

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PIANO INTERMEZZO FROM THE NINETEENTH
TO TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

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Michelle Richardson
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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my loving husband, Matt, my piano teacher, Dr. Anna Balakerskaia,
and my parents, Barry and Deborah Laurent.

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I would like to thank my husband, Matt, for his never-ending support in this project throughout the years and while we raise our two young boys. Thank you to Dr. Green for helping me articulate my ideas and giving me so much advice in this long process. Thank you to my parents, family, and friends for all your love and support, and for listening with a smile while I talked about my research. And especially, thank you to my teacher, Dr. Anna Balakerskaia, for her caring guidance in my life through so many years.

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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PIANO INTERMEZZO FROM THE NINETEENTH TO TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

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George Mason University, 2022

Dissertation Director: Dr. Emily Green

The piano intermezzos of Brahms are well known in piano repertoire; frequently taught, performed, and analyzed. Despite interest in these works, the reasons the title intermezzo would have appealed to Brahms as the name for the majority of his late piano character pieces remains obscure. This dissertation explores the use of the title intermezzo in piano repertoire from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, with the goals of defining the genre and tracing the use of these pieces throughout history. An introductory section provides the background of the word intermezzo and relevant literature. The first chapter explores the use of piano intermezzos during the nineteenth century, to show that Brahms was not original in his choice of title, as the term was flexibly used by many composers during this century. Schumann was perhaps the first piano composer to use this title in piano music, and subsequently many other composers used intermezzos as a substitute for scherzo movements, inner movements of piano sets, or entire piano cycles. The second chapter analyzes how intermezzos were adapted into twentieth century classical and entertainment music, using a wider geographical sphere of composers. The third chapter explores twentieth to twenty-first century intermezzos,

many of which are uniquely original works and quite progressive. Some intermezzos fall within the style periods in this century, being influenced by neoclassicism, serialism, and neoromanticism; others stand out as being specifically influenced by Brahms and his intermezzos. The collection and analysis of these works provides the first comprehensive survey of intermezzos as a genre in piano music, to clarify the origins and development of these works from the nineteenth century to today.

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this dissertation began when I was learning Brahms's Op. 118 and encountered the title *intermezzo*. The Italian title seemed odd, whereas the other pieces titled *ballade* and *romanze* had familiar romantic connotations to me. I was aware of Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, perhaps the most famous comic opera *intermezzo* and was puzzled that such dissimilar works could share a title. I began my research, and the formation of this dissertation took shape. From what I could find, a comprehensive collection of piano *intermezzos* has never been created, nor has this genre been thoroughly examined in keyboard music. Similar studies exist for opera *intermezzos* and are common in almost every other genre of piano music. Researching piano *intermezzos* is valuable for a more thorough representation of keyboard music. Widening our scope of these pieces outside of Brahms revives works that could serve performance and pedagogical value. My research examines the range of nineteenth- to twenty-first-century piano *intermezzos*, to survey, organize, and compare the compositional practices within this genre.

In 1916, Jeffrey Pulver made a notable attempt to organize the history of the opera *intermezzo*, a musical term that can trace its principles to the early history of dramatic plays. He described his research into the task as feeling like a jungle, where “you attempt to follow a young shoot to its parent stem, and thence to its root; you find

yourself baffled and baulked at every term.”¹ Pulver summarized intermezzo pieces as being “a simple madrigal, an orchestral work, a complete comic opera, or a ballet, according to the period.”² Interestingly, Pulver’s research does not mention that an intermezzo could also refer to a keyboard piece, and in the realm of keyboard literature, the history and practice of intermezzos are similarly difficult to organize.

Exactly what an intermezzo referred to varied by region and time period. The etymological roots of the *intermezzo* stretch as far back as musical drama itself. Charles Burney describes *intermezzi* (plural) as derivative of the Roman *satirae*, where farces were performed during comedies or pious pieces.³ Pulver traces the Italian intermezzos as derivatives of fifteenth century *interludium*, *intermedium*, or *intermedios*, which existed as intermediary works between staged dramas. These works could have been sung, played, or acted, and served as entertainment while performers changed costume or took time to rest.⁴ Other sixteenth-century Italian *intermezzi* accompanied banquets and festivities as sets of ensemble pieces.⁵ However, the later seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Italian *intermezzo* relates to the miniature comic operas that were performed in between acts of *opera seria*. These pieces became popular enough to be

¹ Jeffrey Pulver, “The Intermezzi of the Opera,” *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 43 (1916): 139. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/765617>.

² Pulver, 160.

³ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, ed. Frank Mercer (Harcourt, NY: Brace and Company, 1935) <https://archive.org/>accessed on 7/20/2021, 597.

⁴ Pulver, 141.

⁵ Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, (Cambridge: Willi Apel, 1972), 417. The feast at the wedding of Ferdinand de’ Medici and Christine of Lorraine had *intermedi* performed with a comedy, *La Pellegrina*. The pieces include madrigals, solo songs, and ballets with instrumental accompaniment and were like individual scenes.

separated from the original opera and performed on their own, giving rise to the genre of *opera buffa*.⁶

Other translations of this title refer to similar and original musical types. The French *intermède* has an equally complex history dating from the sixteenth century. These works were more often ballet-style pieces during the seventeenth century but became referred to as the translation for the Italian equivalent of an intermezzo during the eighteenth century *opera buffa*.⁷ The English *interludes* referred to morality plays in the sixteenth century and various other types of dramatic plays across later centuries.⁸ English psalm interludes were written since the seventeenth century for organ to accompany lines of psalms in religious services.⁹ In many of these cases, intermezzo pieces were intended to entertain and provided variety.

Brahms's keyboard intermezzos were published at the end of the nineteenth century and were widely known pieces by the time of Pulver's article in the early twentieth century. As in the history of opera, intermezzos were employed in the nineteenth century as various inner movements in symphonies and chamber music, often acting as a trio movement during the nineteenth century, or occasionally as an individual movement. Attempting a clarification of the intermezzo is difficult because it was not

⁶ Apel, 417. Notably the famous intermezzo, *La Serva padrona*, was composed by Pergolesi composed in 1733, first within his serious opera *Il Prigionero superbo* and later existed independently.

⁷ James R. Anthony and Elizabeth C. Bartlet, "Intermède," (Grove Music Online, 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013829>.

⁸ Pulver, 141.

⁹ John Caldwell, "Psalm interlude," (Grove Music Online, 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000022470>

used in a singular way by the end of the nineteenth century, nor has it been examined into the twentieth and twenty first centuries.

This study focuses mainly on the *intermezzo* as a piano character piece. I refer to the plural form of these works as *intermezzos* rather than the Italian plural, *intermezzi*, except in the rare cases in which a composer has used that specific Italian title. Early twentieth century dictionaries give the briefest definitions to the intermezzo in keyboard music, mainly focusing on Schumann and Brahms's works. Hugo Reimann's, *Dictionary of Music* (1908) credits Schumann as possibly the first to use the term as a "connected series of pianoforte pieces (Op.4) without any reference to the word-meaning." Riemann continues to state that Schumann "perhaps regarded them as hors d'oeuvre, intermediate numbers for a concert programme" and that "Heller and Brahms have also made use of the title."¹⁰ Willi Appel in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (1972) gives a definition of the intermezzo as "one of the numerous titles of the nineteenth-century character pieces, suggestive of the somewhat casual origin of a piece, as if it were composed between works of greater importance (Schumann and Brahms)."¹¹ Maurice Brown's definition in *Grove Music Online* (2001) provides the most comprehensive and recent definition of the intermezzo in keyboard music, as well as some historical explanation. Brown elaborates on the difficulty of understanding the origination of Schumann's intermezzos. While Schumann frequently used the title, he "may have conceived it in terms of the earlier tradition of the comic intermezzo," as synonymous with a trio movement, or as a

¹⁰ Hugo Riemann and J.S. Shedlock, *Dictionary of Music*. Augener Ltd., (1908): 371, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/pst.000005135707> (accessed March 2019).

¹¹ Apel, 418.

completely original piano cycle in his Op. 4 *Intermezzi*.¹² No further context of intermezzo pieces in the nineteenth century has been researched or mentioned.

Literature on Schumann and Brahms's intermezzos was helpful in the formation of the first chapter. Erika Reimann's *Schumann's Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul* provides a thorough analysis of Schumann's Op. 4 *Intermezzi*, noting Schumann's tendency to "divert" the listener's expectations.¹³ Camila Cai's dissertation, "Brahms' Short, Late Piano Pieces-- Opus Numbers 116-119: A Source Study, An Analysis and Performance Practice (Intermezzo, Capriccio, Rhapsody)," is also particularly helpful for understanding the context of these significant nineteenth-century intermezzos amongst the nineteenth-century character piece genre. Walter Frisch's article "Brahms: From Classical to Modern" also provides a useful overview of Brahms's intermezzos during the nineteenth century.¹⁴

Some twentieth-century scholarship on Brahms describes a history of his compositional influence. Frisch's article "The 'Brahms Fog': On Tracing Brahmsian Influence" outlines many of the compositional techniques that early twentieth-century piano composers adapted into their works.¹⁵ Frisch's style of analysis was a helpful model for many of my examples. Peter Burkholder's article "Museum Pieces: The

¹² Maurice J.E. Brown, "Intermezzo (iii)," (Grove Music Online 2001) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.mutext.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013835>.

¹³ Erika Reiman, Erika, *Schumann's Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul*, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004) 48-49.

¹⁴ Walter Frisch, "Brahms: From Classical to Modern," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. Larry Todd (New York: Routledge, 1990).

¹⁵ Walter Frisch, "Reger's Bach and Historicist Modernism," *nineteenth-Century Music* 25, no. 2-3 (2001): 296, (April 20, 2020). doi:10.1525/nem.2001.25.2-3.296.

Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years” is another helpful source on the historical backdrop of many twentieth-century intermezzo examples by non-European composers.¹⁶

There is far less scholarly attention given to intermezzos outside of the Schumann/Brahms output. Pierre Guillot’s *Hommage au compositeur Alexandre Tansman* includes a brief overview of Tansman’s 24 *Intermezzi*, noting their connection to Brahms’ aesthetic and overall uniqueness.¹⁷ Kyung-Ah Noh’s dissertation is an in-depth analysis of Binkerd’s *Intermezzo* in relationship to Brahms’ Op. 118 No. 1 *Intermezzo*, while Yu-Ching Chin’s dissertation provides a useful analysis of Rochberg’s No. 2 *Intermezzo* in connection to a Brahmsian compositional style.¹⁸

My work here compares overall musical styles used in intermezzos across the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. Comparing broader aspects of tempi, dynamics, and overall pianism creates a bird’s eye approach to the vast amount of music covered and allows for organization into time periods and stylistic groupings. Each chapter has its own method of organization unique to the time and pieces composed. While providing context for the history and practice of piano intermezzos, this dissertation also provides a catalog of intermezzos as a scholarly resource in an Appendix. Unfortunately, uncovering

¹⁶ J. Peter Burkholder, "Museum Pieces: The Historicist Mainstream in Music of the Last Hundred Years," *The Journal of Musicology* 2, no. 2 (1983): 115-34. <http://doi:10.2307/763802>.

¹⁷ Pierre Guillot, *Hommage au compositeur Alexandre Tansman: (1897-1986)*, (Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000).

¹⁸ Kyung-Ah Noh, "Gordon Binkerd's 'Intermezzo' from 'Essays for the Piano' (1976): A Comprehensive Analysis of Brahmsian Compositional Influences and Stylistic Elements," (diss., University of North Texas, 2014); Yu-Ching Chin, "A Recording and Performer's Analysis of 'Partita-Variations for Piano Solo'" by George Rochberg," (diss., Ball State University, 2012).

every single intermezzo written since the nineteenth century is a difficult and never-ending task; it is inevitable that I have missed some piano intermezzos.¹⁹ The most important intermezzos included as chapter examples are works that best exhibit the style and time period or stand out as particularly unique. In cases where multiple works could have served as examples, I purposefully chose to include underrepresented composers. I have limited my survey to the character piece labeled as an intermezzo, rather than include *interludium*, *intermedios*, *interludes*, and *intermèdes* in this survey. While these titles were applied to piano pieces during these years, there was less evidence of their significance in piano repertoire. From my research, the German use of the *intermezzo* was applied to a far greater number of piano pieces and adopted widely in Europe. Aside from a few examples, I have not included intermezzos from other instrumental repertoire and vocal repertoire during the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. I refer to non-piano pieces only when particularly relevant. There may or may not be a Brahms association to the various other instrumental and vocal examples from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries; a study of the title and its use in other musical genres may show different conclusions.

