu Schiffe, in trauter Umarmung mit einem schlanken, lieblichen Mädchen, in einem Kampfe mit wild aussehenden Männern, und in freundlichen Gesprächen mit Sarazenen und Mohren […] Die letzten Bilder waren dunkel und unverständlich; doch überraschten ihn einige Gestalten seines Traumes mit dem innigsten Entzücken; der Schluß des Buches schien zu fehlen.' Novalis, *Dichtungen*, ed. Curt Grützmacher (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1972), 149.

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vaguely intuited in the earthly and temporal realm that he inhabits.[54] The book of life, never fully knowable, remains an object of mystery and wonderment.

### *Literary treasure chests*

Heinrich's enraptured encounter with the book that tells a story of his life, together with the comments by Eichendorff and Goethe, provide us with one way of thinking about Brahms's reading – as a continuation of the Romantic project of mixing up art and reality, that is to say, of *romanticizing* the world around him. For Brahms, the appeal of these German Romantic texts perhaps lay in the escapism they afforded and the alternative they offered to the practicalities of the musical profession he was then confronting. But literature and the practice of storytelling could also be used as a means of stimulating reflection on social and cultural issues. We can trace this phenomenon in story collections with framing narratives such as Goethe's *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* (1795) and Tieck's *Phantasus* (1812–16), where interpolated stories are shared and then discussed by an assembled group of characters. These collections suggest the sociability that was bound up with reading and also helpfully make clear that for all the prevalence of swashbuckling male protagonists in German Romantic novels, literature was enjoyed, discussed and criticized by both male and female readers.

The process of copying out and ordering quotations, as documented by Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* notebooks, offers another example of a reflective engagement with literature, but one that could be practised more readily by a solitary reader. For the entries in a commonplace book, what is of greatest importance is not the specific text from which they come (the literary world in which the reader might temporarily reside), but the nuggets of wisdom that the quoted words contain. Theoretically, these quotations could thus be recycled – harvested from secondary sources, or from other peoples' equivalent collections (as, it transpires, many of Brahms's were). What was crucial was the insight or idea provided by the individual entry. This type of engagement with the printed page relates to a process Arthur Schopenhauer described in an essay on reading published in 1851:

> When we read, someone else thinks for us: we merely repeat his mental process. It is like the pupil who, when learning to write, goes over with a pen the strokes made in pencil by the teacher.[55]

[54] The relationship between these novels by Goethe and Novalis is characteristic of a broader intellectual development in late eighteenth-century literature, as noted by Safranski, whereby the 'inexplicable is now no longer a scandal, but an enticement'. Safranski, *Romanticism*, 31.

[55] 'Wann wir lesen, denkt ein Anderer für uns: wir wiederholen bloß seinen mentalen Proceß. Es ist damit, wie wenn beim Schreibenlernen der Schüler die vom Lehrer mit Bleistift geschriebenen Züge mit der Feder nachzieht.' Arthur Schopenhauer, 'Ueber Lesen und Bücher', *Parerga und Paralipomena: Kleine philosophische Schriften* (Berlin: A. W. Hayn, 1862), 587–95 (p. 587). In this translation I maintain the gender of the possessive pronoun present in the German. It is probable that in the mid-nineteenth century Schopenhauer would have assumed that the thinker whose mental processes were being traced was male.

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Brahms's act of copying out quotations could be understood as an extension of this process: as an attempt first to trace the thoughts of earlier writers, and then to take hold of them for himself.

In conjunction with this reflective type of reading, it seems worthwhile to dig deeper into Brahms's designation of his commonplace books as a *Schatzkästlein*. As *Schatz* means 'treasure' in German, and as *Kästlein* is a diminutive form of *Kasten*, meaning box or chest, a *Schatzkästlein* is most literally translated as a 'little treasure chest'. In this simple act of naming, Brahms likened his literary pearls of wisdom to valuable material commodities. Like a jewel, the aphorism, quotation or poem is a miniature form with an attraction and a power incommensurate with the smallness of its scale; these items glimmer from a distance, but they also demand care and loving contemplation. Like a real treasure chest, Brahms's trove of quotations might imply a particular mode of engagement: rummaging, rather than ordinary reading – the sifting of its contents in search of some half-remembered object of delight.

In nineteenth-century German, though, the noun 'Schatz' was understood not just to mean treasure, but also (akin to the English term 'treasury') as a designation for literary anthologies. It is possible that Brahms found inspiration for his *Schatzkästlein* title from Wolff's *Poetischer Hausschatz des deutschen Volkes*, the collection that, as noted above, furnished him with a number of epigrams. As a title for a literary collection, the specific term *Schatzkästlein* was not new: in the early nineteenth century, the writer Johann Peter Hebel (1760–1826) gathered together his earlier stories and anecdotes, the resulting volume appearing in 1811 as *Schatzkästlein des rheinischen Hausfreundes* (*The Little Treasure Chest of the Rhenish Family Friend*).[56] And according to the Grimm brothers' *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, the metaphorical use of 'Schatzkästlein' as a term to describe a collection of valuable quotations that might serve dual purposes of entertainment and edification can be traced back to Goethe.[57]

Probably the most significant meaning of the term *Schatzkästlein*, though, and one that certainly featured in Brahms's own reading matter, takes the word as a metaphor for an individual's heart or soul. In Hoffmann's novel *Kater Murr* the character of Meister Abraham thus refers to an 'inner little treasure chest' when berating kapellmeister Kreisler for his playful evasiveness. Abraham encourages the musician to provide an honest account of an episode from his past:

> 'I would have thought', Master Abraham commented […], 'that in your present good mood you could do nothing better than to open up your heart or your mind, or whatever else you might name your inner little treasure chest [*inneres Schatzkästlein*], and take this and that from it.'[58]

[56] Johann Peter Hebel, *Schatzkästlein des rheinischen Hausfreundes* (Tübingen: Cotta, 1811).

[57] The Goethe reference occurs in the first part of his autobiographical writings *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, published in 1811. *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, <https://woerterbuchnetz.de/?sigle=DWB#1> (accessed 15 May 2021).

