To refer to Couperin’s *Apothéose de Lully* as an “orchestral suite” (p. 11) is disturbingly misleading. “Grant victory to the king” is not an accurate translation of *Domine salvum fac Regem* (p. 12). Titon du Tillet did not say that Couperin wrote “six grands motets” (p. 12), but rather that he wrote twelve, referring to *une grande quantité de Motets dont douze à grand Chœur*, and Titon’s exact text is given correctly on page 149, again highlighting the editorial sloppiness of the book. All this is discouraging to find in the first twelve pages; the rest of the volume is no better. The nature of the problem here is encapsulated in Tunley’s statement that in France “it could truly be said that most music . . . aspired to the condition of the dance” (p. 9). The word “truly” is the problem.

It gives me no pleasure at all to be unenthusiastic about a book about François Couperin written by someone who so clearly loves this music, but there are so few books about Couperin, and a good one is much needed. An English translation of Olivier Baumont’s monograph, mentioned earlier, would be a step in the right direction: in less space than Tunley’s book it says far more about Couperin, gets the facts right, and offers sound musical judgments.

DAVITT MORONEY

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Margaret Notley’s *Lateness and Brahms* is the first book-length study that engages with the broad range of questions suggested by the topic. At what point in Brahms’s oeuvre does a sense of lateness come to the fore? How can it be characterized? What role did the political, social, and philosophical milieu of late nineteenth-century Vienna play in the formation of this music and the way it was received? How might Brahms’s position as a composer working at the end of an era (both political and cultural) be reflected in his late works and their reception?

The notion of “late” Brahms has a substantial history in the literature. Early authors such as Max Kalbeck and Richard Specht already considered his late music to have a special character. Their discussion of the political and cultural battles that colored the reception of these works in Vienna often reflected their own positions in the resulting journalistic feuds there.1 The next

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generation of scholars usually divided Brahms’s music into three or four style periods and often suppressed its political associations. Typical are studies by August Sturck, who located a third and last period in 1883, with the composition of the Third Symphony, Op. 90, or Karl Geiringer, who proposed a fourth and last style period beginning in 1890, after Brahms’s String Quintet, Op. 111. Sturck’s framing of the broad issues of Brahms’s late style as “a still sharper concentration of form and content, proceeding from the most highly intensified technical refinement” is characteristic of most midcentury authors’ views.\(^2\) Some recent scholars have looked for new ways to understand Brahms’s late style. Siegfried Kross associated Brahms’s late works with changes in the balance among genres and noted a new concentration on duo sonatas.\(^3\) And Notley herself, in her 1992 dissertation, observed a new approach to composition in four chamber works either begun or completed at Thun in the summer of 1886: the Cello Sonata, Op. 99, Violin Sonatas, Opp. 100 and 108, and Piano Trio, Op. 101. These she characterized as being written “in a spare new style that to contemporaneous listeners sounded less contrived than [Brahms’s] earlier styles.”\(^4\)

Notley’s emphasis on stylistic change as heard by “contemporaneous listeners” is a key methodological distinction in her approach to late Brahms. In her first, fifth, and sixth chapters, which are somewhat indebted to previously published articles, Notley aims to recover those listeners’ political, social, and generic contexts for receiving Brahms’s late chamber music.\(^5\) In chapter 1, for example, “Brahms as Liberal, Bruckner as Other,” she addresses the connections between Vienna’s music criticism and its politics. In the so-called Brahms-Bruckner controversy, Brahms’s music, and to a considerable degree, Brahms himself, came to be identified with the Liberal party that had been in power in Vienna since 1867. For many in Vienna in the 1880s, liberalism represented cultural, linguistic, and bureaucratic German hegemony; rationalism; an emancipated and assimilated Jewish community; the concentration of political power in the hands of a wealthy, highly educated elite; unrestrained capitalism; and, most importantly, the limitation of voting rights to men of wealth


