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Baroque Influence on the Organ Works of Johannes Brahms: Annotated Bibliography

Baroque Influence on the Organ Works of Johannes Brahms

Annotated Bibliography

Bond, Ann. "Brahms Chorale Preludes." *The Organist's Repertory* 112, no. 1543 (1971): 898.

Brahms' 11 Choral Preludes, op. 122 were not written until 1896, one year prior to his death. The final of the of the chorales, *O Welt, ich muss dich lassen*, (O World I must leave you) was the last written. Bond examines the introspection of Brahms at this point in his life as he was composing more serious, religious works. It leads to questions whether Brahms was focusing on the end of his life coming upon him or if he was merely composing in a retrospective style of the great Baroque chorales. Either way, this opened the way for Parry, Karg-Elert, Reger, and possibly a modern revival of chorale prelude composing.

Bozarth, George S., and Walter Frisch. "Brahms, Johannes." *Grove Music Online*. Edited by Deane Root. Accessed 29 October, 2018. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

In this article, Bozarth and Frisch first detail the formative years of Brahms. They include the turning point in which Brahms began composing his major works. Then they discuss the introductions of Brahms to other major composers which lead to his acceptance into the musical world. Finally, they discuss his final years as the death of Clara Schumann became imminent, leading Brahms to begin to consider the meaning of life and death. This article also includes Brahms' piano and organ music, chamber music, orchestral works and concertos, choral works, and leieder and solo vocal ensembles with complete lists of works and their opus numbers.

Bülow, Hans von. *Hans von Bülow's letters to Johannes Brahms*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012.

This book contains letters written between Hans von Bülow and Johannes Brahms beginning in the autumn of 1877, when Bülow was forty-seven and Brahms was forty-four. Bülow met Brahms through a friendship with Joseph Joachim. The book details the friendship between Bülow and Brahms and details many accounts of their meetings and correspondences.

Frisch, Walter, Kevin Karnes and Bard Music Festival. *Brahms and His World*. Edited by Walter Frisch and Kevin C. Carnes. Rev. edited by Bard Music Festival Series. Princeton University Press, 2009.

Frisch compiles a book of essays in four parts to present an in-depth exploration of the life and music of Brahms. Part one includes essays of the life of Johannes Brahms and his work. Part two includes the reception and analysis of Brahms' works. This section focuses on several of his major works, early works, the requiem, symphonies, a capella choral pieces, and *Four Serious Songs*, Op. 121 which was written in conjunction with Op. 122 prior to his death. Part three includes Brahms' memoirs and part four includes the index of his works.

Garratt, James. "The Reception of Bach's Organ Works from Mendelssohn to Brahms. By Russell Stinson." *Music and Letters* 89, no. 3 (2008): 419-421.

In this article, James Garratt reviews Russell Stinson's monograph, "The reception of Bach's Organ Works from Mendelssohn to Brahms." In this review, Garratt states that Stinson has vast knowledge of Brahms and offers great in-sight into the music of Bach

and his nineteenth-century champions. However, Garratt does not believe that Stinson contains the knowledge of Bach's works to present such insight into this monograph. He supports this claim by saying that the notion that Bach's music was romanticized in this period is vague but continues to surface throughout Stinson's work. Garratt believes that sections of the book contain supportive information for the subject but overall he feels that the section on Brahms is the most impressive.

Landis, Raymond Eric. "Developing variation in the Chorale Preludes for Organ, Opus 122 by Johannes Brahms." DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2001.

In his dissertation, Landis asks, "Are the Chorale Preludes simply superb variations on their respective chorale melodies or are they something more?" He then goes on to discuss the Chorale Preludes and the timelines in which they were written. He also supports his opening questions with the belief that Schoenberg clearly discussed developing variations with a basic unit, or motive, and variation on the basic motive. He continues by showing supportive works by Brahms that develop variations on basic motives and includes Schoenberg's analysis of "O Tod" from *Four Serious Songs* to support the claim of Chorale Preludes being superb variations.

McKenna, Amy ed. *100 Most Influential Musicians of All Time*. Chicago: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2010.