[58] '"Ich dächte", sprach Meister Abraham […], "dass Ihr in Eurer heutigen passabalen Stimmung nichts besseres tun könntet, als Eurer Herz oder Eurer Gemüt, oder wie Ihr sonst gerade Euer inneres Schatzkästlein nennen möget, aufschließen, und dieß, jenes daraus hervorlangen."' E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Werke*, ed. Herbert Kraft and Manfred Wacker, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1967), iii, 203;

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Kreisler, Meister Abraham here implies, customarily keeps his *Schatzkästlein* locked, hiding his true self from public view. To open up the *Schatzkästlein* would be to let down his guard, to lower his customary defence of sarcastic humour. A very similar usage of the same word occurs in *Das merkwürdige musikalische Leben des Tonkünstlers Joseph Berglinger* (1797), a short story by Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder from which Brahms quoted in his fourth notebook.[59] Early on in Wackenroder's narrative we learn that the aspiring musician Berglinger feels he has an artistic calling that outweighs even his affection for his family:

> He loved his father and siblings sincerely; but he treasured his inner life above everything and kept it secret and hidden from others. In this manner one keeps a little treasure chest secret, to which one surrenders the key to nobody.[60]

The remainder of Wackenroder's story traces Berglinger's trials and tribulations as he attempts to live out his artistic calling as a musician.

This type of connection between Brahms's quotation collection and his inner life finds support in other entries in the *Schatzkästlein.* The general practice of gathering together sayings and wise words, and of storing them in a notebook for future contemplation, was familiar to Brahms from at least one literary source: the novella *Contraste und Paradoxen* (1845) by the now little-known German writer Friedrich von Sallet (1812–43). In this story, the central figure is a young boy called Junius who is caught between the opposing forces of his bourgeois materialistic father, Herr Habichs, and the dreamy, subversive artistry of his uncle Holofernes. Interpolated within the story are entries from both Holofernes's own diary and an instructional volume made by the uncle for his nephew – the 'ABC-Buch des Onkels Holofernes'. Common to both types of interpolated entry is the simple tone of the language through which moral and artistic precepts are delivered. Interrupting the temporal flow of Sallet's narrative, these quotations are presented as worthy of the reader's quiet contemplation. Brahms copied several of Holofernes's precepts into his notebook, including the following lengthy passage:

> Most commonly one finds that which is called *openness* in the highest degree only in the most frivolous and unreflective of people; that which is called *reticence* in the deepest, truest and most bountiful of minds. And truly: I participate gladly and love a full, free flow of conversation to accompany the clanging of glasses; everything noble that I have thought is not for me – it has, where possible, been won for the entire world. But there is a *sanctuary* in our minds. That which is on display in this private inner space I should not pull out and

the passage in Hoffmann's novel was first spotted by Siegfried Kross. See Kross, 'Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann', 194.

[59] Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Ia 79562, entry 84; Krebs 474. Brahms appears to have encountered this story, together with other short texts by Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck, in an edition from 1818. [Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder], *Phantasien über die Kunst von einem kunstliebenden Klosterbruder*, ed. Ludwig Tieck (Vienna: Leopold Grund, 1818), 167–97.

[60] 'Seinen Vater und seine Geschwister liebte er aufrichtig; aber sein Inneres schätzte er über alles und hielt es vor andern Heimlich und verborgen. So hält man ein Schatzkästlein verborgen, zu welchem man den Schlüssel niemanden in die Hände gibt.' [Wackenroder], *Phantasien über die Kunst*, ed. Tieck, 170.

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> allow to glisten vainly and childishly in the ordinary light of day. It remains there in the holy night! Not even to my kindred spirit, be he the most noble of men, not even to my beloved (if I have one), should I make this known in plain words […] To provide a report, directly explaining that which is holy within us, is a wanton desecration.[61]

The earnest tone of these words stands in contrast to the comical satire present elsewhere in Sallet's story. The concern for a type of 'inner life' that should be protected from the outside world is germane to Holofernes's precepts more generally and relates also to equivalent collections of thoughts and wise words maintained by other German literary characters. Relevant here are the short passages of poetic prose known as polymeters that are penned by the character Walt and occur as interpolations in Jean Paul's novel *Die Flegeljahre* (1804–5). Perhaps the most famous example of this type of literary device are the brief diary entries of the young Ottilie found in Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809). These entries, which are generally much shorter than the Sallet quotation given above, are notable in affording an inner life to a female protagonist; like the Sallet quotation, though, they marry acuity with simple verbal expression and delight in a type of unvarnished honesty.

If these quotations suggest that Brahms used the term *Schatzkästlein* with an awareness of its many significations, they also link the practice of maintaining this literary collection firmly to the project of his private self-fashioning. In January 1854, Clara Schumann, observing Brahms's introversion, noted in her diary that he certainly has his 'secret inner world', that 'he takes up everything beautiful into himself and feeds on it inwardly'.[62] In relation to this, it is noteworthy that Brahms shared his notebook with his friend Joachim, at least to the extent of allowing the latter to copy in certain aphorisms of his own devising. While the opening up of the *Schatzkästlein* to a friend may have contravened Sallet's precept about guarding one's inner life, the gesture seems to find support in words of Schiller that were also quoted by Brahms:

> If you have something, then share it with me and I will pay what is right;
> If you are something, oh, then let our souls mingle.[63]

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[61] 'Meist findet man das, was man Offenheit nennt, im höchsten Grade just bei den leichtfertigsten und gedankenlosesten Menschen; das, was man Verschlossenheit nennt, gerade bei den tiefsten, reichsten und treuesten Gemütern. Und wirklich: ich teile mich gern mit und liebe ein volles, freies Ergießen des Gespräches beim Becherklange; alles, was ich Edles gedacht, sei nicht für mich, es sei, wo möglich, für die ganze Welt erobert. Aber dennoch gibt's ein Allerheiligstes im Gemüt. Was dort im innersten Kern, im Verborgenen prangt, das mag ich nicht hervorholen und im allgemeinen Licht des Tages eitel und kindisch glitzern lassen. Es bleibe da in heiliger Nacht! Selbst meinem Seelenfreunde, sei er der edelste Mann, selbst meiner Geliebten (wenn ich eine hätte) darf ich in dürren Worten nicht Kunde davon geben […] Vom Heiligen in uns, direkt auseinandersetzend, Bericht zu erstatten, ist eine schamlose Entweihung.' Friedrich von Sallet, *Kontraste und Paradoxen* (Munich: Hyperionverlag, [1920]), 84–5. Krebs 320.