and property. Bruckner’s music came to be identified with the new, “sharпер-
key” politics of Georg von Schönerer and his followers, who sought political
advantage by extending the franchise to lower socioeconomic classes by any
means possible. These included an emotionally appealing, racialist brand of
pan-German nationalism and an increasingly racial anti-Semitism, with which
Richard Wagner’s anti-Semitism was closely associated. The logical, cerebral,
rationalist qualities of Brahms’s music, especially his chamber music, were as-
sociated with the liberal worldview; the more immediately emotional, some-
times elementally powerful music of Bruckner was associated with the
ascendant socialist and nationalist political movements. Press organs and their
music critics lined up along the political divide. Papers such as the liberal Neue
freie Presse, staffed by the likes of Kalbeck and Eduard Hanslick, championed
Brahms, while papers of the political opposition such as the Ostdeutsche
Rundschau supported Bruckner through reviews by August Göllerich or
Camillo Horn. Notley paints a compelling picture of this situation, drawing
on a detailed study of contemporaneous concert reviews that began with her
dissertation research, but which has been vastly expanded by subsequent in-
vestigations. Her recent work on Bruckner, for example, has broadened her
context for viewing Brahms’s place in Vienna’s political and social milieu. The
result is the recovery of a context for Brahms’s late works that was assumed,
but not objectively articulated, by some early Brahms scholars; that was largely
suppressed, either methodologically or possibly even for political reasons, by
later writers; and that arguably played a significant role in the formation of
Brahms’s late style.

In Lateness and Brahms, as earlier in her dissertation, Notley limits the dis-
cussion of repertoire to Brahms’s chamber music. While her dissertation pri-
marily explored the four works mentioned above, here she expands her focus
to include the Clarinet Trio, Op. 114, the Clarinet Quintet, Op. 115, and the

6. Notley’s dissertation incorporated the first systematic review of the critical reception of
Brahms’s music in the Viennese press in the 1880s and 1890s. Angelika Horstmann’s study of
Brahms reviews stops at the year 1880; see Horstmann, Untersuchungen zur Brahms-Rezeption
music criticism covers only the very end of the period with which Notley is concerned, but
explores a wider range of critical writing, providing a perspective on Brahms’s relative importance
in the Viennese critical conversation; see McColl, Music Criticism in Vienna 1896–1897: Critically
Aufführungen der ersten Symphonie op. 68 von Johannes Brahms in Wien: Studien zur Wiener
Brahms-Rezeption,” in Brahms-Kongress Wien 1983, ed. Susanne Antonicek and Otto Biba,

Hawkshaw and Timothy L. Jackson, 54–71 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and
idem, “Formal Process as Spiritual Progress: The Symphonic Slow Movements,” in The Cam-
bridge Companion to Bruckner, ed. John Williamson, 190–204 (New York: Cambridge University
This repertoire accords well with her emphasis on the social and political context for late Brahms, since the medium of chamber music, with its elitist associations, was closely tied to liberalism in Vienna. The symphony, as a more public genre, was often associated with wider democratization. These issues around genre come most to the fore in chapter 5, “Volksconcerete and Concepts of Genre in Brahms’s Vienna.” In chapter 6, “Adagios in Brahms’s Late Chamber Music,” Notley explores the importance of the adagio as the expressive center of late-century multimovement works, and suggests that the monumentality of Bruckner’s symphonic adagios, and particularly the adagio of his String Quintet, pushed Brahms to confront the lighter, intermezzo-like quality of his own slow movements, leading him in his last years to seek a more ambitious adagio that aimed to articulate the sublime, as prefigured in the late chamber music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Notley’s analytical work in Lateness and Brahms addresses the question: where can we find signs of “renewal” in Brahms’s approach to the late chamber works with clarinet? In the third chapter, “Themes and First Movements: Questions of Lateness and Individualism,” she proposes that Brahms sought to renew the oppositional relationship between thematic and nonthematic material in a classical-style work, such as the first movement of Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony, by creating concomitant relationships based on other kinds of opposition in his own first movements. At the beginning of the Clarinet Trio, for example, she notes an initial area where plagal harmonic relationships establish key and articulate cadences—what she terms “semiautonomous plagal harmony” (p. 93)—and a succeeding area using traditional dominant-tonic relationships to accomplish these things. She then explores the ramifications of this opposition for the movement as a whole, concluding that Brahms “places the most extended passages based on purely plagal harmony at the movement’s beginning and end, with briefer moments in the development section, the plagal half-cadence that closes the exposition, and the a’ sections of both the exposition and recapitulation” (p. 94). In doing so, Notley argues, Brahms conveys “late-style alienation” through the intrusion of the “otherness” of plagal areas into a form that listeners would expect to be defined by more traditional harmonic syntax (pp. 96–97). In a similar vein, in the first movement of the Clarinet Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, no. 1, she posits an “opposition between chordal and linear styles” that “offers a substitute for that between thematic and nonthematic” writing. “Since chordal style