The first chapter of this dissertation explores the range of intermezzo pieces during the nineteenth century. My findings show that the character piece *intermezzo* was not common until the mid to late-nineteenth century. Earliest examples of piano intermezzos appear in sonata cycles from solo piano and piano chamber repertoire. Examples show that intermezzos could be connecting movements or self-contained within cycles. While there exists a connection to the scherzo movement, intermezzo movements were more flexible, not always adhering to scherzo form or style. Organizing

¹⁹ For a complete collection of the intermezzos please see the Appendix.

the various styles of intermezzo between a *scherzo* and *lyrical* style shows how flexible this piece was throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Schumann is the first to apply this term in his early piano cycles and character pieces, more often associating this term with a *scherzo* style. Later nineteenth-century European composers also use this title in various presentations of cycles, sets, or individual pieces. Intermezzos became more popular throughout the century. Intermezzos are present in amateur pieces as well as more virtuosic and experimental works. Brahms's intermezzos stand out among other examples, notably in their consistency of mood, style, and lyrical treatment. By the end of the nineteenth century, the piano intermezzo develops into a self-contained work, not reliant on its outer movements.

The second chapter explores intermezzos from the early twentieth century, the time of the most prolific amount of intermezzo publications. These intermezzos are organized between concert and entertainment genres, and the title becomes even more generalized than in the nineteenth century. Within the *concert* genre, intermezzos continue traditions from the nineteenth century. Many *concert* intermezzos from this time follow a Brahms romantic tradition in either similar compositional style and/or direct imitation. A trend of more lyrical style pieces is notable, while the connecting intermezzo movement is rare. *Entertainment* intermezzos are usually individual pieces, sometimes in classical idioms or in popular dance styles, even ragtime. In some cases, entertainment intermezzos draw on exoticist styles, appropriating non-European cultures to pique consumer interest. Thus, the intermezzo title becomes more of a cliché rather than musically indicative of a particular style during this time.

The final chapter analyzes piano intermezzos following about 1920 to present day. The popularity of entertainment intermezzos declines, and intermezzos were more often composed for educated, classical music audiences. I organize this chapter based on the first half of the century from 1920-1950, and then more recent works from 1950 to today. Intermezzos from prior to 1950 are often neoclassical and avoid romanticism by using the title in a general sense, exhibiting modernism and experimentation within a broader classical tradition. Following 1950, intermezzos continue to show progressive influences. Many intermezzos composed during this time were neoromantic. All these works vary in tonal approaches and modern trends and some neoromantic intermezzos sound indistinguishable from their nineteenth century's counterparts. Notably, by the later twentieth century, references to Brahms become more common, either with title homages, preface commentary, and/or musical quotations. Examples from this chapter show how Brahms continues to have a legacy in this genre, often providing the stylistic boundaries for the piano intermezzo throughout the twentieth century to today.

CHAPTER ONE

Early Nineteenth Century: Intermezzos in Sonata Cycles

In 1789, Charles Burney reflected on Haydn's variety of writing styles in a particularly colorful way:

There is a general cheerfulness and good humour in Haydn's allegros, which exhilarate every hearer. But his adagios are often so sublime in ideas and the harmony in which they are clad, that though played by inarticulate instruments, they have a more pathetic effect on my feelings, than the finest opera air united with the most exquisite poetry. He has likewise movements that are sportive, *folatres*, and even grotesque, for the sake of variety; but they are only the *entre-mets*, or rather *intermezzi*, between the serious business of his other movements.²⁰

Charles Burney was possibly the first to reapply the term *intermezzo* to instrumental movements in the late 18th century. He describes the ability of Haydn's music to vary considerably between comic and serious, and the various movements in which these styles are expected, and reveals a late eighteenth century opinion of how an intermezzo could be defined in instrumental music. His sentiments outline early performance practice for piano intermezzos, yet do not predict the development of the piano intermezzo into nineteenth-century piano music. While early century intermezzos were dependent on surrounding musical entities, intermezzos in the middle to later part of the century

²⁰ Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, 960.

became less restricted to these associations, especially in piano character pieces, in which they became increasingly more serious.

Throughout the nineteenth century, piano intermezzos developed from a genre of light supportive pieces to weightier individualized pieces. The earliest examples of intermezzos in piano music are found in sonata cycles and reflect Burney's sentiments. These intermezzos were less substantial than other "serious" lengthier movements; most of these pieces are short inner movements. In some cases, these intermezzos were connecting movements, preceding a movement without a break. Overall, they were pieces that required the surrounding movements for musical significance and balance of form. In terms of musical style, early intermezzos retained a lighthearted association, being more comical and jesting. In some sonatas intermezzos replace scherzos, and in others they even appear alongside scherzos. Thus an intermezzo and scherzo were not used synonymously. Additionally, an intermezzo's role was solely for the "sake of variety." Intermezzos would provide contrast from other movements, thus their style was a direct reaction to the style and weight of the surrounding movements.

An examination of the earliest appearance of intermezzos shows that intermezzo movements were often shorter than scherzo movements and had a more flexible form. In some cases, they could serve like an introduction. The earliest example I could find is the intermezzo from Jan Ladislav Dussek's piano Sonata No.3, Op. 35, Movement 3 (1798), which is only 14 bars long. Following the quiet ending of an *adagio* second movement in Eb major, this intermezzo begins abruptly in C minor with fast melodic material that modulates to an ending on a G major chord, preparing for the final movement in C Major

(Example 1.1 below).²¹ Like a written improvisation, the form is composed entirely of transitory material.



Example 1.1 Dussek Sonata No. 3, Op. 35, m. 79-92 (1798).

More self-contained intermezzos can be found in other instrumental cycles, often in place of a traditional scherzo. Mendelssohn occasionally chose intermezzos to replace scherzo movements in sonata cycles but did not abandon scherzo titles either. Outside the realm of solo piano music, another early example of this title is found in Mendelssohn's early piano quartets. Mendelssohn composed the Piano Quartets Op. 1-3 between 1822 and 1824. The early opus works all contain four movements, each with a short and quick-tempo third movement, yet none of these third movements are labeled the same.

²¹ Schumann also chose the title intermezzo for the inner movement in his Piano Concerto Op. 54 written in 1845. The second movement intermezzo is a short, five-minute repose that ends as an attacca to the last movement.

Interestingly, Mendelssohn chooses a traditional scherzo for the first quartet, an intermezzo for the second quartet, and abandons both titles for the third quartet, only providing a tempo marking. The intermezzo from Op. 2 is the shortest in length of all the different quartet movements. The opening 8 bar theme is simple, presented first in piano, then repeated in the strings. A repeated development-like section on A material follows, with moments of transition that don't seem to ever culminate into a true B theme. The movement does not repeat any of the opening material to close; rather it ends with an extension of closing material from the opening section in a lengthy coda. The elaboration of ending material takes a surprise journey through a succession of different keys, finally ending in the return key of f minor. This closing coda section is a third of the total piece length, which is unexpected and off-balance.

When comparing the intermezzo from Piano Quartet Op. 2 with the other third movements of the first three piano quartets, Mendelssohn appears to treat an intermezzo in a similar way to Dussek. The work has less ability to be self-sustained, or set apart from the surrounding movements, even more than a scherzo movement, which retains more balance (such as Mendelssohn's Piano Quartet Op. 1).

Early sonatas of Schumann also link the intermezzo to a scherzo style, but in more experimental ways. Schumann's Piano Sonata No.1, Op. 11 (1833) has an intermezzo within the Scherzo movement.²² The intermezzo acts as an interruption to the scherzo, or like a *trio*. The tempo is marked Lento with *Alla burla, ma pomposo*,

²² In 1841 Schumann also wrote an intermezzo within a scherzo for his String Quartet No.1. This intermezzo acts like a contrasting trio section.

referring to an Italian style of comedy, *Commedia dell'arte*, popular during the 16th-18th centuries. The intermezzo has an unusually free form, opening with a playful dotted theme that makes up most of the first section. The second part of the intermezzo completely deviates into an unmeasured improvisation-like section with new musical material that is interrupted by rolled chords and fermatas (Example 1.2 below). This action builds in suspense to a large rolled chord on the dominant preceding the return of the A section from the scherzo. Like Dussek, Schumann's intermezzo provides a connecting role to the next movement.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the Scherzo-Intermezzo from Schumann's Sonata No. 1, Op. 11, measures 21-23. The first system features a piano (p) and a quasi-oboe (Quasi Oboe) staff. The piano part begins with a forte (f) dynamic and a tempo marking of 'ad libitum scherzando'. The quasi-oboe part enters with a forte (sf) dynamic and a tempo marking of 'stringendo'. The second system continues the piano and quasi-oboe parts, with the piano part marked 'p marcato' and the quasi-oboe part marked 'sf'. The third system shows a transition from 'Lento' to 'Presto' and then to 'Tempo I'. The piano part is marked 'ff' and the quasi-oboe part is marked 'sf'. The system concludes with a 'Pedale' marking and a large rolled chord on the dominant.

Example 1.2 Scherzo- Intermezzo from Schumann's Sonata No. 1, Op.11, m. 21-23 (1833).

By the mid-century, lyrical styled intermezzos emerged within sonata cycles, becoming less “sportive,” and increasingly serious pieces. Sometimes these pieces replaced slow movements and were highly expressive and often experimental. Lyrical intermezzo movements, in contrast to a typical scherzo, were slower and melodic-driven pieces. Stephen Heller’s Piano Sonata No. 1 in D minor, composed in 1839, contains an intermezzo alongside a scherzo movement. The second movement, labeled *scherzo capriccio*, is a fast, virtuosic piece, while the third movement is an intermezzo in a slow tempo. Despite the contrast in tempo and style, the intermezzo is not straightforward or simple harmonically and metrically. The piece begins in B minor and modulates to the key of G minor for the ending and closes unresolved on a D major chord. Rather than preparing for a finale in G minor, the finale begins in D minor, a weak harmonic link between the key areas of these movements, resulting in a weak connecting quality of this intermezzo. Additionally, the movement is metrically unstable, with an opening phrase that never rests on a downbeat and is further obscured with a lower voice that acts canonically to the melody (Example 1.3 below). Despite its outward lack of virtuosity, the more contrapuntal aspects of this piece are not simple. Heller wrote three more sonatas, all with non-traditional names for movements and more experimental forms. Clearly, Heller did not have limitations for intermezzos, as experimentation with this title is evident in future works. Heller’s second piano sonata, composed in 1849, has a slow *ballad* for the second movement, with a fast intermezzo waltz piece for the third movement. In this context, the intermezzo acts more like a scherzo.



Example 1.3 Heller's Intermezzo from Sonata No.1 m. 1–5 (1839).

The sonata cycle intermezzos of Schumann and Brahms embody a more serious and lyrical stylistic approach. The F-A-E Sonata for violin and piano in 1853 is a unique example where the composers collaborated, and each wrote different movements of this work. Schumann composed the intermezzo as a slow, lyrical second movement, while Brahms wrote a scherzo for the third movement. The two inner movements are contrasting in this sonata. The intermezzo is a song without words, in ternary form with gentle arpeggiated piano accompaniment and long lyrical lines in the violin. Rather than being lighthearted and comical, this movement is deeply sensitive and followed by Brahms's scherzo for the third movement as a typical fast, virtuosic piece.

In the same year, Brahms composed an intermezzo as the slow fourth movement of the five movement Piano Sonata No. 3 (1853). This sonata was the last work Brahms submitted to Schumann for review, thus Schumann may have had some influence on Brahms in the choice of the label—intermezzo—for the fourth movement of this cycle. Brahms's intermezzo movement includes a more poetic enhancement subtitled, *Rückblick* (to reflect). Despite its brevity, the movement has a brooding intensity exhibited in the dynamics and great range of the piano registers. Like Heller's slow intermezzo from

Example 1.3, Brahms's intermezzo is neither simple nor virtuosic. Extreme moments of contrast occur between a soft legato theme which builds to forte chords using an increased pitch range. This is brought to a climax in mm. 8-12, when the drum roll in the bass drops an extra octave down, now playing five octaves below the melody. The build to forte is suddenly extinguished by a return to the opening soft theme following m. 12 (Example 1.4).

The image shows a musical score for Brahms's Piano Sonata No. 3 Intermezzo Rückblick, measures 1-12. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems. The first system is marked 'Andante molto' and 'p legato'. The second system is marked 'f' and 'f pesante'. The third system is marked 'p'. The score features a variety of musical notations, including treble and bass staves, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 1.4 Brahms's Piano Sonata No. 3 Intermezzo *Rückblick* m. 1-12 (1853).

Brahms later chooses a scherzo-style intermezzo in his Piano Quartet no. 1 Op. 25 (1856- 1861), then abandons the label for future chamber works. Outside of piano repertoire, Brahms also wrote an intermezzo for the third movement in his famous Symphony No. 1 composed between 1855 to 1876. The movement acts as a scherzo despite its lack of formal divisions. Following 1870, Brahms reserved the title *intermezzo* for his piano character pieces.