[62] 'Er hat gewiß seine geheime Welt – er nimmt alles Schöne in sich auf und zehrt nun innerlich davon.' Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben nach Tagebüchern und Briefen*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902–8), ii (1906), 291.

[63] 'Hast du etwas, so teile mir's mit, und ich zahle, was recht ist; / Bist du etwas, o, dann tauschen die Seelen wir aus.' Krebs 188.

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## Aesthetic values

While Brahms had begun the process of providing an index for his third *Schatzkästlein* notebook, for the most part the entries across his collection appear to have been left unsorted: the order in which quotations occur probably relates to the order in which they were encountered. The lack of system is especially apparent in the third and fourth notebooks, which from their title ('Schöne Gedanken über Musik') would seem to be concerned with music but in fact contain quotations on other subjects as well. Despite the relative messiness of the collection, though, and the presence of a wide range of quoted writers, many of the entries in the *Schatzkästlein* engage with themes that one would expect to be of importance to a devoted reader of Hoffmann. While Hoffmann himself appears only twice, a substantial number of the quotations directly support the ideas he articulates in his prose fiction through the figure of kapellmeister Kreisler.[64] This goes particularly for entries on musical subjects, such as these words by Jean Paul which give voice to the idea of music as an unmediated expression of the soul:

> O Music! Echo of a remote, harmonious world! Sighs of the angels within us! When the word is speechless, and the embrace and the eye full of sorrow, and when our mute hearts lie imprisoned in our breasts: O then, it is only through you, music, that they call out to one another from their dungeons, and unite their distanced sighs in the wilderness![65]

Equally in tune with Hoffmann's sensibility are the quotations which suggest that art should be practised by artists in a manner akin to a religious calling. One of Joachim's aphorisms proclaims that, 'Artists should not be servants, rather priests of the public.'[66] The violinist was also keen to stress that art must not be treated as though it were merely ornamental:

> The complete artist is only the man for whom life and art mingle with one another exultantly – the man for whom art is not something incidental, that he puts on and takes off at whim like a piece of jewellery.[67]

> The seashell resounds with the roar of the waves even when far from the sea; likewise, far from the ebb and flow of tones, music rings out within the true musician.[68]

[64] In his recent biography Matthias Kornemann appeals to the small number of Hoffmann entries in the *Schatzkästlein* to suggest that Brahms's interest in Hoffmann's writings has been overplayed in previous scholarship. Kornemann, *Johannes Brahms*, 45–8. The relative absence of Hoffmann could, however, also be explained by the fact that Brahms owned quite a few of this writer's works and might already have internalized their contents.

[65] 'O Musik! Nachklang aus einer entlegnen harmonischen Welt! Seufzer des Engels in uns! Wenn das Wort sprachlos ist, und die Umarmung, und das Auge, das weinende, und wenn unsre stummen Herzen hinter dem Brustgitter einsam liegen: O, so bist nur du es, durch welche sie sich einander zurufen in ihren Kerkern und ihre entfernten Seufzer vereinigen in ihrer Wüste!' Krebs 6.

[66] 'Künstler sollen nicht Diener, sondern Priester des Publikums sein.' Krebs 229.

[67] 'Nur der Mensch ist ganzer Künstler, bei dem das Leben in die Kunst, diese in das Leben verherrlichend eingreift, der Mensch, dem die Kunst nichts Zufälliges ist, das er wie ein Geschmeide nach Belieben um und abhängt. / f.a.e.' Krebs 235.

[68] 'Die Muschel rauscht auch fern von der See wie Wogengebraus; so tönt's dem echten Musiker auch fern von Tongewoge im Innern wie Musik. / f.a.e.' Krebs 241.

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Here Joachim implies that music exercises its rights as a kind of divine sovereign: like faith, it claims its musicians, irrespective of where they are or what else they might be doing. Such pronouncements would have met with the approval of Kreisler senior: in his essay 'Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik', the kapellmeister adopts a heavily ironical tone, using sarcasm to poke fun at philistines who view music's role as being merely to provide 'pleasant entertainment' ('angenehme Unterhaltung').[69]

Probably the most fascinating sections in Brahms's *Schatzkästlein*, though, are the points at which one is most keenly aware of the lack of a tidy and unified aesthetic world view. The presence of contradictory entries is in many ways germane to such a collection and is in some ways unsurprising given that Brahms gathered up his literary treasures from different sources, at both first and second hand, and did not necessarily set out to formulate a coherent aesthetic treatise. Particularly when it comes to ideas about genius, originality, technique and the creative process, the divergences among *Schatzkästlein* entries seem to provide evidence of the young Brahms drawing on literature as a means of exploring and evaluating competing conceptions of artistry. While a substantial group of entries accord with sentiments expressed in Hoffmann's writings, at other times Brahms copied quotations into his notebooks that serve to challenge and modify the German Romantic writer's heady view of artistry.

### *Genius and originality*

In the German intellectual tradition, a veneration of originality was a key feature of the *Sturm und Drang* movement of the later eighteenth century. As Safranski notes in his biography of Goethe, a strong desire of *Sturm und Drang* writers was to break with 'prescribed, eternally valid patterns and conventions'; for them, 'It was a point of pride to be an original genius or at least to be regarded as one.'[70] Brahms was certainly aware of key literary works from the 1770s and 80s which were informed by such ideas (notably, Goethe's *Werther* and Schiller's plays *Die Räuber* and *Kabale und Liebe*), though in his *Schatzkästlein* collection the hymns of praise to groundbreaking geniuses derive largely from the later German Romantics. These quotations coexist with the more cool-headed maxims offered by the older Goethe and the young Joachim – entries that suggest the need for both diligence and humility in relation to one's artistic forebears.