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8. Perhaps Notley passed over the second version of the Piano Trio, Op. 8, which Brahms revised in the summer of 1889, because so much of the music originated at a different place and time—Düsseldorf, 1854. For a comparative study of the late and early versions of this work, see Franz Zaunschirm, Der frühe und der späte Brahms: Eine Fallstudie anhand der autographen Korrekturen und gedruckten Fassungen zum Trio Nr. 1 für Klavier, Violine und Violoncello opus 8 (Hamburg: Karl Dieter Wagner, 1988).
tends to sound weightier than linear style, moving between one and the other creates a kind of formal rhythm analogous to that offered by moving between thematic and nonthematic passages” (p. 104). While some readers might quibble about analytical details, in general this very original idea about Brahms’s approach to form and content in his late works is convincingly argued.

In chapter 4, “Music Pedagogy, Musicology, and Brahms’s Collection of Octaves and Fifths: Historical Decline, Personal Renewal,” Notley describes how Brahms’s encounter with several articles related to the villanelle in the *Vierteljahrschrift für Musikwissenschaft* prompted his return to work in the 1890s on a manuscript collection of examples of parallel fifths and octaves that had previously occupied him in the 1860s. After thoroughly reviewing the sources for the collection, Brahms’s categorization of the examples, and his engagement with the question of parallel fifths and octaves in other contexts, such as correspondence with musicians in his circle, Notley posits that “reen-gagement with various voice-leading situations represented in his manuscript left its mark on the part-writing in the F minor and E-flat major Clarinet Sonatas” (pp. 136–37), pieces written during his renewed work on the collection. To demonstrate that this essentially musicological undertaking became a source of compositional renewal for Brahms, Notley examines sets of parallel fifths in the clarinet sonatas, showing their similarities to examples in Brahms’s collection and discussing how the fifths are made good by his manipulation of voice leading, rhythm, or texture. For example, she observes that the bass and upper part in the piano in measures 23–24 of the second movement of the Clarinet Sonata in F Minor (A♭ descending to D♭ in the bass, with E♭ ascending to A♭ in the treble) “do not sound as parallel fifths” (p. 139), since Brahms placed an eighth rest in the bass between the A♭ and D♭. The contrary motion between the parts is also an important factor in making these fifths good. However, Brahms had known for a long time how to disguise parallel fifths by contrary motion and by various other rhythmic and textural means, and had put this knowledge to work throughout his oeuvre. Consider, for example, the very beautiful parallel fifths by contrary motion in measure 218 of the first


10. I do not agree with Notley that “the ‘real’ voice-leading in the piano treble here is from E-flat to F: the A-flat sounds as an inner voice temporarily displaced up an octave” (pp. 139–40). Brahms marked the piano part p dolce, but the clarinet part only p, suggesting that he considered the treble of the piano to be the principal melodic voice. It may be that Notley’s remark presupposes a Schenkerian perspective. As a practical matter, however, Brahms must have been concerned with note-to-note counterpoint wherever parallel fifths were at issue.
movement of the Violin Sonata in A Major Op. 100 (D descending to E in the bass, A ascending to B in the piano’s treble voice). Conceptually, these fifths are not unlike the ones in Notley’s example, but the violin sonata was, of course, written well before Brahms’s reengagement with his octaves and fifths manuscript in the 1890s. To cite another case, Notley points out “undeniable parallel fifths between the clarinet and piano left hand: F over B-flat to B-flat over E-flat” (p. 141) in measures 52–53 of the second movement of the Clarinet Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 120, no. 2. Very similar parallel fifths occur, however, in mm. 314–16 of the last movement of Brahms’s Serenade, Op. 11, although in the serenade they are more artfully disguised, occurring over a pedal and with interpolated rests. The serenade dates from 1857–58, that is, even before Brahms’s initial work on his octaves and fifths manuscript.