Defining the genre and practice of piano intermezzos by the middle of the nineteenth century is no simple task. Intermezzos within sonata cycles varied from one another, without a single coherent model, even within one composer's own output. Aside from their consistently short length, anywhere from two to six minutes, these inner movements became increasingly challenging to define as simply lighthearted, supportive works. As composers started to experiment with romantic style and forms, intermezzos also became less stylistically restricted, outgrowing Burney's use of the term as a superfluous piece. While intermezzos appear less frequently in sonata cycles toward the end of the century, many of these trends continued into the development of the intermezzo as a genre for piano character pieces.

Nineteenth-Century Character Piece Intermezzos

Within character pieces, piano intermezzos were not restricted to the weighty context of surrounding sonata movements. Instead, they became unique romantic gestures of extreme diversity, reflecting individual composers' style and preference. The nineteenth century brought many changes to keyboard music, one of which was the emerging genre of piano character pieces with creative titles. A new market of increased production of piano instruments and amateur music-making drove publication of new works. Simultaneously, the piano became a vehicle for all types of concert music. Through the increase of transcriptions and four-hand arrangements of symphonies and chamber music, the piano reproduced music that typically relied on the rarer occasions of organized performances. In the words of Thomas Christenson, "genres became irrevocably untethered from their traditional geographies of performance," thus producing "generic hybrids" in this new world of music making.²³ Piano composers had access to all concert repertoire at their fingertips, and titles usually associated to one genre were adapted into the other. Schumann's *Symphonic Etudes* (1834) comes to mind, as these pieces were intended for solo piano and the word *symphonic* suggests the piano pieces bear the weight of an orchestra. These crosscurrents influenced not only titles, but musical styles as well, as the piano and sheet music became the main medium of access to nineteenth century music of all styles. Lastly, for nineteenth-century composers, older

²³ Thomas Christensen, "Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 2 (1999): 255-98, Accessed February 9, 2021, doi:10.2307/831999, 289-290.

titles were simply no longer as fashionable.²⁴ Romantic composers sought models outside of tradition, creating new genres and titles.

Compared to other piano character piece titles of the early to mid-nineteenth century, the *intermezzo* title was never applied uniformly enough to have an indicative form or style. These character pieces followed similar trends as found with *intermezzos* in sonata cycles. Some acted as connecting *intermezzos* with other movements, while others were individual works amongst a set. The style of *intermezzos* continued to vary, while character piece with other titles were directly evocative. A *nocturne* had direct poetic associations to “night,” connoting a slower and expressive piece. A dance-styled piece such as a *mazurka*, had rhythmic emphasis on the second or third beat. *Scherzos* or *capriccios* never indicated a slow-tempo piece, while an *intermezzo* could be scherzo-like or lyrical; dance-like or song-like.

Despite lacking a clear expectation of style within a genre, *intermezzos* were naturally suited for the market of short pieces; the title was customarily for short ternary-form pieces, between three and six minutes long. The roots of this title as an intermediary movement only made them easier to disperse amongst sets and cycles. A *set* would have been a work of various titled pieces and a *cycle* would have been a collection of *intermezzo* pieces titled by the Italian plural, *intermezzi*. In character piece sets, *intermezzos* were often contrasting to surrounding pieces, similar to their treatment in

²⁴ Franz Liszt “Robert Schumann,” from *Schumann and His World*, edited by Larry R. Todd, by John Michael Cooper and Christopher Anderson, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994) doi:10.2307/j.ctt7zv73w.18, 353. Liszt questioned whether Schumann’s early works “would have had the same effect if they had appeared with the outmoded title of Bagatelles or Divertissements,” and said they would never have maintained their “freshness.”

sonata cycles. Interestingly, intermezzo cycles could have varied treatment. Sometimes cycles were quite diverse, with contrasting tempos and dynamic between intermezzo movements. Other cycles were less preoccupied with relationships and movement variety.

As evident in the intermezzos within sonatas, character piece intermezzos were flexible in style. To categorize the variety of intermezzos, it is possible to divide nineteenth-century character-piece intermezzos between a *scherzo style* or *lyrical style*. *Scherzo* intermezzos were generally virtuosic works in a fast tempo. They could be divertissement pieces, dance-like pieces, or even take a regular scherzo form. *Lyrical* intermezzos tended to be more serious works; slower, softer pieces with longer, legato melodies, and less formal divisions. This is not to say that all scherzo intermezzos were not also lyrical in some respects, nor that all lyrical intermezzos do not have energetic moments. Additionally, one category was not necessarily more suited for domestic music than the other. Certain lyrical intermezzos were quite experimental, and some scherzo intermezzos exhibit a more straightforward clarity of melody and accompaniment.

1. Schumann's Piano Intermezzos

Schumann is likely the first composer who used the title *intermezzo* in piano character pieces, and in many ways his intermezzos in this genre are like the intermezzos found in sonata cycles during the early nineteenth century. His intermezzos are most often in a scherzo style. At the same time, Schumann's experimentation with this title explored new ways of implementation amidst character-piece cycles, in many ways reflecting the general nineteenth-century atmosphere of exploring new musical forms with romantic idioms.

Schumann's Op. 4 *Intermezzi* (1832) is the first example of this title as a set of six short piano character pieces in a cycle. Schumann based his Op. 4 off the Op. 2 *Papillons* but on a more expanded scale.²⁵ While Schumann's Op. 4 may have been loosely programmatic dances like his Op. 2, the source of his inspiration remains unclear. Poetic hints of inspiration for Schumann's Op. 4 may be from the poetic cycles of Heinrich Heine, whose *Buch der Lieder*, published in 1827, contained the famous cycle of *Lyrisches Intermezzo*.²⁶ In 1828, Schumann obtained Heine's *Buch de Leider*, so he would have been very familiar with the poems while composing his Op. 4 *Intermezzi*. Perhaps Schumann was influenced by Heine's title. A journal entry in Schumann's *Leipsinger Lebensbuch*, in 1833 notes of a piano cycle of "musical poems" to be

²⁵ Reiman, *Schumann's Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul*, 47.

²⁶ Schumann later used select poems from the *Lyrisches Intermezzo* for his *Dichterliebe* song cycle in 1840.

underlain by Heine's poetry.²⁷ Yet Schumann's Op.4 is not underlain by Heine's poetry, but rather by Goethe's, where in the second intermezzo's *alternativo* section, Schumann writes "Meine Ruh' ist hin," from *Faust*.

Schumann's Op.4 is the first piano composition to deviate from a practice of dispersing intermezzos within sonata cycles. These intermezzos are not found between any larger movements; rather, they are all short movements grouped to form the larger work. Erika Reimann argues the influence of Jean Paul, a literary figure favored by Schumann, regarding the irony of using the title for the movements of this work. If Schumann intended the Op.4 to refer to a larger work or each other, such connections are weak and without any "interpretive center."²⁸ These six individual movements act as independent dance movements in a cycle, with implied connections by marked *attaccas* between certain movements. Overall, these pieces are ternary, with a contrasting *alternativo* section that would have been expected in eighteenth-century paired pieces that were meant to be alternated.²⁹ These *alternativo* sections essentially act like an intermezzo within each intermezzo.

Schumann's Op.4 is unique in that the intermezzos are not largely contrasting in tempo, likely because Schumann intended them to be modeled after dance movements. The first piece is marked *allegro* and its *alternativo* is indicated *più vivo*. Similarly, aside

²⁷ Susan Youens, *Heinrich Heine and the Lied*, (Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press, 2007) 224.

²⁸ Reiman, *Schumann's Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul*, 48-49.

²⁹ Adolf Schubring, "Schumanniana No. 4: The Present Musical Epoch and Robert Schumann's Position in Music History (1861)," In *Schumann and His World*, 1994, 373.

from a brief sotto voce dynamic change, the second piece's *alternativo* retains the same tempo. The third piece acts more like a scherzo in character and tempi, with brief moments of pause in the *alternativo*. This is followed by what could be considered the slowest piece, the fourth, *allegretto semplice*, which has a four measure *alternativo* marked by an acceleration of rhythm, using sixteenth note accompaniment in the bass. The final two movements are also marked *allegro* and their *alternativos* indicate no tempo change.

One example of a scherzo intermezzo is from Schumann's Op. 4 No. 2. The speed and quick transitions of arpeggiated material in the intermezzo have added rhythmic difficulties that often thwart rhythmic stability. Schumann obscures the downbeat by placing the accents of the phrase on the 6th and 3rd beat of the measure (Example 1.5 below). This rhythmic awkwardness is emphasized throughout the piece and occasionally altered with strong downbeat accents. Following the intermezzo's opening A section, an *alternativo* B section provides contrast with a softer dynamic and more sparse texture (Table 1.1 below). The bass serves an accompanimental role, yet is often rhythmically awkward by placing chords on beat 2 (example 1.5). The three-note rising motive is unmistakably similar to Schubert's adaptation of the poem in his song, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. The quote is fitting, as no musical reprieve is ever harmonically achieved in this section which ends on an F# fully diminished chord.

Table 1.1 Schumann's *Intermezzi* Op. 4 No. 2. Overall Form.

Section	A				B	transition	A				Coda
Episode	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	1	
Measure	m. 1- 17	18- 34	34- 63	64- 100		101- 117	118- 134	134- 149	150- 178	179- 193	194- 200



Example 1.5 Schumann's *Intermezzi* Op. 4 No. 2 m. 1-6 (1832).

Example 1.6 Schumann's *Intermezzi* Op. 4 No. 2 m. 19-21 (1832).

Schumann's Op. 4 has marked attacca transitions, suggesting that the linking qualities of an intermezzo was important to Schumann. In later years, Schumann wrote more connecting intermezzo pieces within character piece sets. In 1834, Schumann wrote

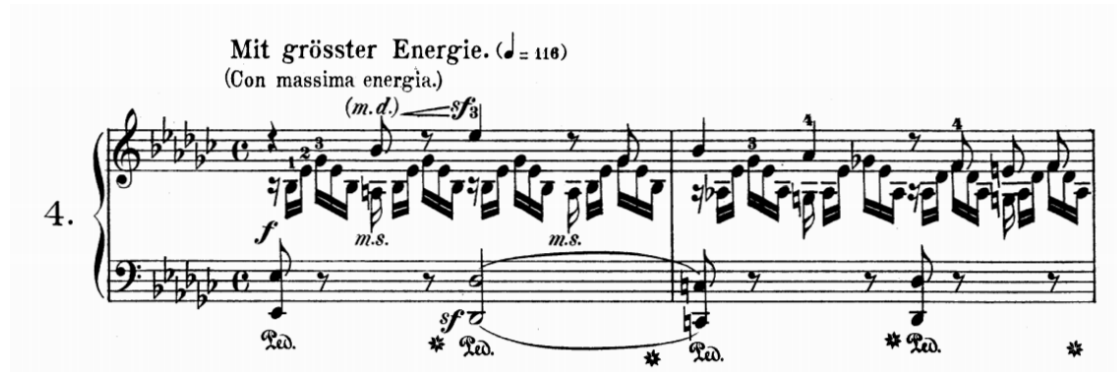
such an intermezzo in his Op. 9 *Carnaval*. A similar rhythmic play of accenting offbeats as found in his Op. 4 No. 2, is also found in his Op. 9 No. 17 Intermezzo, titled “Paganini” (Example 1.7 below). This intermezzo is extremely short, barely the length of a page, providing a contrasting inner section in the middle of a waltz. The short episode ends on a half cadence, providing a transition to the return of the waltz theme. Schumann also wrote connecting intermezzos in his Op. 16 *Kreisleriana*, in which two quick-tempo intermezzo movements are interspersed within piece No. 2 *Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch*. In both of these instances, the intermezzos serve as a brief episode before a return to familiar material.



Example 1.7 Schumann’s Op. 9 Carnival No. 17 “Paganini” m. 1-4 (1834).

In contrast to these connecting intermezzos, Schumann’s *Intermezzo* from Op. 26 *Faschingsschwank aus Wien* is a self-contained lyrical piece. Written in 1839, this piece suggests a more romantic style, exhibiting clear, long melodic lines in the treble voice. While this piece appears virtuosic, it is less scherzo-like due to the clearly emphasized lyricism over the fast accompanimental notes. Schumann develops this piece by

transposing the opening melody through different keys. Rather than providing an alternativo section, this short work proceeds developmentally on the opening idea (Example 1.8 below).



Example 1.8 Schumann's Op. 26 No. 4 *Intermezzo* m. 1-2 (1839).