Given Brahms's identification with the figure of Kreisler, it is unsurprising to find a cluster of quotations that accord with the understanding of artistic greatness that is advocated by Hoffmann:

> The more confused a person is […] the more can be made of him through diligent self-study. On the other hand, ordered minds have to aspire to become true scholars and thorough encyclopaedists […] Confusion indicates a surplus of energy and capacity but a lack of balance; resoluteness indicates balance but reduced capacity and energy.

[69] This essay occurs in Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana* (see above, n. 11).
[70] Safranski, *Goethe*, 82.

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> Therefore, the confused one is progressive and perfectible; on the other hand, the orderly individual soon ends up as a philistine.[71]

These words by Novalis could be understood as a tribute to Kreisler's own personality. In the novel *Kater Murr*, the kapellmeister's unpredictable antics and emotional volatility contrast with the orderly aristocratic society that surrounds him. Kreisler's artistry even emerges as a kind of illness, and it seems that this also might have met with Novalis's approval. In another quotation copied by Brahms, Novalis opines that the 'ideal of complete health is only interesting from a scientific perspective. Illness pertains to individualization.'[72] In spite of such sentiments, diligent study remained important for Novalis in the development of an artist, and he describes the true sustenance of the soul ('Seelenkost') as deriving from the co-mingling of cool reason ('klarer Verstand') and warm fantasy ('warme Phantasie').[73]

More extreme representations of the individualized artist which Brahms included in his collection advocate the jettisoning of study and reason altogether in favour of one's immediate creative instincts. Significant in this regard is a series of extracts seemingly from Tieck's 1818 edition of Wackenroder's *Phantasien über die Kunst* which occurs in the fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook (see above, note 59). The subjects of the essays are for the most part Italian Renaissance artists, and the short and entertaining narrative accounts of their lives draw heavily on the writings of Giorgio Vasari. Brahms's quotations from this text typically omit the references to the artists being described. Entry 76, for example, was lifted from an account of the genius of Leonardo da Vinci:

> (In a short time he overtook his teachers.) A proof that art truly cannot be learnt and taught, but rather that its tide, when led and directed for but a small stretch, flows unrestrained from the individual soul.[74]

Entry 83, offering an even more radical celebration of artistic originality, was taken from Wackenroder's comments about Michelangelo:

> In the world of artists there is nothing worthier of veneration than true originality! To work with diligence, faithful emulation and clever judgment – that is *human*; but to see the entire substance of art with fresh eyes, as though to make it anew – that is *divine.*[75]

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71 'Je verworrener ein Mensch ist […] desto mehr kann durch fleißiges Selbststudium aus ihm werden; dahingegen die geordneten Köpfe trachten müssen, wahre Gelehrte, gründliche Enzyklopädisten zu werden […] Verworrenheit deutet auf Überfluß am Kraft und Vermögen bei mangelhaften Verhältnissen; Bestimmtheit auf richtige Verhältnisse, aber sparsames Vermögen und Kraft. Daher ist der Verworrene so progressiv, so perfektibel; dahingegen der Ordentliche so früh als Philister aufhört.' Krebs 53.

72 'Das Ideal einer vollkommenen Gesundheit ist bloß wissenschaftlich interessant. Krankheit gehört zur Individualisierung.' Krebs 37.

73 'Klarer Verstand mit warmer Phantasie verschwistert, ist die echte, Gesundheit bringende Seelenkost.' Krebs 36.

74 '(In kurzer Zeit überholte er seine Lehrer.) Ein Beweis, daß die Kunst sich eigentlich nicht lernt u. nicht gelehrt wird, sondern daß ihr Strom, wenn er nur auf eine kurze Strecke geführt und gerichtet ist, unbeherrscht aus eigener Seele quillt.' Portion in brackets added by Brahms. Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Ia 79562, entry 76; Krebs 566.

75 'Es ist in der Welt der Künstler gar kein höherer, der Anbetung würdigerer Gegenstand als: – ein ursprünglich Original! – Mit emsigem Fleiße, treuer Nachahmung, klugem Urtheil zu arbeiten – ist

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Noteworthy in these words is the representation of artistry as a God-given gift. For Wackenroder and Tieck these ideas about genius did not apply merely to the visual arts: later in the *Phantasien* there are chapters dealing with musical themes, including the life narrative of the fictional musician Berglinger cited above. This high regard for artistic originality underlay other Romantic writings on culture, and the extravagant language employed by Wackenroder resonates with much of what Hoffmann has to say about Beethoven. In his famous essay on Beethoven's instrumental music Hoffmann characterized Beethoven as a Romantic rule-breaker, an inspired artistic creator akin to Shakespeare, whose music opens up to us the 'realm of the infinite and the immeasurable'.[76]

Important though Romantic conceptions of genius and originality are within the *Schatzkästlein*, these sentiments are at times directly contradicted by other authors quoted by Brahms. The heady and excitable tone of Wackenroder's language is thus condemned by the words of the Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, who notes how much easier 'reverent effusion' is than good, straightforward action.[77] Even more startling is the way that the disdain for imitation and the feverish praise of Leonardo find a terse dismissal in a precept from Joachim: 'Don't praise and admire,' the violinist admonishes; 'love, imitate!'[78] When it comes to conceptions of originality, though, the most important opponent of Romantic excess among Brahms's quoted authors was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

As suggested by two entries in the fourth *Schatzkästlein* notebook (both lifted from Schumann's *Neue Zeitschrift*), Goethe's conception of talent might have been different for musical and non-musical artistry. In one of the entries, Goethe thus opines:

> Musical talent can probably show itself the earliest, as music is something inborn and innate that requires no great nourishment from the outside and no experience drawn from life.[79]

Dominant in Brahms's notebooks, though, are Goethe's more general maxims on the themes of talent and originality, and these tend to qualify the role of the innate artistic gifts by calling for diligent study and respect for tradition. In sharp distinction to Wackenroder, the mature Goethe therefore claims that a regard for rules is a crucial component of genius:

> What justifies our strict demands and firm rules more than anything else is that precisely the genius, the inborn talent grasps them first, and acquiesces to them most compliantly.

menschlich; – aber das ganze Wesen der Kunst mit einem ganz neuen Auge zu durchblicken, es gleichsam mit einer ganz neuen Handhabe zu erfassen, ist göttlich' (emphasis original). Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Ia 79562, entry 83; Krebs 573.