This article discusses the life of Johannes Brahms as a German composer and pianist. It discusses the relationship with Robert and Clara Schumann which led to the advancement of Brahms' musical career. The article discusses his music beginning with Brahms' early career as a young pianist and music director, his maturity and the writing of his first

symphony that led to his fame, his final years writing for wind and serious songs based on Biblical texts, and his achievements with his master work, *A German Requiem*.

Owen, Barbara. *The Organ Music of Johannes Brahms*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

In this book, Owen states that Brahms' organ works have been regarded by many as an anomaly. It is also believed by some that the organ works of Brahms were a side work and he never really captured the full depth of the organ. Owens goes into the background of Brahms' encounters with organs and organ concerts leading him to meet Robert and Clara Schumann and the profound respect that he and Clara shared toward the organ. Brahms utilized the library of the Schumanns to self-study the works of Bach and became absorbed in counterpoint. This led to deeper study into double counterpoint, canons, fugues, and prelude. From there, Brahms began to play and study the organ to compose correctly for the instrument. In addition to the information regarding Brahms' organ background and music, Owen includes many editions of the organ works, discusses the organs Brahms played, and includes a list of organ transcriptions of works by Brahms.

Roberts, W. Wright. "Brahms: The Organ Works." *Music & Letters* 14, no.2 (1933): 104-111.

In this article, Roberts points out that many composers consider Brahms' "brief saunter" with organ works to merely be a nod to Bach and his works for the "mechanical monster." However, he breaks down several of the most well-known chorales and discusses the craftsmanship portrayed in his works following studies of Bach and his

North German predecessors. He also details the use of counterpoint and fugue based on Bach and Handel in his *German Requiem* and other familiar compositions.

Rochester, Marc. "Complete Organ Music by Brahms and Nicholas Danby." *The Musical Times* 124, no. 1683 (1983): 325. JSTOR.

In this article, Rochester points out that Brahms intended to write a more substantial set of chorales than he composed. However, this proved to be a huge task and Brahms was aware that he would not make it as far as he would like. His final chorale, "O World, I now must Leave You," sums of his feelings of death and awareness that this would be coming soon. His final works concentrate on the Christian belief of the Resurrection and heaven. He then goes on to discuss the complacent, dull and colorless performance of these eleven chorales performed by Nicholas Danby.

Shaw, John Abbott. "The Eleven Chorale Preludes op. 122: Johannes Brahms." M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria (Canada), 1990.

In this Thesis, John Shaw breaks down all eleven chorale preludes written by Johannes Brahms. He takes the time to analyze the chorale melodies and the contrapuntal and harmonic structures of each composition. He also details Brahms attitude toward Christianity and what would lead him to write compositions for a religion he was very much against. Finally, Shaw talks about the organs Brahms may have played, and the registration and performance of each of the chorales.

Stinson, Russell. *J.S. Bach's Great Eighteen Organ Chorales*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

In this book, Stinson discusses The Chorale Motet, Chorale Partita, Ornamental Chorale, Cantus Firmus Chorale, and The Chorale Trio. He then details the significance of these chorales in liturgical and organological context of the music and goes on to discuss each of the eighteen chorales in detail. Stinson breaks down each of the chorales with notes from Bach as to why he chose certain styles, ornamentation, registrations, and even certain chord structures to give a clear understanding that Bach took every detail of each work into consideration as he composed them.

--- *The Reception of Bach's Organ Works from Mendelssohn to Brahms.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Stinson describes Johannes Brahms as the greatest “Bachian” music history has ever known. In this book, Stinson details the great admiration held for Bach by several of the great Romantic composers and the revival of his music that they brought about. The composers discussed are Felix Mendelssohn Bartholody, Robert and Clara Schumann, Franz Lizst, and Johannes Brahms. Of the four composers, Mendelssohn and Brahms had the greatest impact on bringing Bach’s works back into the mainstream music of the nineteenth century. Not only did they both compose in the style of Bach, but Mendelssohn edited and printed Bach’s works, many of which had never been in print.