It may very well be true that Brahms’s reengagement with this voice-leading conceit was in some way a source of renewal for him compositionally. I am more convinced, however, by the sheer number of examples Notley has assembled from the clarinet sonatas than by the particular contrapuntal strategies Brahms used to make the parallels good, or the relationships of those strategies to examples in Brahms’s octaves and fifths manuscript. Certainly, though, Notley’s inventive approach to this subject serves to remind us of how frequently and how subtly Brahms pushed his contrapuntal art to the very limits of the rules he so deeply respected.

The six essays that form the main body of *Lateness and Brahms* are flanked by an introduction that deals with methodology and contextualizes some issues explored later, and an epilogue, “The Twilight of Liberalism.” This last chapter is virtually a seventh essay, which, among other things, presents new documentary evidence of Brahms’s support for charitable organizations in Vienna with links to its Jewish community, providing another important confirmation of his political outlook.

In addition to the many and varied issues Notley addresses, she also interweaves, throughout the text, the thoughts of Theodor Adorno and, less prominently, several other Marxist critics, about Brahms or the concept of lateness. Adorno is best known in musical circles for his critical writings about Beethoven—particularly late Beethoven—and about Schoenberg. He didn’t have a great deal to say about Brahms by comparison, although Brahms is arguably the most logical transitional figure linking Beethoven and Schoenberg.

11. The corresponding fifths in the exposition of the violin sonata are in m. 82. One finds what amounts to a mirror inversion of these fifths in mm. 29–30 of Brahms’s Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, no. 2, between the upper-voice melody and the bass. Daniel Beller-McKenna points out how the melody at this point echoes the opening of the intermezzo both motivically and in its insistence on a plagal harmonization of the melody tone A, and it is precisely this voice leading that produces the fifths. A tonic-chord conclusion for this motive is delayed until m. 48, the end of the A section of the ternary form, where Brahms also “corrected” the fifths. See Daniel Beller-McKenna, “Reminiscence in Brahms’s Late Intermezzi,” *American Brahms Society Newsletter* 22, no. 2 (Autumn 2004): 6–9.
However, Notley regards Adorno, as well as other Marxist critics such as Ernst Krenek, Paul Bekker, and the literary critic Georg Lukács, as being uncommonly well positioned to critique period-historical lateness, especially with regard to the common-practice period of tonal music that corresponds historically with the ascent of European capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the simultaneous growth of educated middle-class values in relation to artistic culture. In threading the thinking of these writers through her narrative, Notley is consciously filling a lacuna. “No one thus far,” she writes, “has given sustained attention to implications for Brahms studies” (p. 6) of these writers’ ideas. In an almost dialogic process, Notley inserts their thinking into her narrative and then responds with her own perspective, demonstrating in a considerable number of critical vignettes the potential for further work along these lines.

Brahms spent much of his life being compared to Beethoven in private circles and in the press, so it is ironic that Lateness and Brahms should come close on the heels of three important studies of late Beethoven. (It is as if poor Brahms cannot get out of Beethoven’s shadow, even on the shelves of the library.) In Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination (2003), Maynard Solomon’s diverse essays illuminate Beethoven’s late style from a primarily biographical point of view. Stephen Rumph’s Beethoven after Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works (2004) places Beethoven’s late style in the context of the altered social and political climate of the Congress of Vienna. Finally, in Music as Philosophy (2006), Michael Spitzer views Beethoven’s late style through the lens of Adorno’s writings, positing the unique usefulness of Beethoven’s late works as objects of philosophical discourse.12 All three authors incorporate thoughtful analyses of Beethoven’s late music. As if to compensate for this state of affairs, Notley considers late Brahms from the biographical, historical, political, social, philosophical, and analytical perspectives simultaneously, an approach that must have posed daunting organizational challenges, but has yielded a book uncommonly rich in original observations about this music and its contexts in fin-de-siècle Vienna.13

WILLIAM P. HORNE