76 'So öffnet uns auch Beethovens Instrumentalmusik das Reich des Ungeheurn und Unermeßlichen.' Hoffmann, *Werke*, i, 38.

77 'Begreifst du aber wieviel andächtig schwärmen leichter als gut handeln ist? wie gern der schlaffte Mensch andächtig schwärmt, um nur – ist er zuzeiten sich schon der Absicht deutlich nicht bewußt – um nur gut handeln nicht zu dürfen?' Krebs 72.

78 'Lobet nicht, bewundert nicht; Liebet, ahmt nach!' Krebs 239.

79 'Das musikalische Talent kann sich wohl am frühsten zeigen, indem die Musik ganz etwas Angeborenes, Inneres ist, das von außen keiner großen Nahrung und keiner aus dem Leben gezogenen Erfahrung bedarf.' The other entry on the subject of musical talent immediately precedes this one and expresses a similar sentiment. Krebs 555.

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> Only the half-capable individual would wish to set his restricted peculiarity in place of the absolute whole – to ennoble his errant fumbling under the guise of untameable originality and independence.[80]

Such comments could be used to criticize the Romantic protagonists and real-life creators celebrated by Hoffmann, Jean Paul and Wackenroder. Goethe's backward glance towards earlier artistic achievements also served as a means of providing an assessment of his own creations, as in these words copied by Brahms that inculcate an attitude of humility:

> When I behold the work of masters
> I see what they have accomplished;
> When I examine my own things
> I see what I should have done.[81]

### *Technique, form and the creative process*

For several German Romantic writers, technique and reflective study were regarded as having little to do with art and were therefore quickly dismissed as arid and soulless. Hoffmann characterizes technical accomplishment (in relation both to musical composition and to performance) as oppositional to the spiritual aspects of music-making. In Hoffmann's story *Der Sandmann* (1817), the perfect singing and piano-playing of the automaton Olympia are thus depicted as mere mechanical music-making;[82] similarly, in *Die Fermate* (1816) the central character Theodor views the local organist as a stale old arithmetician who writes 'unpleasant-sounding toccatas and fugues'.[83] After his musical awakening, achieved through a rapturous encounter with operatic singers, Theodor throws all of these compositions into the fire and laughs gleefully as the double counterpoint smoulders and crackles.[84] Here the sunny and sensuous delights of Italian opera contrast starkly with the musty mind-music of a provincial organist.

Brahms's *Schatzkästlein*, however, contains a number of entries that, in opposition to Hoffmann, stress the absorption of basic principles and technique early on in one's

[80] 'Was uns aber zu strengen Forderungen, zu entschiedenen Gesetzen am meisten berechtigt, ist, daß gerade das Genie, das angeborene Talent sie am ersten begreift, ihnen den willigsten Gehorsam leistet. Nur das Halbvermögen wünschte gern seine beschränkte Besonderheit an die Stelle des unbedingten Ganzen zu setzen und seine falschen Griffe unter Vorwand einer unbezwinglichen Originalität und Selbständigkeit zu beschönigen.' Krebs 483.

[81] 'Seh' ich die Werke der Meister an, / So seh' ich das, was sie getan; / Betracht ich meine Siebensachen / Seh' ich, was ich hätt' sollen machen.' Krebs 227.

[82] 'Ihr Spiel, ihr Singen hat den unangenehm richtigen geistlosen Takt der singenden Maschine und ebenso ist ihr Tanz.' Hoffmann, *Werke*, ii, 33.

[83] 'Es war an dem kleinen Orte recht schlecht bestellt um die Musik, niemanden gab es, der mich hätte unterrichten können, als einen alten eigensinnigen Organisten, der war aber ein toter Rechenmeister und quälte mich sehr mit finstern übelklingenden Tokkaten und Fugen.' E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Die Serapions-Brüder* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2008), 74.

[84] 'Und lachte recht hämisch als der doppelte Kontrapunkt so dampfte und knisterte.' *Ibid.*, 78.

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artistic education. Thus, Friedrich Schlegel dismisses those who would dismiss learning:

> All those who believed themselves to be done with what they once learnt have remained insignificant; all who continually returned to basic principles and developed skills and proficiency through observing, learning and practising have become accomplished.[85]

Hoffmann's characters typically have no truck with 'observing, learning and practising', and would probably be disconcerted to find their favoured opposition between technique and spirit (*Geist*) being challenged by writers and musicians who feature in the *Schatzkästlein*. Goethe's friend Carl Friedrich Zelter argues that technical accomplishment must be viewed as an essential part of one's early training as an artist and is, in fact, a prerequisite of true creative freedom:

> The technical aspects of an art must be mastered in the earlier years in an orderly manner. For the spirit to emerge from within, the concern for outward presentation must be removed, and whoever is acquainted with good craftsmanship will admit that it helps poetic expression; for it stirs the passions and frees the instinct.[86]

For Kreisler, by contrast, what seems to free the instinct most effectively is not technique but the excessive intake of alcohol. In the first story of *Kreisleriana*, the kapellmeister drifts into an enraptured state as he plays Bach's *Goldberg Variations* at a tea party. Growing steadily less aware of his surroundings and of the gradually depleting audience (they expected to hear variations on a popular operatic tune), Kreisler is sucked into the world of Bach's music to such a degree that when he reaches the end of the work he continues to play out of his own imagination, fantasizing at the piano:

> I would gladly have ended, but this No. 30, the theme, swept me inexorably onward. The quarto pages suddenly stretched themselves out into a gigantic folio on which were written thousands of imitations and realizations of the theme which I had to play. The notes became alive and flickered and hopped around me – electrical sparks surged through my fingertips into the keys – the spirit from which they emanated outstripped the ideas – the entire room was full of a heavy fragrance, the candles burned more and more murkily – occasionally a nose appeared, at other times a pair of eyes; but they disappeared again straightaway. Thus it happened that I remained seated alone with my Sebastian Bach, served by Gottlieb as though by a *spiritu familiari*! – I drink![87]

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[85] 'Alle, die mit dem einmal Gelernten fertig zu sein glaubten, sind klein geblieben; alle, die immer wieder zu den Urprinzipien zurückkehrten und Kenntnisse und Fertigkeiten beobachtend, lernend, übend ausbildeten, sind tüchtig geworden.' Krebs 247, 492 (duplicated).