2. Later Nineteenth-Century Piano Intermezzos

By the end of the nineteenth century, composers were not solely considering intermezzos as intermediary pieces. Connecting intermezzos faded; intermezzos became increasingly composed as more balanced, individual character pieces. Notably, intermezzos continued to lack stylistic boundaries, being both scherzo-influenced, as well as lyrical works. From what I could find, Schumann's intermezzos predate most character-piece intermezzos by about a decade. While it is possible that Schumann's character-piece cycles were an influential factor in the appearance of intermezzos in later years, how much of an influence Schumann's works were on surrounding repertoire is difficult

to determine.³⁰ Most composers of intermezzos were European, predominantly German, and in some cases, composers did have direct associations with Schumann. Other compositional circumstances regarding most of these pieces are unknown.

Intermezzo character pieces were often assorted into programs amidst other character pieces. Mid-century examples of these pieces in concert programs are difficult to find, but concert programs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reveal many character pieces were treated this way in concert (Figure 1.1 below).³¹ It was likely becoming normal practice by the end of the nineteenth century for intermezzos to be separated and combined into unique sets for various concert programs. While most intermezzos continued to be published in sets and cycles, even individually published intermezzos would have appropriately fit in the assortment programming of late nineteenth century concerts.³²

³⁰ The intermezzo was not reserved for musical realms only, as the German artist, Max Klinger titled a group of twelve prints titled *Intermezzi, Op. IV*, written from 1879-1880 and published in 1881. The diverse set of works are based on everyday life, Romantic themes, and mythological creatures.

³¹ Kneisel Quartet. *Programmes of concerts: with prospectus*. New York. Musical Times and Singing Class, Catalog Record: Programmes of concerts; with prospectus, HathiTrust Digital Library (accessed February 12, 2021).

³² Camilla Cai, "Brahms' Short, Late Piano Pieces-- Opus Numbers 116-119: A Source Study, An Analysis, and Performance Practice (Intermezzo, Capriccio, Rhapsody)," PhD diss., (Boston University, 1986) 270-273.

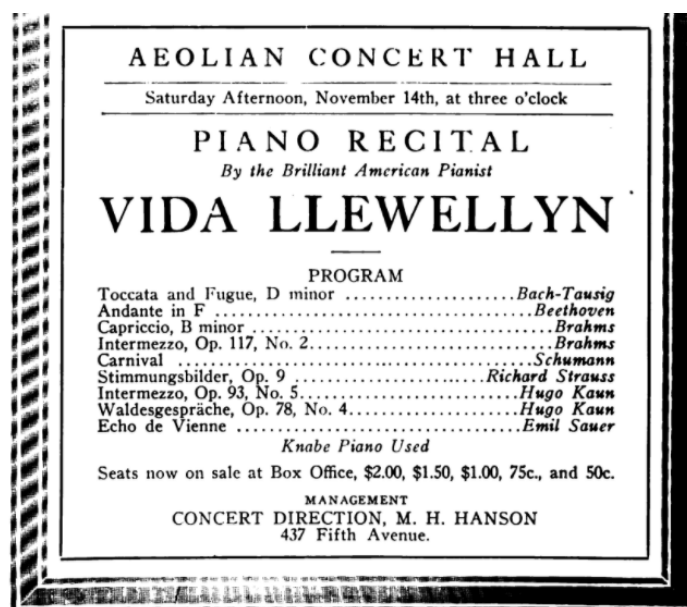


Figure 1.1 Concert Program from 1913-1915 *Aeolian* Concert Hall in NY.

To what extent intermezzos were separated for concert or performed in entire cycles is based on the work's circumstances. Composers were publishing sets and cycles of pieces in any number during the nineteenth century, and pieces could have been published in a small set of two or larger (Table 1.2 below). In the case of some intermezzos, such as Schumann's Op.4, it would be assumed the work was intended to be a cycle, likely played as a whole. Other cyclical intermezzos such as Hugo Reinhold's *Four Intermezzi* (1887) contained very short contrasting movements; such short works are alternating episodes, and likely not intended to be separated from the whole. In contrast, Stephen Heller's two *Intermezzi* Op. 135, are lengthy pieces that would have been sufficient individually had they been separated for performance. Additionally, the

similarity of virtuosic style between both of Heller's intermezzos do not provide strong contrast as a cyclical pair.

Table 1.2 Nineteenth- Century Character Piece Intermezzos.

Composer	Origin	Title	Context	Date	Style/ Length	Opening tempo/dynamic
Schumann, Robert	Germany	Op.4 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle – 6	1832	Scherzo/ medium	*
		Op. 9 No. 17	Cycle-21	1834- 1835	scherzo/ short	<i>ff / presto</i>
		Op. 16 No. 2	Cycle- 8	1838	scherzo/ short	<i>f / molto vivo</i>
		Op. 26 No. 4	Cycle 5	1839	lyric/ short	<i>p / un poco più mosso</i>
Halvden, Kjeuralf	Norway	Op. 27 No. 1	Set - 2	1851	scherzo/ short	<i>f / con massima energia</i>
Volkmann, Robert	Germany	Op. 25 b	Set- 2	1857	scherzo/ medium	<i>p / allegro vivace</i>
Mussorgsky, Modest	Russia	<i>Intermezzo in modo Classico</i>	Individual	1860- 1867	lyric/ long	<i>mf / allegro non troppo</i>
						<i>p / grave pesante</i>
Jenson, Adolf	Germany	Op. 33 No. 3 and 9	Set- 20	1866	scherzo / short	No. 8 <i>lebhaft und leise</i>
Dubois, Theodore	France	Op. 20 <i>Pieces de Genre</i> No. 3	Set- 3	1870	scherzo / medium	No. 9 <i>p / sehr schnell</i>
						<i>f / allegro</i>
Borodin, Alexander	Russia	<i>Petite Suite</i> No. 2	Set- 7	1870	lyric / medium	<i>p / tempo di minuetto</i>
Seiss, Wilhelm Isidor	Germany	Op. 9 No. 2	Set- 2	1871	scherzo / medium	<i>p / allegro capriccioso</i>
Brahms, Johannes	Germany	Op. 76 No. 3,4, 6, 7	Set - 8	1871	lyric / medium	*
Heller, Stephen	Hungary	Op. 135 No. 1 and 2	Cycle- 2	1873	scherzo / long	No. 1 <i>p / allegro non troppo</i>
						No. 2 <i>f / allegro molto vivace</i>
Scharwenka, Xaver	Poland	Op. 19 <i>Scherzo con due Intermezzi</i>	Individual	1875	scherzo and lyric / long	No. 1 <i>p / moderato assai</i> and No. 2 <i>p / molto meno mosso</i>
Kirchner, Theodore	Germany	Op. 45 No. 5	Set 6	1879	lyric / medium	<i>p / sehr ruhig, doch nicht schleppend</i>
Jaëll, Alfred	Austria	Op. 160 <i>Intermezzo Elegiaque</i>	Individual	1875	lyric / long	<i>p / andante sostenuto</i>

Bülow, Hans von	Germany	Op. 21 <i>Il Carnivale de Milano</i> No. 4 <i>Intermezzo Fantastico</i> No. 7 <i>Intermezzo Lyrico</i> No. 9 <i>Intermezzo Scherzoso</i>	Set- 10	1879	No. 4 <i>lyrica / short</i> , No. 7 <i>lyrical/ medium</i> , No. 9 <i>scherzo/ short</i>	No. 4 <i>una corda/ poco allegro</i> , No. 7 <i>andantino / delicatissimo</i> No. 9 <i>presto / pp</i>
Dvořák, Antonín	Czechoslovakia	Op. 52 No. 2	Set- 6	1880	lyric / medium	<i>p / larghetto</i>
Lyadov, Anatoly	Russia	Op. 7	Cycle – 2	1883	scherzo / no. 1 long, no. 2 medium	No. 1 <i>p / allegro</i> and No. 2 <i>f / allegro energico</i>
Tielman, Christian	Norway	Op. 77	Individual	1882	scherzo / medium	<i>p / tempo di minuetto</i>
Arensky, Anton	Russia	Op. 13	Individual	1882	scherzo / medium	<i>p / presto</i>
Paderewski, Ignacy	Poland	No. 1	Individual	1884	scherzo / medium	<i>p / allegro molto</i>
		No. 2	Individual	1885	scherzo / medium	<i>p / allegro moderato</i>
Reinhold, Hugo	Austria	Op. 14 <i>Intermezzo Scherzoso</i>	Individual	1880	scherzo / medium	<i>f / lebhaft</i>
Boellman, Leon	France	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1885	scherzo / short	<i>p / allegretto</i>
Reinhold, Hugo	Austria	Op. 48 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle- 4	1887	scherzo and lyric / short	*
Paderewski, Ignacy	Poland	6 Humoresques de concert, II <i>Intermezzo Polacco</i> Cahier Moderne, No. 2	Set- 3	1887	scherzo / medium	<i>f / allegretto, quasi allegro</i>
Macdowell, Edwin	England	Op. 39 No. 9	Set- 12	1889-1890	lyric / short	<i>p / allegretto</i>
German, Edward	England	<i>Intermezzo in A Minor</i>	Individual	1892	scherzo / medium	<i>f / allegro ma non troppo</i>
Brahms, Johannes	Germany	Op. 116-119	Set/ Cycle	1892-1893	lyric / medium	(Table 1.4 Below)

a. *Set* = character pieces of various titles and *number* of total pieces in the set, *cycle* = intermezzos and *number* of intermezzos in the cycle, or an *Individual* = singular published work.

b. *Short* = 3 or less pages and less than three minutes, *medium* = 3-5 pages, less than five minutes length, *long* = more than five pages and at or more than five minutes.

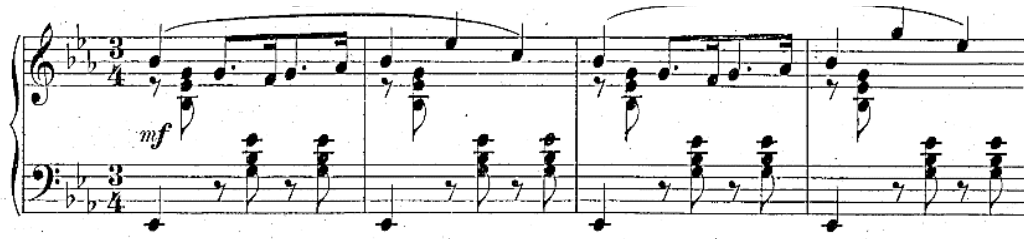
- c. * contains a large set of differing tempo and dynamic indications that would not fit in the table
- d. *Origin*= composer's birthplace, and country of origin is according to present day geography.

Scherzo-Style Intermezzos

By the end of the nineteenth century, musical titles were even more general.³³ Thus, one lasting trend throughout the late nineteenth century was the intermezzo's flexible musical style. Intermezzos continued to vary between the *scherzo* or *lyric* piece. Possibly the earliest character-piece intermezzo following Schumann's was Robert Volkmann's *Intermezzo* Op. 25, published in 1857. From 1836, Volkmann resided in Leipzig, where he was introduced to Schumann and attended many of Mendelssohn's Gewendhaus concerts. Volkmann's intermezzo was published alongside a lengthy *Fantasie*, which is a much longer, experimental character piece. This intermezzo is less challenging, suited for the amateur, with a straightforward waltz accompaniment and clear melodic line (Example 1.9 below). There are moments where the texture is more dense with octave doubling in the melody, but the piece is harmonically and metrically stable.³⁴

³³ J. Brahms, H. Bryant, M. Kalbeck, E. von Herzogenberg, H. von Herzogenberg (1909), *Johannes Brahms, the Herzogenberg correspondence* (London: J. Murray, 99). Brahms's close friend, Elizabeth Herzogenberg in their 1879 correspondence over what to name Brahms' *Zwei Rhapsodien* Op. 79, Elizabeth questions the most "non-committal" term *Klavierstücke* as not fitting the work, while *Rhapsodien* was probably best, despite it being, "somewhat at variance with one's conception of a rhapsody." She further elaborates, "it is practically a characteristic of these various designations that they have lost their true characteristics through application, so that they can be used for this or that at will, without many qualms..."

³⁴ Thomas M. Brawley, "Volkmann, (Friedrich) Robert," (*Grove Music Online*. 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029648>.



Example 1.9 Volkmann's *Intermezzo Op. 25b m. 1-4* (1857).

Adolf Jensen's *Lieder und Tänze* from 1866 also contains two dance-inspired intermezzos along with other dance movements labeled *waltz*, *ländler*, and *polonaise*. Interspersed between these lively pieces are contrasting slower movements labeled *widmung*, *lied*, *albumlied*, *romanze*, and *barcarolle*. Jensen clearly assumed the intermezzo to indicate a more lively piece. Notably, both of Jensen's intermezzos within this set retain a staccato articulation for the main theme, emphasizing a lightness in character for these amateur pieces (Example 1.10 below).



Example 1.10 Jensen's *Lieder und Tanze No. 3 Intermezzo m. 1-4* (1866).

