

Louisville Orchestra Presents:

BRAHMS' THIRD

Edvard GRIEG: Piano Concerto in A Minor
Johannes BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3





Louisville Orchestra Presents: BRAHMS' THIRD

LISTENING GUIDE

Johannes BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3

I. Allegro con brio

II. Andante

III. Poco allegretto

LISTENING GUIDE

Edvard GRIEG: Piano Concerto

I. Allegro Molto Moderato

II. Adagio

III. Allegro Moderato Molto e Marcato

KEY TERMS

Musical Monogram: is a short and often repeated musical figure, fragment, or succession of notes that represents a special importance to the composer. Musical monograms are often the composer's initials or that of a close friend or love one.

Absolute Music: instrumental music with meaning unrelated to the title, text, or program. Music meant to be heard, thought of, and understood without significant context.

Programmatic Music: instrumental music that intends to portray a specific story, image, concept.

Folk Tune: a popular vocal or instrumental melody of a folk song.

Johannes BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3

TIMELINE

1833 – Born Hamburg, Germany

1853 - Brahms meets Clara and Robert Schumann while on tour and receives overwhelming public support and praise for his talents

1856 - death of Robert Schumann

1883 –Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performs the world premeire

1896 – death of Clara Schumann

1897 - death of Brahms in Vienna, Austria

FAST FACTS

- Brahms was constantly compared to Beethoven (1770 - 1827). His fear of not living up to public expectations prevented him from sharing his first symphony until the age of 43. He began working on his first symphony in his 20s and spent the following two decades editing the composition.
- Brahms' 3rd Symphony is the shortest symphony of the four he wrote, with a playing time usually between 30 to 40 minutes.
- In the Romantic era, there was a substantial increase of **programmatic music**. Johannes Brahms four symphonies are popular examples of **absolute music** produced during the emergence of **programmatic music**.

MUSICAL GEOGRAPHY



Hamburg, Germany



Vienna, Austria

Johannes BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3

MORE ABOUT THE PIECE

The 3rd symphony's opening material features Brahms' **musical monogram** F–A–F. The notes F–A-flat–F represents the fifty-year-old bachelor's motto "Frei aber froh" ("free but happy".)

This motto was a play on words to the motto of famous violinist and friend Joseph Joachim. Joachim's **musical monogram** featured the notes F–A–E, which represents his often repeated motto

"Frei aber einsam" ("Free, but lonely".)



"All the movements seem to be of one piece, one beat of the heart."

-Clara Schumann

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE MUSIC

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Clara Schumann was one of the most popular concert pianist of the 19th century. She used her fame to popularize the repertoire of her longtime friend Johannes Brahms and husband Robert Schumann. A composer in her own right, Schumann often neglected her own talents to selflessly promote compositions of her male counterparts she felt needed to be championed.

At a time when women were undervalued, Clara Schumann made great strides to have more female soloists and composers be accepted and taken seriously as contributors to the art form.

Instrumental in Brahms' compositions and edits, she often sent unfiltered him criticism when she believed Brahms could produce more meaningful work. She was the first person to receive a copy of Brahms' 3rd Symphony, which she received as a piano reduction.

Edvard GRIEG: Piano Concerto in A Minor



THE WOMAN BEHIND THE MUSIC cont.

Edvard Grieg's first time hearing Robert Schumann's piano concerto was a performance by his wife Clara Schumann. Grieg wrote about Schumann's concerto: "Inspired from beginning to end, it stands unparalleled in music literature and astonishes us as much by its originality as by its noble disdain of an extravert, virtuoso style."

Both concertos share the A Minor tonality and open with big orchestral chords, followed flashy runs up and down the keyboard. Similar in spirit only, Grieg's and Schumann's piano concertos differ due to Grieg's quest to find a unique sound that incorporates Norwegian **folk tunes**.

TIMELINE

1843 - Born in Bergen, Norway

1868 - Wrote his piano concerto in Søllerød, Denmark

1869 - World Premiere: Holger Simon Paulli led the orchestra of the Royal Theater in Copenhagen with pianist Edmund Neupert

1907 – Death of Grieg in Bergen, Norway

"Composers with the stature of a Bach or Beethoven have erected grand churches and temples. I have always wished to build villages: places where people can feel happy and comfortable . . . the music of my own country has been my model."

- Grieg