[86] 'Das Technische einer Kunst muß eigentlich in frühern Jahren ordentlich erlernt werden. Regt sich erst der Geist von innen heraus, so muß die Sorge für äußere Darstellung beseitigt sein, und wer das schöne Handwerk kennt, wird gestehen, daß es gleichsam Dichten hilft; denn es rührt die Luft und macht den Trieb frei.' Krebs 539.

[87] 'Ich hätte glücklich geendet, aber diese Nro. 30., das Thema, riß mich unaufhaltsam fort. Die Quartblätter dehnten sich plötzlich aus zu einem Riesenfolio, wo tausend Imitationen und Ausführungen jenes Themas geschrieben standen, die ich abspielen mußte. Die Noten wurden lebendig und flimmerten und hüpften um mich her – elektrisches Feuer fuhr durch die Fingerspitzen in die Tasten – der Geist, von dem es ausströmte, überflügelte die Gedanken – der ganze Saal hing voll dichten

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Here, as with other examples in Hoffmann's writings, transcendent experience is abetted by alcohol, with this glimpse of the spirit realm likened to intoxication.

Against Hoffmann's excitable and breathless prose, some of the comments about creativity that Brahms included in the *Schatzkästlein* sound like the complaints of an irritable schoolteacher. As noted above, Brahms copied a succession of quotations on the subject of form into his collection from an article that appeared in back issues of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. This article included Goethe's previously cited comment about the importance of obedience for the true genius, together with quotations from the novelist Heinrich Laube (1806–84) and Goethe's associate Eckermann. One of the passages from Eckermann's *Beiträge zur Poesie* (1824) verges on outright dogmatism:

> Form is something that has been refined through the efforts of the most excellent masters over millennia, something that every succeeding generation cannot assimilate quickly enough. It would be a most foolish delusion of misunderstood originality if everyone were to set out on their own path, blundering around in order to find that which is already to hand in great perfection.[88]

Towards the end of the second part of the same article in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, a brief editorial conclusion considered the implications of the assembled quotations (which had literature as their original subject matter) from the perspective of contemporary musical culture. Somewhat predictably, the article ended with a dismissal of the urge towards originality: 'One only becomes incomprehensible, and incomprehensibility can nevermore be a desirable attribute of the artwork.'[89] Hoffmann's fictional Kreisler figure, along with Romantic writers such as Novalis and Tieck, would almost certainly have disagreed.

Significantly, underlying the tension between Kreisler's improvisations and the words about form from Goethe and Eckermann are contrasting models of the creative process: artistic creation as a spontaneous outpouring on the one hand and as a hard-won battle over unyielding materials on the other. As a lover of folk song and an avid reader of Eichendorff, Brahms would have encountered the notion that art (in the form of song) might serve as an unchecked expression of one's feelings. In Eichendorff's novels, in moments of despair, rapture and joy, his protagonists abandon

Dufts, in dem die Kerzen düstrer und düstrer brannten – zuweilen sah eine Nase heraus, zuweilen ein paar Augen; aber sie verschwanden gleich wieder. So kam es, daß ich allein sitzen blieb mit meinem Sebastian Bach und von Gottlieb wie von einem spiritu familiari bedient wurde! – Ich trinke!' Hoffmann, *Werke*, i, 25. (No. 30 in the *Goldberg Variations* is not, in fact, the theme, but the final variation.)

88 'Die Form ist etwas durch tausendjährige Bestrebungen der vorzüglichsten Meister Gebildetes, das sich jeder Nachkommende nicht schnell genug zu eigen machen kann. Ein höchst törichter Wahn übelverstandener Originalität würde es sein, wenn da jeder wieder auf eigenem Wege herumsuchen und herumtappen wollte, um das zu finden, was schon in großer Vollkommenheit vorhanden ist.' Krebs 482.

89 'Man wird nur unverständlich, und das Unverständliche kann nimmermehr eine wünschenswerthe Eigenschaft des Kunstwerkes werden.' 'Excerpte: Form', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 21 October 1846, 710 (not quoted by Brahms).

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speech for song. And as Adalbert von Chamisso puts it in one of the *Schatzkästlein* entries:

> What swelled my breast, unbidden –
> I could not prevent it – became song;
> Into song was turned every sweet wish,
> Into song, every pain with which I struggled.[90]

While Hoffmann does not appear to have been especially interested in folk song, he certainly privileged spontaneity in music-making. Probably Hoffmann's most remarkable account of the process of musical composition occurs towards the end of the novel *Kater Murr.* Here Kreisler recounts a dream in which he conducts a polyphonic Mass setting sung by the monks at the monastery of Kanzheim; in this episode Julia, the central female character in the novel, appears transfigured as an angel:

> It was indeed wonderful the manner in which Kreisler had brought forth this composition, in which the abbot and brothers discerned the expression of the most ardent reverence – of heavenly love itself. Completely taken up with the High Mass, which he had begun to set but was a long way from completing, one night he dreamed that the saint's day for which the composition was determined had arrived – the bell has sounded for the start of the Mass, he is at the conductor's stand, the completed score in front of him, the abbot intones and his Kyrie begins. –
>
> Movement after movement now follows, the performance, dignified and powerful, surprises him, carries him along up until the Agnus dei. Then, to his horror, he becomes aware of empty pages in the score with no notes written on them, the brothers look at him as he suddenly lets the baton drop, expecting that he will eventually begin, that the interruption will eventually cease. But embarrassment and fear weigh on him heavily, and despite the fact that he holds the entire Agnus complete within his breast, he cannot bring it forth into the score. Then a beautiful angelic figure seems to appear suddenly, to step up to the music stand, and to sing the Agnus with heavenly tones, and this angelic figure is Julia! In the rapture of the highest exultation Kreisler awoke and wrote down the Agnus that had been revealed to him in the blessed dream.[91]

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[90] 'Was mir im Busen schwoll, mir unbewußt, / Ich konnt' es nicht verhindern, ward Gesang; / Zum Liede ward mir jede süße Lust, / Zum Liede jeder Schmerz, mit dem ich rang.' Krebs 174.