Stephen Heller's *Two Intermezzi for Pianoforte* Op. 135 (1873) are both intermezzos for concert performance.³⁵ Heller was well acquainted with Schumann, sending him works and corresponding with him during his career. Schumann had high regards for Heller, remarking that Heller's music was "new, fantastic, and free."³⁶ Heller's concert intermezzos differ from Schumann's and from Heller's first Piano Sonata's intermezzo. These concert pieces are twice the expected length of an intermezzo and have quite an expanded form and harmonic scheme (Table 1.3 below).³⁷ The first intermezzo from the Op.135 is a waltz-like piece with expanded transitions displaying fast arpeggios (Example 1.11 below). The form for this piece is inventive, containing a brief transition following the B section that acts like a new theme introduction with more harmonic instability.

³⁵Heller's list of works from Grove categorizes these pieces as etudes, which might apply to the second intermezzo, but the first is more befitting amidst his character pieces. Additionally, these pieces were possibly originally published as *Two Intermedes de Concert*, yet later published as *intermezzi*.

³⁶Ronald Earl Booth and Matthias Thiemel, "Heller, Stephen," (Grove Music Online, 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000012736>.

³⁷ The practice of expanding other titles into lengthier, standalone pieces was common in the nineteenth century. One important example are the Chopin scherzos from 1833-1843, which originated from the classical scherzo form into larger, standalone concert works.

Table 1.3 Heller's *Two Intermezzi* No. 1 Overall Form.

A	transition	B	C/ transition	A	transition	B	A/Coda
m. 1-48	m. 49-68	m. 69-108	m.109-124	m. 125-170	m. 171-184	m.185-208	m.209-240
g		G		g		G	G



Example 1.11 Heller's *Two Intermezzi* Op. 135 No .1 m. 1-4 (1873).

Heller's second intermezzo is also very scherzo-like with the indication, a *capriccio*. The opening theme contains virtuosic scale patterns equivalent to a Chopin etude. The romantic influence of this work is also noticeable in the B section, which is more song-like with long melodic phrases accompanied by arpeggios.

Other examples directly connect the intermezzo to a scherzo either by form or with a combinatory title.³⁸ For example, Hugo Reinhold wrote *Intermezzo Scherzoso* (1880) as an individual scherzo movement. The movement is short, with a playful dotted-eighth note theme for most of the scherzo's melody, contrasted by a minor trio section,

³⁸Another example of an individually published intermezzo in a scherzo form is by the Norwegian composer, Christian Tielman in his Op. 77 *Intermezzo* (1880). While Hans von Bülow also wrote an *Intermezzo Scherzo* in his Op. 21 No. 9 (1879) from his *Carnivale di Milano*.

and followed by a recap of the opening intermezzo theme. The choice of adding intermezzo in the title seems superfluous, as the piece could just as easily have been labeled as a scherzo. *Scherzo con due Intermezzi* (1875), composed by the Polish-German pianist, Xaver Scharwenka, uses the intermezzo as a contrasting episode to the scherzo. This experimental piece deviates from later-century examples and is reminiscent of Schumann's connecting intermezzos. Scharwenka's intermezzo sections are more romantic, lyrical-style moments, acting as a pause from the more lively and virtuosic scherzo sections. The second intermezzo from this work is particularly reminiscent of the sostenuto A major in Chopin's Scherzo No. 2 Op. 31, with the soft dynamic and choral-like texture between the hands and using the lower range of the piano (Example 1. 12 below).



Example 1.12 Sharwenka's *Scherzo con Due Intermezzi*, *Intermezzo II* m. 1-4 (1875).

Lyrical-Style Intermezzos

While scherzo intermezzos were popular, some intermezzos do not stylistically fit within this category and are better described as lyrical intermezzos. Lyrical intermezzos were generally slower, indicated *andante*, *adagio*, *moderato*, *allegretto*, rarely *allegro*. They often emphasized dynamic expressiveness, opening and closing the piece in softer dynamic and indicating *espressivo*, *cantabile*, or *dolce* markings, and longer legato slurred phrasing. Lyrical intermezzos were often intimate pieces. While they generally lacked the virtuosic capacity found in scherzo intermezzos, these pieces were often experimental in other musical ways, becoming expressively demanding.

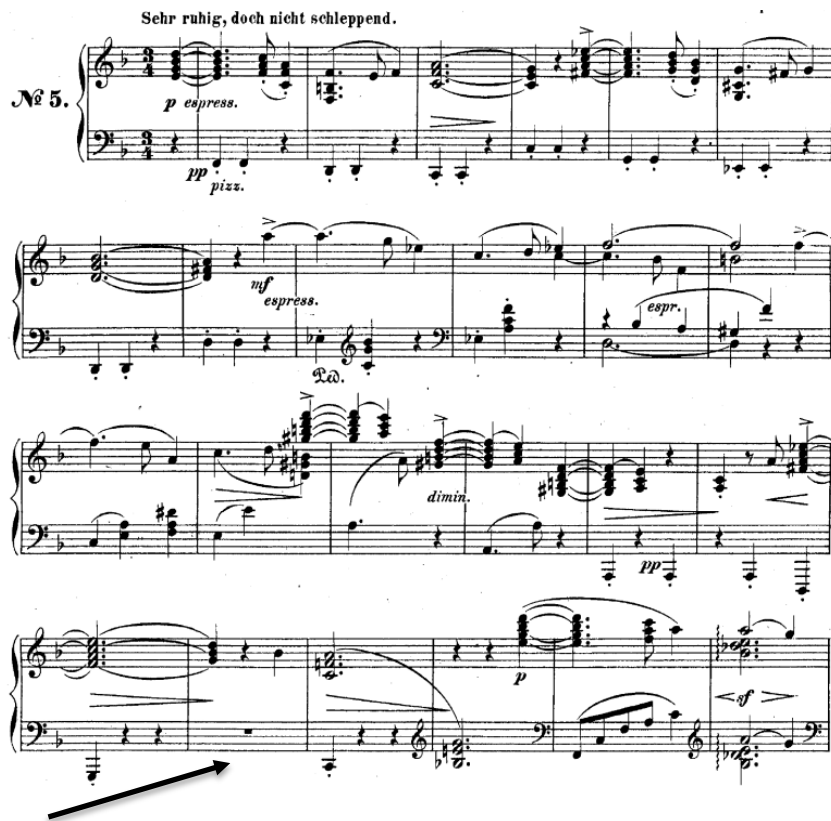
Lyrical intermezzos were often published in sets or cycles and occasionally as an individual piece. Some included programmatic enhancements, such as the *Intermezzo Elegiaque* (1875) by the Austrian composer Alfred Jaëll. This piece would be highly unusual if it was a scherzo intermezzo. As the title suggests, Jaëll's intermezzo demonstrates many aspects of a lyrical romantic piece, as noted with the expressive indications in the first few measures (Example 1.13 below). This piece is simple, with clear melody and accompaniment like a Chopin waltz or nocturne. Modulation to distant keys throughout the work is a more romantic influence in this piece. This occurs in the B section which modulates to F# major for the *più mosso* theme, followed by E major for a brief statement of the opening theme, and lastly to f minor for the return of the A theme.



Example 1.13 Jaëll's Op. 160 *Intermezzo Elegiaque* m. 1-3 (1875).

Another lyrical intermezzo by the German composer Theodore Kirchner, is harmonically, rhythmically, and texturally experimental. Kirchner titles the fifth piece of his 6 *Klavierstücke* Op. 45 (1879) as an intermezzo, marked *sehr ruhig, doch nicht schleppend*. Kirchner knew Schumann well and was a close associate of Brahms. Brahms's Op. 76 intermezzos were published a few years before and may or may not have been an influence on Kirchner's idea for the style and title. Kirchner emphasizes *espressivo* twice in the first two lines, and the opening motive is characterized by a suspended seventh chord resolution, creating moments of dissonance and ease. The bass accompaniment is low, occasionally dropping four octaves with a single staccato note against the treble chords (m. 18). The accompaniment is sparse against the treble's legato chords. The melody is extended in mm. 18-20, where the bass ceases completely for a measure and the treble resolution is delayed an additional measure (Example 1. 14 below).³⁹

³⁹ Louise Marretta-Schär and James Deaville, "Kirchner, (Fürchtegott) Theodor," (Grove Music Online,(2001)<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000015049>).



Example 1.14 Kirchner's *Intermezzo* from Op. 45 mm. 1-24 (1879).

Mussorgsky's *Intermezzo in a Modo Classico*, written in 1861-1862, would fit in the lyrical category, but compared to Jaëll's and Kirchner's intermezzos, is a much lengthier concert work. Mussorgsky wrote the piece early in his compositional career, and later reworked it into an orchestral version in 1867 and a second concert piece for piano in 1867. The inspiration for this work is poetic; apparently Mussorgsky was inspired by a winter peasant scene.⁴⁰ Mussorgsky's *Intermezzo* captures the Russian spirit and sound in piano, as a predecessor for his *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The opening

⁴⁰ Michael Stochem, *Modest Mussorgsky: Piano Works*, Alice Ader (Fuga Libera, Paris, 2009).

melody is unison and legato in the lower range of the piano (Example 1.15 below).

Mussorgsky indicates a wide expressive range of dynamics from *ppp* to *ff*. This work is clearly intended for concert due to length and difficulty, using a wide range between melody and accompaniment chords often doubled in octaves, as well as accompanimental tremolos and trills in forte passages.



Example 1.15 Mussorgsky's *Intermezzo in a modo Classico*, m. 1-4 (1861-1862).

3. Brahms's Piano Intermezzos

Within the scope of all nineteenth-century intermezzos, Brahms chose to write intermezzos the most frequently and with the most unified stylistic approach. Brahms's intermezzos were in extreme contrast to Burney's century-old descriptions of the term by the late nineteenth century. Following an analysis or performance of a Brahms intermezzo, it is difficult to imagine the piece as a supportive work, musically relying on outer movements for internal/external significance or balance. All of Brahms's character intermezzos are contained pieces, published in assorted character-piece sets. At the same time, Brahms's pieces are intimate works, more restrained in dynamic or tempo. Brahms

reserves the titles *capriccios*, *ballades*, or *rhapsodies* to pieces of greater energy and boldness. Thus, Brahms was the least flexible with this title, when compared to earlier nineteenth-century composers.

Brahms was extremely cautious when naming his works for the public and his choice of *intermezzo* for many of his late pieces is significant. As evident with the great variety of intermezzo pieces by his time, an intermezzo allowed Brahms great stylistic freedom within a character piece. Brahms likely favored the title due to its continued “lack of specificity.”⁴¹ In the case of Op. 76, published in 1871, Brahms delayed the revision and publication process trying to decide between the collective title, *Phantasien* or *Kapricen und Intermezzi*. He ultimately chose the more conservative title *Klavierstücke*, which contained eight pieces of interspersed capriccios and intermezzos. Interestingly, one of Brahms' suggestions to his publisher, Fritz Simrock, was to separate the set and publish the capriccios individually and the intermezzos in pairs.⁴² His hesitation to publish individual intermezzos is worth noting; the musical public still expected supportive movements for the intermezzo in the 1870s.

Brahms preferred to keep the intermezzos grouped so they all appear in cycles or sets. Brahms struggled with naming Op. 116, choosing between *Phantasien* and *Capricci und Intermezzi*. He ultimately chose the former title as he preferred not to mix the German “und” with the Italian title, *intermezzo*. Brahms chose the title *Intermezzi* for Op. 117, containing three intermezzos, and *Klavierstücke* for Op. 118 and 119, both of

⁴¹ Cai, 222.

⁴² Ibid.

which contain intermezzos and pieces with other titles. Lastly, Brahms was equally picky when naming individual pieces amongst these sets, weighing various titles' impressions. Brahms changed the title of the fourth piece of Op. 116 from *Notturmo* to *Intermezzo*, whereas No. 5 in Op. 118 was titled *Intermezzo* in the engraver's copy corrections and later changed to *Romanze*.⁴³

While the intermezzo title may have been a generic choice, it is likely that Brahms also had personal intentions for these works. Dillon Parmer's argument that Brahms had a dual reception of his works, one for the public and one for private, is convincing with the intermezzos. Programmatic hints regarding Brahms' intermezzos are found in his music, as well as in correspondence.⁴⁴ From early in this chapter, even in Brahms' Sonata No. 3, Op. 5 from 1853, the fourth movement intermezzo is subtitled with a poetic enhancement, *Rückblick* (retrospective). Decades later, Brahms remarked that his Op. 117 intermezzos were "three lullabies for my pain," possibly responding to the death of his close friend Elizabeth von Herzogenberg, or his sister who died in 1892. Additionally, the first intermezzo from the Op. 117 set is prefaced with two lines from the Scottish ballad, *Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament* which states, "Sleep softly my child, sleep

⁴³ Ibid, 186.

⁴⁴ Dillon R. Parmer, "Musical Meaning for the Few: Instances of Private Reception in the Music of Brahms," *Current Musicology* (2007): 109–130.

softly and well! It breaks my heart to see you weep.”⁴⁵ The connection to songs and poetry are likely why Op. 117 is often considered as ‘songs without words.’⁴⁶

The Brahms intermezzos became identified with a spiritual inner, rather than a physical intermediary. Brahms’s poetic suggestions, as well as his general approach toward his intermezzos, led others to consider these pieces in ways that are in extreme contrast with to the style of most other nineteenth-century intermezzos. His intermezzos have little to do with a popular *divertissement* style for the amateur or concert hall, as they have neither an easy entertainment mood nor dazzling virtuosity. Brahms’s pieces were noted for their musical lyricism and intimate qualities. Clara Schumann describes the pieces in Op. 116 in 1892, revealing in her diary that they were deeply meaningful and “full of poetry, passion, sentiment, emotion, and having the most wonderful effects of tone.... In these pieces I at last feel musical life stir once more in my soul, once more I play with real devotion.”⁴⁷ A few years later, Edward Hanslick described in his review of Op. 118 and Op. 119 in 1896, “One can describe these two volumes as ‘Monologues at the piano’: Monologues that Brahms recites by and for himself... in Romantic reminiscence, from time to time also in dreamy wistfulness.”⁴⁸ Their difficulty is of a different kind, as noted by Clara regarding Op. 116,

⁴⁵ Tim Howell, “Brahms, Kierkegaard and Repetition: Three Intermezzi,” *Nineteenth-century music review* 10, no. 1 (June 2013): 101–117.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁷ Steven Ring, “The Learned Self: Artifice in Brahms’s Late Intermezzi,” In *Expressive Intersections in Brahms : Essays in Analysis and Meaning*, edited by Hannah P. Smith and Heather A. Platt (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 25.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

As far as demands on the agility of the fingers, the Brahms pieces are, except in a few places, not difficult. But the spiritual (*geistige*) technique therein demands a delicate understanding. One must entrust oneself completely to Brahms in order to render these pieces in the way that he has imagined them.”⁴⁹

When looking at Brahms’s intermezzos across multiple sets, they are overall pieces in a lyrical style (Table 1.4 below). The Brahms intermezzos are interspersed between piano sets in his Op. 76 composed in 1871 and his later works, Op. 116-119 composed between 1892 and 1893. As with most of his character pieces, the intermezzos are of moderate to short length, and in a ternary form with an often-varied repeat of the A theme. The tempo is overall moderate to slow, and the dynamics often begin and end softly. These intermezzos do have great expressive range within, often reaching forte for climactic points in the piece. Some exceptions are worth noting, like Op. 118 No. 1, marked *forte* and *allegro*, or the B section of Op. 118 No. 6 which is thematically quite contrasting, more energetic, with forte chords in a new key area. Even Op.119 No. 3 could have possibly been titled as a *capriccio*.

Table 1.4 Brahms’s Intermezzos: Tempi and Opening Dynamic Indications.

Op. 76 (1871)	Performance Tempo	Opening Dynamic
No. 3	<i>Grazioso, espressivo</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 4	<i>Allegretto grazioso</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 6	<i>Andante con moto</i>	<i>p</i>

⁴⁹ Walter Frisch, „Brahms: From Classical to Modern,” in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*. Ed. Larry Todd, (New York: Routledge, 1990) 378.

No. 7	<i>Moderato semplice</i>	<i>mp</i>
Op. 116 (1892)		
No. 2	<i>Andante</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 4	<i>Adagio</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 5	<i>Andante con grazia ed intimissimo sentimento</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 6	<i>Andante teneramente</i>	<i>p</i>
Op. 117 (1892)		
No. 1	<i>Andante moderato</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 2	<i>Andante non troppo e con molto espressione</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 3	<i>Andante con moto</i>	<i>p</i>
Op. 118 (1893)		
No. 1	<i>Allegro non assai, ma molto appassionato</i>	<i>f</i>
No. 2	<i>Andante teneramente</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 4	<i>Allegretto un poco agitato</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 6	<i>Allegro, largo e mesto</i>	<i>p</i>
Op. 119 (1893)		
No. 1	<i>Adagio</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 2	<i>Andantino, un poco agitato</i>	<i>p</i>
No. 3	<i>Grazioso e giocoso</i>	<i>p</i>

Brahms's intermezzos are more intimate pieces when compared to the style of many other intermezzos. They stand out amidst late nineteenth-century character pieces in general.⁵⁰ As Clara Schumann suggested, a higher *geistige* technique is required of the

⁵⁰ Cai, 273.

performer, as these works are carefully composed, too complex for the amateur, yet not flashy performance pieces. The early Brahms biographer, Walter Niemann, remarked that Brahms's pianism did not succumb to late nineteenth century technical “bravura.”

Even with its outward features, there is scarcely any other pianistic style which displays such sharply defined idiosyncrasies as that of Brahms. The progressions of thirds, sixths, and octaves, their redoubling, with its orchestral effects, the preference shown for wide intervals and for a sombre, sonorous effect of depth, the wayward rhythms, with their tendency to dissolve into a perfect filigree-work of subordinate figures, and their inclination towards all sorts of syncopated effects and triplet figures...⁵¹

Examining one intermezzo from Brahms's early set of Op. 76 demonstrates his ability to create an expansive sound and emotional range, using the stylistic features Niemann describes. Brahms's preference for doubling the melody with thirds and sixths creates a more “orchestral” sound on the piano (Example 1.16 below). The opening theme is an irregular five bar phrase based in the upper registers of the keyboard. A “sonorous effect of depth” is created in the repeat of the theme, which in the final measure takes a sudden plunge into the bass. A brief modulation to c minor and widely spaced octaves in the lowest part of the bass (m. 10) creates a “sombre” effect. This is briefly followed by a contrasting *dolce* section with triplet figures accompanied by a syncopated bass (m. 11).

⁵¹ Walter Nieman, *Brahms*, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1969) 215.



Example 1.16 Brahms's Op. 76 No. 3 Intermezzo m. 6-11 (1871).

Another notable occurrence of metrical complexity is found in the conclusion of this intermezzo (Example 1.17 below). The switch from 4/4 to 3/2 (m.27) creates an even broader phrase during the ritardando begun in m. 25, but the feeling of a meter change in m. 27 is blurred as the bass is syncopated against the melody. The lack of clear downbeats, and the addition of the triplets in m. 27 against bass syncopations during a ritardando, creates an extremely broad feeling of rhythmic expansion. This is harmonically enhanced with a slow stepwise descent of sixths in the treble, which is suspended and resolved against the changing bass notes. The drawing out of phrase and chain of harmonic suspensions across three slow measures creates a complex situation as Clara described earlier, where the performer would have to “entrust oneself completely to Brahms.”



Example 1.17 Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 76 No.3 m. 25-30 (1871).

A significant aspect of Brahms's compositional style in his intermezzos is his ability to maintain an economy of musical elements within his form. Often Brahms relies on a motivic figure which becomes the source for developmental aspects of the piece. The connections between musical figures and form were noted to be without any “tricks” or “fluff,” creating an originality that distinguished Brahms from other contemporaries. Niemann writes: “everything, down to the most apparently subordinate musical figures, can be seen to be worked in the close, fine tissue formed by the development of his motifs, as a direct outcome of it.”⁵² An example of this type of compositional practice is found in Brahms's Op. 118 Intermezzo No.2. This intermezzo's opens with a melodic figure in the treble that becomes a device for the work (Example 1.18 below). The rhythmic element of duple 8ths leading to a held higher note, a downward step and then

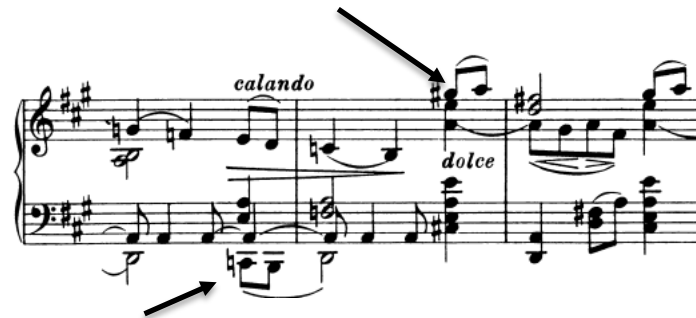
⁵² Ibid, 215.

leap, are transformed throughout the piece, providing cohesion as well as development.

The following measures show the motive's initial form and some occurrences where it is inverted to other themes (Example 1.19 below).



Example 1.18 Brahms's Op. 118 No. 2 m. 1-4 (1893).



Example 1.19 Brahms's Op. 118 No. 2 m. 33-35 (1893).

Brahms writes this motive plainly or in an inversion, as seen in the examples above, but its underpinnings can also be felt in more developmental passages. One example occurs where the inverted motive is extended by a higher leap in m. 49, then augmented with passing 8th notes in m. 50-51 (Example 1.20 below). The melody still retains the motive's shape of ascending and descending patterns, with the addition of passing eighth notes.



Example 1.20 Brahms's Op. 118 No. 2 m. 49-5 (1893).

Conclusions

Intermezzos were a versatile piece in piano music throughout the nineteenth century. Emerging as a subordinate movement, intermezzos were dependent on surrounding movements for musical style, form, and balance. By the end of the century, intermezzos were less tied to outer movements, emerging prolifically as an individual character piece, musically intended to be considered as its own entity. These pieces were most often published in sets or cycles, performed in combinations of other character pieces for programs. Stylistically, intermezzos outgrew scherzo associations, but maintained flexibility between scherzo and lyrical pieces. Brahms's intermezzos stand out among the landscape of nineteenth-century intermezzos, being intimate works in a mostly lyrical style. Thus, Brahms elevated this character piece genre from a superfluous, amusement piece, to a serious compositional work.

CHAPTER TWO

Early Twentieth-Century Concert Intermezzos- 1900-1930

Intermezzos of the early twentieth century were increasingly published in both concert repertoire and popular genres of piano music. In concert music, intermezzos followed similar trends to pieces written during the late nineteenth century. During these years, a booming market of piano manufacturing, sales, and piano music publishing seemed to correspond with an increase in the composition of intermezzos. Many of these pieces are best categorized as *entertainment* intermezzos —commercial pieces intended for easy sales and approachability by the amateur. While some of these entertainment intermezzos may have evolved from concert tradition, others absorbed popular music from outside the concert hall.

By this time, the title was more widely considered as a character piece, equal to other genres. Connecting intermezzos are rare within these years.⁵³ Intermezzo cycles and sets were still published, but a greater number of individual intermezzos were published. This suggests that by the twentieth century, the intermezzo had further lost its associations to being an intermediary or connecting work. It is also possible that the pressure of a more commercially driven musical atmosphere may have incited composers

⁵³ Connecting intermezzos did appear in sonata cycles. Notably, Balakirev's Piano Sonata No. 2 (1900-1905) has a long connecting third movement intermezzo in the place of a slow movement out of the four-movement sonata. Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 also uses a connecting intermezzo for its second movement, Adagio, which ends in a cadenza that leads directly to the final third movement. The intermezzo is around ten minutes long.

to publish individual intermezzos; an individual piece would have been easier to compose, publish, and profit.

1. Intermezzos in a Nineteenth-Century Tradition

Intermezzos intended for concerts continue to demonstrate a wide variety of tempo and style from the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century (Table 2.1 below). Concert intermezzos in both *scherzo styles* and *lyrical styles* continue to be present. These two categories have many of the same stylistic attributes as the previous chapter.

Table 2.1 Early Twentieth- Century Concert Intermezzos.