[91] 'Wunderbar war es wohl, auf welche Weise Kreisler diesen Satz, in dem der Abt, die Brüder den Ausdruck der brünstigsten Andacht, der himmlischen Liebe selbst fanden, hervorgebracht hatte. Ganz erfüllt von dem Hochamt, das er zu setzen begonnen, aber noch lange nicht vollendet hatte, träumte er in einer Nacht, der Heiligentag, für den die Komposition bestimmt, sei da, das Hochamt eingeläutet, er stehe an dem Pult, die fertige Partitur vor sich, der Abt, selbst Messe lesend intoniere, und sein Kyrie fange an. –

Satz auf Satz folge nun, die Aufführung, gediegen und kraftvoll, überrasche ihn, reiße ihn fort bis zum Agnus dei. Da gewahre er zu seinem Schreck in der Partitur weiße Blätter, keine Note aufgeschrieben, die Brüder schauten ihn, der plötzlich den Taktstock sinken lassen, an, gewärtig, daß er endlich anfangen, daß die Stockung endlich aufhören werde. Aber bleischwer drücke ihn Verlegenheit und Angst nieder, und er könne, ungeachtet er das ganze Agnus fertig in seiner Brust bewahre, nur es nicht herausbringen in die Partitur. Da erschiene aber plötzlich eine holde Engelsgestalt, trete an den Pult, sänge das Agnus mit Tönen des Himmels, und diese Engelsgestalt wäre Julia! – Im Entzücken hoher Begeisterung erwachte Kreisler und schrieb das Agnus auf, das im seligen Traum ihm aufgegangen.' Hoffmann, *Werke*, iii, 369–70.

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Noteworthy in this passage – itself a high point among Hoffmann's rapturous imaginings – is the description of how the music of the Mass is created by Kreisler: it is heard by him in a dream and then copied out in a moment of artistic exultation. Tellingly, musical creativity is depicted here as beyond the capacities of the rational human subject; it arises not through work and diligence, but from involuntary flashes of inspiration.

Goethe was no stranger to flashes of inspiration, but his mature conception of creativity (in contrast to that of Hoffmann) stressed the importance of moderation and balance, and for a mode of artistic expression within established cultural forms. Despite the complaints of Romantic writers and later critics (Heine likened Goethe's poetic works to the cold and unfeeling stone statues displayed in the Louvre),[92] Goethe sought not so much to do away with feeling and emotion as to bring them into a harmonious relationship with reason and the intellect. Simon Richter elegantly characterizes the determining values of Weimar Classicism as an aesthetic of containment.[93] One of the Goethe entries included by Brahms in his collection suggests the importance of being able to move beyond one's immediate emotions through reflection:

> First feeling, then thought,
> First expansiveness, then restraint,
> From the savage, the true image
> Reveals itself to you, meek and mild.[94]

Similarly, the following utterance by Goethe makes sense of feeling and thought hierarchically within human development:

> The uncivilized human is content merely to see something happen; the educated wants to feel, and reflection is enjoyable only to the completely refined.[95]

As precepts that might guide human action, the values underlying these words are exemplified by the title character of Goethe's play *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. Iphigenie is depicted as an individual who both feels and suffers owing to her fate, but crucially also demonstrates a capacity to master and control her emotions.[96] With regard to the process of artistic creation, the ideas underlying Goethe's quotations were probably most famously realized not by Goethe himself, but by his close friend Schiller, a supreme proponent of the triumph of reason over instinct and raw emotion. The *locus classicus* for Schiller's fraught and troubled approach to creativity

[92] Heinrich Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, ed. Helga Weidmann (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1976), 48.
[93] Simon Richter, 'Introduction', *The Literature of Weimar Classicism*, ed. Richter (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005), 3–44 (p. 41).
[94] 'Erst Empfindung, dann Gedanken, / Erst ins Weite, dann zu Schranken, / Aus dem Wilden hold und mild / Zeigt sich dir das wahre Bild.' Krebs 541.
[95] 'Der rohe Mensch ist zufrieden, wenn er nur etwas vorgehen sieht; der Gebildete will empfinden, und Nachdenken ist nur dem ganz Ausgebildeten angenehm.' Krebs 591.
[96] In 1882 Brahms would set words from Goethe's play in his *Gesang der Parzen*, op. 89. For an account of Brahms's setting in its intellectual context, see Grimes, *Brahms's Elegies*, 120–62. The original prose version of *Iphigenie auf Tauris* dates from 1779, the verse play from 1786.

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is the *Wallenstein* trilogy, which he eventually brought to completion in 1799. Schiller gave a sense of his struggle with this particular dramatic work in a letter to Goethe:

> The more I rectify my ideas for the form of the play, the more gargantuan the material that is to be mastered appears, and truly, without a certain bold faith in myself, I would find it hard to continue.[97]

Here successful artistic creation emerges not as the result of imagination and inspiration, but from conviction, from an unshakeable belief in one's own ability to win the battle. The goal of such hard work was an artistic creation that will not vanish in a puff of smoke but rather, like the bell whose casting is narrated in Schiller's famous poem *Das Lied von der Glocke* (1799), might withstand the ravages of time and human history.