Composer	Origin	Title	Context	Date	Opening tempo/dynamic	Style
Leschetizky, Theodore	Poland	Op. 44 <i>Pastels</i> No. 4 <i>Intermezzo in Octaves</i>	Set- 4	1897	<i>Molto vivace / mp</i>	Scherzo
Palmgren, Selim	Finland	<i>Intermezzo for the LH</i>	Individual	1898	<i>allegretto / p</i>	Lyrical
Chasselon, Mélanie	France	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1899	<i>allegretto / p</i>	Scherzo
Reger, Max	Germany	Op. 32 No. 4 and No. 5	Set- 7	1899	No. 4 <i>agitato / f</i> No. 5 <i>andante / p</i>	No. 4 Scherzo/ No. 5 lyrical
		Op. 45	Cycle- 6	1900	Cycle	Both
Hofmann, Josef Casimir	Poland	Op. 34	Individual	1900	<i>andante con moto / p</i>	Lyrical
Sinding, Christian	Norway	Op. 65 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle - 8	1903	Cycle	Scherzo
		Op. 72 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle - 8	1905	Cycle	Scherzo
Respighi, Ottorino	Italy	6 Pieces for Piano No. 6 <i>Intermezzo - Serenata</i>	Set- 6	1903-1905	<i>andante / p</i>	Lyrical
Haas, Joseph	Germany	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1907	<i>sehr lebhaft / f</i>	Scherzo
Kirchner, Fritz	Germany	<i>Intermezzo á Capriccio</i>	Individual	1906	<i>allegretto / p</i>	Scherzo
Bridge, Frank	England	<i>2 Intermezzi from Threads</i>	Cycle-2	1910		Lyrical/ Scherzo
Szalit, Paula	Poland	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1910	<i>moderato / p sostenuto</i>	Lyrical
Mankell, Henning	Sweden	Op. 10 24 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle- 24	1910	Cycle	Both
		Op. 12	Cycle- 2	1911	No. 1 <i>non troppo moto / p</i> No. 2 <i>allegro</i>	No. 1 scherzo, No. 2 lyrical
Ponce, Manuel	Mexico	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	~1900-22	<i>moderato melanconico / p</i>	Lyrical

Sinding, Christian	Norway	3 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	1913	Cycle	Scherzo
Rex, Cairos	Unknown	2 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	1913	No. 1 <i>allegretto</i> /	Lyrical
Maykapar, Samuel	Russian	2 <i>Octave Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	~1900-1930	No. 1 <i>vivace</i> / <i>p</i> No. 2 <i>allegro</i>	Scherzo
Vomáčka, Boleslav	Czechoslovakia	<i>Intermezza</i>	Cycle – 3	1915-1917	No. 1 <i>larghetto</i> / <i>ppp</i> No. 2 <i>allegretto scherzando</i> / <i>sfpp</i> No. 3 <i>andante moderato</i> / <i>p</i>	Lyrical / No. 3 Fugue
Weill, Kurt	Germany	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1917	<i>quiet but not slow</i> / <i>p</i>	Lyrical
Nyzhankivsky, Nestor	Ukraine	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	~1900-1930	<i>moderato</i> / <i>p</i>	Lyrical
Bannister, Robert	Unknown	Op. 2 <i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1920	<i>moderato</i> / <i>mf</i>	Lyrical
Różycki, Ludomir	Poland	4 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	1915-1918	Cycle	Both
Kornauth, Ergon	Austria	Suite Op. 29 No. 2 <i>Intermezzo</i>	Set- 9	1923		
Bendix, Victor	Norway	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1921	<i>lento</i> / <i>pp</i>	Lyrical
Zins, Daniel	Poland	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1927	<i>allegretto</i> / <i>pp</i>	Lyrical
Hall, Frederick	Australia	<i>Intermezzo (study in octaves)</i>	Individual	1927	<i>allegretto/ff</i>	Scherzo
Graener, Paul	Germany	3 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	1927	No. 1 <i>svolazzando</i> / <i>pp</i> No. 2 <i>molto moderato</i> / <i>p</i> No. 3 <i>con moto ma non troppo</i> / <i>p</i>	Both
Fabini, Eduardo	Uruguay	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	~1929	<i>lento</i> / <i>p</i>	Lyrical
Beck Slinn, Edward	England	Op. 36 <i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1929	<i>Con moto</i>	Lyrical

Scherzo-style intermezzos in the early twentieth century continued to be popular. Some pieces were more technically based almost like etudes, and intended for experienced pianists. A few examples of octave intermezzos by notable composers are notable from this time (Example 2.1 below).⁵⁴ Leschetizky's *Intermezzo in Octaves* from his Op. 44 *Pastels* became popular enough to be included in Aeolian's *Pianola Catalog* from 1905. Samuel Maykapar's *2 Octave Intermezzi* likely were influenced by the popularity of Leschetizky's *Intermezzo*, as Maykapar studied with Leschetizky from 1893-1898, around the time when Leschetizky wrote his intermezzo.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, an exact date on Maykapar's composition is unknown. Both of these pieces could be considered as etudes in their virtuosic study of quick octave technique, and are marked to be played fast with a light touch.

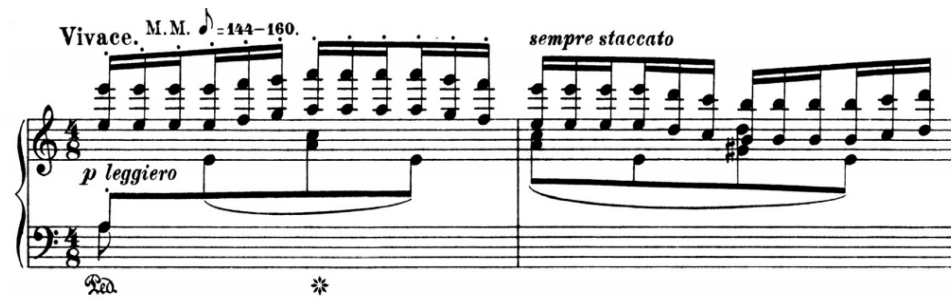
Theodore Leschetizky's *Intermezzo in Octaves* m. 1-3 (1897)



⁵⁴ In 1927, another octave example from the Australian composer Frederick Hall is also noted as a study in octaves.

⁵⁵ "Samuel Maykapar," Samuel Maykapar (taganrogcity.com), accessed January 16, 2022, <http://www.taganrogcity.com/maykapar.html>.

Samuel Maykapar's Op. 13 No. 1 *Octave Intermezzo* (Early Twentieth Century)



Example 2.1 Octave Intermezzos in the Early Twentieth Century.

Other scherzo intermezzos were styled more like dance pieces. These pieces were often very short (less than three pages) with a simple melody and accompaniment. Some were published as individual works, such as Mélanie Chasselon's *Intermezzo*. Her work is difficult to categorize, being both dancelike with a lyrical melody marked *con eleganza*, ultimately, I chose to categorize her piece as a scherzo intermezzo due to its dancelike qualities. Embellishment figures and grace-notes accent the strong beats, and quick scale and arpeggio figures in the treble clef are frequently marked *brilliant*. The simple bass accompaniment in 6/8 gives this piece an overall dance-like feeling.



Example 2.2 Chasselon's *Intermezzo* m. 1-6 (1899).

Some intermezzos were enhanced with further title descriptions. As *Intermezzo Elegiaque* (Example 1.13 from the previous chapter) would have been more indicative of a lyrical piece, while an *Intermezzo à Capriccio* specifies a lighter concert piece (Example 2.3 below). Many examples of hybrid and original titles are present in the next section of this chapter covering entertainment intermezzos.



Example 2.3 *Intermezzo à Capriccio*, m. 1-6 (1906).

Early twentieth century intermezzos in sets or cycles still had great variety. Cycles could be as small as two intermezzos or as large as twenty-four. Intermezzos grouped in cycles were usually larger concert works. Max Reger's Op. 45 *Intermezzi* (1899) contains six pieces that vary considerably between each other; some of his intermezzos could easily be categorized as rhapsodies or capriccios. The Norwegian composer Christian Sinding wrote intermezzos in cycles as well. It appears Sinding was influenced by the romantic traditions of Liszt and Wagner.⁵⁶ However, the Swedish Composer Henry Mankell wrote intermezzo cycles much like preludes. These pieces are significantly shorter than most intermezzos from both the nineteenth and twentieth century, often just two pages in length. Their brevity suggests an even further generalization of the title *intermezzo*. His largest publication with this title is the cycle of 24 intermezzos, Op. 10 *Intermezzi* (1910).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Kari Michelsen, "Sinding, Christian," In Grove Music Online (2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000025855>.

⁵⁷ Alexandre Tansman's 24 *Intermezzi* take a very similar approach to Henry Mankell's. See Chapter 3, p. 100.

2. Brahms's Influence in Concert Intermezzos

Brahms's intermezzos left an impression on piano music as well as the intermezzo genre of character pieces during the early twentieth century. Due to Brahms's stature, his intermezzos were immediately canonized into classical tradition upon their publication, advertised alongside other "greats" in classical genres (Figure 2.1 below). By the early twentieth century, no other European composer made such a singular impression on the intermezzo character piece (Figure 2.2 below).⁵⁸ These works were performed widely during the early twentieth century as evident in concert programs from the time (Figure 2.3 below). Brahms's influence on piano intermezzos is only part of the much larger impact he had on twentieth century classical music. The "Brahms fog," was coined by the early twentieth century German critic Wilhelm Tappert, to describe Brahms's style permeating the classical environment. Walter Niemann exclaimed, "Brahms is everywhere," when he described his influence in pianistic idioms in *Die Musik* in 1912.⁵⁹

Brahms's style in piano, chamber music, and lieder carried a "prestige" by the early twentieth century that would have been attractive for composers to imitate and absorb.⁶⁰ Many early twentieth-century intermezzos were written by composers seeking to establish themselves in the arena of serious classical music, to preserve their music in

⁵⁸As noted in Figure 2.2 below, the presence of mostly Brahms's intermezzos in the Aeolian catalogue.

⁵⁹ Walter Frisch, "The 'Brahms Fog': On Analyzing Brahmsian Influences at the Fin de Siècle," In *Brahms and His World*, 117–136, Princeton University Press, 2009, 117.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 118.

the established traditions of the past, as well as invent themselves in the present times.⁶¹

Thus aligning themselves with Brahms's tradition in this genre was appealing to classical composers both within and outside of Europe.

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Figure 2.1 *Musical Times* Advertisement January 1st, 1894.⁶²

⁶¹ J. Peter Burkholder, "Museum Pieces," 115-116.

⁶² "Back Matter," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 35, no. 611 (1894): 53-72, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3364029>, 56.

ROLL NO.		PRICE
67109 c	Impromptu a la Hongroise und Marsch... <i>Xaver Scharwenka</i> G minor. Nach Franz Schubert's Op. 54.	1 50
61489 c	Improvisation sur la Beethoven..... <i>C. Saint Saens</i> Cantate de Franz Liszt, Key D.	1 75
9285	Im Walde Fantasie, Op. 41..... <i>Gade</i>	75
9454	In Autumn, Op. 51, No. 4..... <i>Edward MacDowell</i> (See Woodland Sketches.)	
1093	In der Nacht, Op. 12, No. 5, F minor..... <i>Schumann</i> (In the Night.)	1 50
67517 c	In der Spinnstuben, Op. 68, No. 1, Key D.... <i>Anton Dvorak</i>	1 25
9436	Intermezzo, Op. 116, No. 2, A minor..... <i>Brahms</i>	75
9400	Intermezzo, Op. 116, No. 4, Key E..... <i>Brahms</i>	75
9401	Intermezzo, Op. 116, No. 5, E minor..... <i>Brahms</i>	75
9402	Intermezzo, Op. 116, No. 6, Key E..... <i>Brahms</i>	75
9360	Intermezzo, Op. 117, No. 1, E flat..... <i>Brahms</i>	75
9361	Intermezzo, Op. 117, No. 3, C sharp minor..... <i>Brahms</i>	1 00
9494	Intermezzo, Op. 119, No. 2, E minor..... <i>Brahms</i>	1 00
1138	Intermezzo Scherzoso, Op. 21, No. 9, D flat.. <i>Hans von Bulow</i>	50
62993 c	Intermezzo, Op. 52, No. 2, C minor..... <i>Anton Dvorak</i> Gigue, Op. 52, No. 3, B flat.	1 00
1442	Intermezzo en Octaves, Op. 44, No. 4, G flat.. <i>Th. Leschetizky</i>	75
9383	Intermezzo, Op. 39, Key A..... <i>Moszkowski</i>	1 25
1265	Intermezzo, Op. 9, No. 3, Key A..... <i>Richard Strauss</i>	1 25
9481	In the Country..... <i>John K. Paine</i> Woodnotes, Op. 26, No. 1, Key E. Wayside Flowers, Op. 26, No. 2, Key G.	1 00

Figure 2.2 Piano and Pianola Catalog of Music, 1905.⁶³

⁶³ A. Aeolian Company, Catalog of music for the pianola, pianola piano, and aeriola, volume I (New York, N.Y.: The Company, 1905) 24. Most of these works are from the late nineteenth century. Some of the listed intermezzos were orchestral arrangements written for two pianos, such as Moszkowski's Op. 39 Intermezzo.