## Epilogue

In his later life, Brahms was fairly reticent when talking about his personal artistic values and compositional processes, but the few surviving comments tend to privilege work over inspiration, and thus accord more with the sentiments of the mature Goethe and Schiller than with the alcohol-induced imaginings of Hoffmann. While teaching Gustav Jenner in the 1880s and 90s Brahms famously advocated for a 'dauerhafte Musik' (an 'enduring music', or a 'music built to last'), a concept that Reinhold Brinkmann has described as the 'avowed moral and aesthetic goal of Brahms's compositional work'.[98] In 1876, in an oft-cited conversation with the singer George Henschel, Brahms would comment that:

> There is no real *creating* without hard work. That which you would call invention, that is to say, a thought, an idea, is simply an inspiration from above, for which I am not responsible, which is no merit of mine. Yea, it is a present, a gift, which I ought even to despise until I have made it my own by right of hard work.[99]

In a similar vein, Eusebius Mandyczewski, who knew the composer in the last decades of his life, suggested that Brahms's motto was: 'Composition means not phantasizing.'[100] A disdain for immediate inspiration is also captured in the *bon mot* offered by

[97] 'Je mehr ich meine Ideen über die Form des Stücks rektifiziere, desto ungeheurer erscheint mir die Masse, die zu beherrschen ist, und wahrlich, ohne einen gewissen kühnen Glauben an mich selbst würde ich schwerlich fortfahren können.' Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Friedrich Schiller oder die Erfindung des deutschen Idealismus* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2004), 452.

[98] Reinhold Brinkmann, *Late Idyll: The Second Symphony of Johannes Brahms*, trans. Peter Palmer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 2.

[99] George Henschel, *Personal Recollections of Johannes Brahms* (Boston, MA: R. G. Badger, 1907), 22 (emphasis original). Brahms goes on to elaborate on the idea with respect to the composition of his song *Die Mainacht*.

[100] 'Componiren heißt nicht phantasiren.' Eusebius Mandyczewski, 'Brahms, Johannes', *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, 47 (1903), 760–7; <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118514253.html#adbcontent> (accessed 15 May 2021).

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Brahms to his close friend Theodor Billroth: 'The more an artwork chews things over, the tastier it becomes.'[101]

In the cultural context of late nineteenth-century Vienna there are other frames of reference for these comments beyond the opposition between Classical and Romantic literary aesthetics. As Martin Ennis has recently suggested, Brahms's commitment to work over inspiration could reasonably be viewed in terms of religious affiliation, with Brahms playing on the stereotype of the industrious north German Protestant in Catholic Vienna.[102] Most influential of late, though, has been the politicized reading of Brahms's aesthetics, with the composer's music being understood to avoid immediate emotional gratification in favour of the working out of rational motivic processes, and thus according with the reason-based politics of Viennese Liberalism.[103] None of these interpretative perspectives need be mutually exclusive, but it seems significant that a commitment to composerly craft and inherited cultural traditions can be traced to the *Schatzkästlein* entries of the mid-1850s, given that this preceded a period in which, through diligent study, Brahms transformed and consolidated his musical language.

To see the *Schatzkästlein* simply as charting the emergence of 'Brahms the classicist' would, however, be to impose an overly reductive teleological interpretation on these fascinatingly messy notebooks. The arrangement of the entries does not necessarily dramatize such a progression (Wackenroder and Jean Paul appear both before and after Goethe). Also, the conception of Brahms merely as a 'classicist' tends to carry with it an emphasis on the intellectual qualities of his oeuvre, sidelining other important aspects of his creativity – notably his piano playing and (in the literary sphere) his enthusiasm for Romantic literature, which continued well beyond the 1850s, as is evidenced by his Tieck settings in the *Magelone-Lieder*, op. 33, and the Trio op. 40 for piano, violin and *Waldhorn* (both works written to some degree 'under the spell of the moonlit magical night of Romanticism').

Perhaps the most striking detail about Brahms's *Schatzkästlein* is the fact that the composer kept these notebooks for the remaining four decades of his life. However many youthful works he destroyed, and however much he tried to write his younger self out of early compositions (as with revisions to his op. 8 Piano Trio), it seems that even into the 1890s there was something about this collection that still spoke to him. For the elderly Brahms to leaf through these pages might have been to recall his younger self and that crucial period of artistic development in the Schumann house in 1854. Brahms's youthful love of Romantic literature certainly figures in the surviving correspondence and memoirs of his later years: in 1895 he wrote nostalgically to Heinrich von Herzogenberg, noting that Eichendorff had probably been 'the

[101] 'Je mehr ein Kunstwerk verkaut, um so schmackhafter wird es.' Quoted in Robert Pascall, *Brahms beyond Mastery: His Sarabande and Gavotte, and its Recompositions* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 17. In translating 'schmackhafter' Pascall opts for 'more tasty'.

[102] Martin Ennis, 'Brahms, Autodidactism, and the Curious Case of the Gavotte', *Current Musicology*, 104 (2019), 139–78 (p. 142).

[103] See especially Margaret Notley, *Lateness and Brahms: Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

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adolescent infatuation of us all'.[104] Richard Heuberger noted details of a conversation he had with Brahms in the last decade of the composer's life when Brahms enthused about Jean Paul – a writer he suggested that the young of today knew too little.[105] Despite the very different cultural worlds Brahms inhabited in the 1850s and the 1890s, he himself suggested that there were overarching values supporting his creativity. Writing to Philipp Spitta in 1894, he commented: 'I believe in my life I have changed my spots only rarely and but slightly.'[106] Perhaps these notebooks of quotations, with their ardently expressed idealism and the devotion they inculcate towards music as an art, might have allowed Brahms to feel a sense of continuity in his personal subjective identity; for the elderly Brahms this trace of his youthful desire to live in books and to be nourished by his reading was a remnant of his now largely completed *Bildung*.

[104] 'Wohl unser aller jugendliche Schwärmerei'. *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Heinrich und Elisabet von Herzogenberg*, ed. Max Kalbeck, 2 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908), ii, 270.

[105] 'Von Jean Paul schwärmte Brahms wieder feurig. Er sagte, daß wir Jungen diesen Mann viel zu wenig kennen.' Heuberger, *Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms*, 83.

[106] *Johannes Brahms: His Life and Letters*, ed. Avins, 715.

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