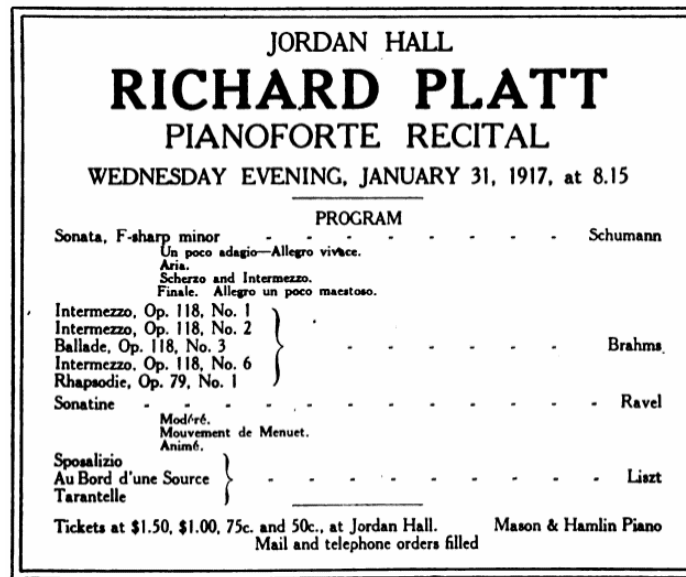


Figure 2.3 Brahms's Intermezzos in Recital at Jordan Hall, Boston, MA.⁶⁴

Brahms's late intermezzos provided what piano intermezzos lacked throughout the nineteenth century, an identifiable style or *geistige*, as outlined previously. Many of the following examples emulate Brahms's approach to a piano intermezzo, through similar application of performance markings, motivic use, and an overall fluidity of melody and accompaniment material. Additionally, the pianistic textures are similar to Brahms's compositions, usually contrapuntal, with wide arpeggiated intervals in the accompaniment and frequent doubling of thirds and/or sixths in the melody. These pieces vary in complexity, particularly through use of rhythmic flexibility or hemiolas. The form

⁶⁴ Boston Symphony Orchestra, *Programme*, (Boston, Mass.: The Orchestra, 1917) 761 in <https://babel.hathitrust.org/>

of these pieces is most often ternary, and the length is consistent to about three to five minutes.

Following the tradition of Brahms, Max Reger's piano intermezzos demonstrate Reger's absorption of Brahms's style into short works of great complexity.⁶⁵ Little is known about the context of these pieces or why Reger chose this title for certain works rather than others, but Reger's affinity for Brahms may be a strong indicator for his choice of intermezzo for his character pieces. Reger chose the title intermezzo for his Op. 32 No. 4 and 5, composed in 1899; Op. 45 *Sechs Intermezzi*, composed in 1900; Op. 79a No. 3, composed between 1900-1904; and Op. 82 Book 4 No. 3, composed between 1911-1912. In many ways, Reger wrote intermezzos in the same way most late nineteenth century composers did, with a variety of tempi and stylistic treatment depending on the context of the surrounding set or cycle.

Reger's Op. 32 No. 5 provides an example of a strong connection to a Brahmsian intermezzo.⁶⁶ Reger has an overall Brahmsian aesthetic, maintaining a compositional unity and source of ideas based on an opening motive (Example 2.4 below). The opening motive of the work bears resemblance to Brahms Op. 118 No. 2, if considered for its basic rhythmic feeling of two short pulses followed by one longer note. Reger disguises this similarity by maintaining a step wise descent and lower leap, but intervallic connection to Brahms is more audible on the third repetition (m. 3-4), with the step from

⁶⁵ Frisch, "The Brahms Fog," 2009. Frisch focuses on another example of Reger's absorption of Brahms style in his piece, *Resignation*, 129-134.

⁶⁶William Thomas Hopkins, "The Short Piano Compositions of Max Reger, 1873-1916)," PhD diss., (Indiana University, 1972), 127.

C to B and leap up to D in the soprano voice (Brahms's opening idea is C#-B-D). Reger does not proceed to mimic Brahms beyond this; rather, the motive succumbs to a descending idea and is rhythmically altered with additional passing quarter notes.



Example 2.4 Reger's Op. 32 No. 5 Intermezzo m 1-4 (1899).

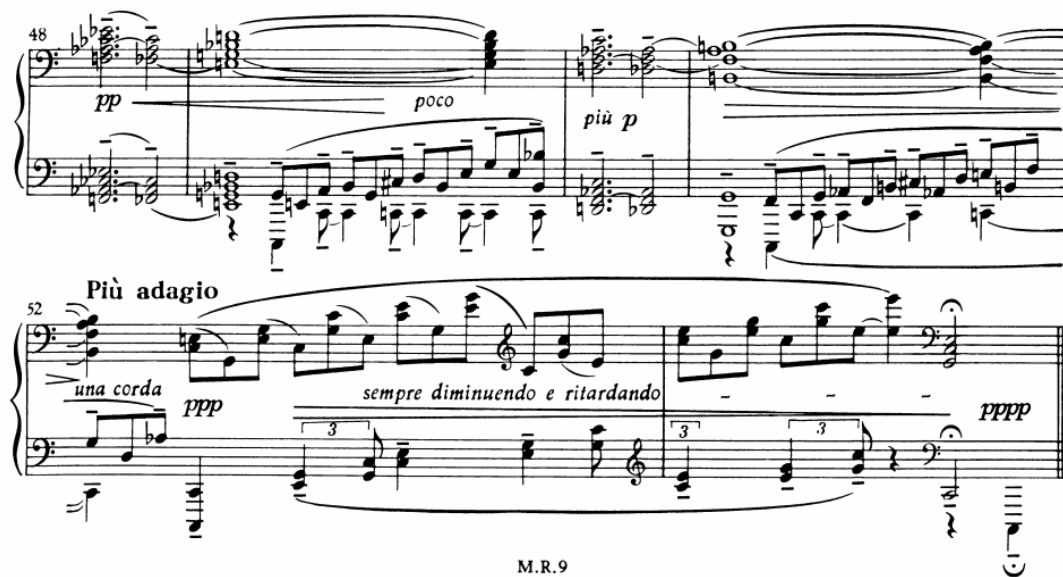
The rhythmic and metrical aspects of this piece also warrant a connection to Brahms; Reger also favors a sense of fluidity through rhythmic ambiguity. Reger opens with an uneven time signature in 5/4, later using a single 6/4 measure, and often obscures the feeling of downbeats through hemiolas. Other aspects emulate Brahms's pianism, such as the arpeggiated figures dipping low into the bass with wide spaced intervals that ascend into the treble. These accompaniment figures flow into the next repetition of the melody, creating smooth transitions between phrases.

Reger's gradually evolving closure in the final measures is reminiscent of Brahms op. 76 No.3 (Example 1.17 from the previous chapter). Reger has a long scheme

harmonic plan of C Major for the piece, but is not delivered clearly until the ending (Table 2.2 below). The final measures bring together rhythmic, melodic, dynamic, and harmonic complexity, combined to create a gradual unveiling of the tonic key that has been otherwise diverted throughout the piece, except for one quiet cadence in m. 7. The lowest notes in the bass in m. 49 and 51 are C octaves, but the seventh chords in the melody, along with the chromatic passing triplets in the bass, obscure its foreshadowing. The final measure delays the arrival of C major by one beat with an ultra-soft dynamic. This powerful moment is also the most introspective moment in this intermezzo (Example 2.5 below).

Table 2.2 Harmonic Plan for Reger's Op. 32 No. 5.

A	A 1	B		A 2 augmented main theme	
M. 1-7	M. 8-14	M. 1	M. 28-29	M. 30- 51	m.52 -53
d----- C	----- e	F-----	d-----	d----- G 7	C



Example 2.5 Reger's Op. 32 No. 5 m. 48-53 (1899).

Other examples from this time reveal a connection with the title intermezzo and the style of Brahms. Some composers interact on a surface level; Brahms's style was more “imitated” than “absorbed.”⁶⁷ Such is the case with a unique example of an intermezzo by Kurt Weill. His intermezzo is more of an experimentation with Brahms’s style, and is Weill’s only work for solo piano. Weill’s early musical instruction included considerable time at the piano, gaining a solid grasp of pianistic styles and idioms. In 1917, he composed his *Intermezzo* intended for a chamber concert that would include solo piano works by Beethoven, Weber, and Liszt. Letters from this time indicate that Weill was studying Brahms’s intermezzos the same year.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Frisch, “The Brahms Fog,” 118-121.

⁶⁸ Sherri Jones, *Intermezzo*, Piano Solo by Kurt Weill, (European American Music Corporation 1988) preface.

Weill's *Intermezzo* emulates the form and overall pianism of Brahms's intermezzos and has similar metrical figures. Although Weill's piano writing is sometimes more awkward than having Brahms-like fluidity. The opening idea begins with a tied sixteenth diad in the accompaniment which de-emphasizes downbeats. This is later replaced by a different accompanimental rhythm, the inversion of the first, which in turn changes the larger feeling of pulse. The ties of these accompanimental chords are not consistent in the draft of the work and are awkward between the fluctuating patterns.⁶⁹ The accompanimental figure is reminiscent of the motive from Brahms Op. 119 No. 2, where the bass does a very similar accompanimental pattern that is alternated with the treble (Example 2.6 below). Weill often composes a wider range of intervals in accompanimental figures throughout the piece. Weill's developmental B theme is based on a trading hemiola pattern between the treble and bass, like Brahms's B section from Op. 118 No. 2. Also in a Brahmsian fashion, rather than a verbatim repeat of the A section for the ending of the work, Weill varies the theme. He presents the A theme in the opposite dynamic in a higher register, accompanied by rhythmic variation of triplet sixteenth note arpeggios in the bass.

⁶⁹ Ibid.



Example 2.6 Weill's Intermezzo m. 1-3 (1917).

"Intermezzo" by Kurt Weill © Used with kind permission of European American Music Corporation, agent for the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc.



Example 2.7 Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 119 No. 2 m. 1-3 (1893).

The relatively unknown *Intermezzo* by the Ukranian composer Nestor Nizhankovsky shows possible influence of Brahms; unfortunately, there is little known about this piece or composer. The composer's lifetime, from 1893-1940, places the work in the early twentieth century. The opening melody becomes a part of the accompaniment's descending arpeggiated figure, helping to connect the melody and accompaniment seamlessly, much like Reger's work (Example 2.8 below). This fluidity between melody and accompaniment creates a cohesiveness that is very reminiscent of Brahms's Op. 119 No. 1 (Example 2.9 below). While Nizhankovsky writes a dotted eighth rhythm in the melodic motive. The musical ties and sixteenth pick up to the next

beat create a similar effect to Brahms's Op. 119 No. 1 in which the soprano voice is tied followed by a sixteenth pickup to the next measure. The range and melodic contour in these two pieces are also very similar.



Example 2.8 Nizhankovsky's Intermezzo, m. 1-2 (Early Twentieth Century).

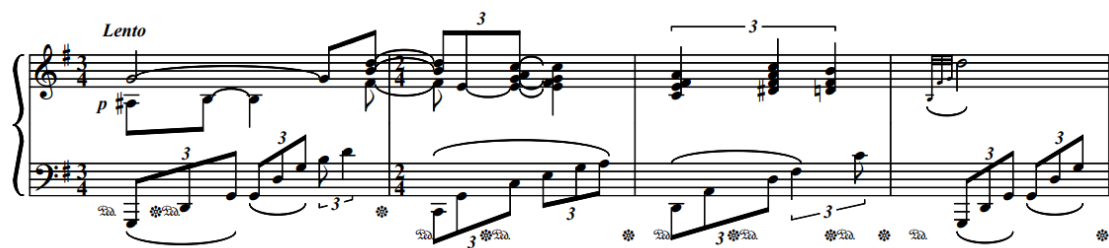


Example 2.9 Brahms's Intermezzo Op. 119 No. 1, m. 1-2 (1893).

Fabini and Manuel Ponce are non-European composers who may have sought to align themselves with a Brahmsian tradition through the writing of their piano intermezzos. Both composers spent some of their formative training in Europe, where they likely encountered and studied Brahms's music. The Uruguayan composer Eduardo Fabini (1882-1950) attended the Brussels Conservatory from 1900-1903, where he studied violin and composition.⁷⁰ Little is known about Fabini's *Intermezzo*, but the work

⁷⁰ Susana Salgado, "Fabini, (Félix) Eduardo," (Grove Music Online 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000009175>.

possibly dates from 1929. Fabini's *Intermezzo* is rhythmically ambiguous, often using a hemiola between melody and accompaniment, and ties to further obscure strong rhythmic accents (Example 2.10 below). The frequent changing of time signature and long, irregular phrase lengths result in a free-feeling, improvisatory effect. Despite the complexity of rhythm and phrasing, the form is simple. Rather than having a true B theme, Fabini's intermezzo is three iterations of an A theme with different harmonic development. Fabini's intermezzo is tonal, and uses chromatically altered chords and suspensions. These brief dissonances are also reminiscent of Brahms's harmonic language. The opening motive consists of a lowered chromatic neighbor (A#) that resolves upward to the third of the chord. This is reiterated throughout the piece as a unifying device. Like with many of the previous composers, the wide spaced intervals in the bass accompaniment are also an important stylistic feature of Brahms's pianism.



Example 2.10 Fabini's *Intermezzo* m. 1- 4 (1929).

The Mexican composer, Manuel Ponce, also had an education in classical musical, spending two years in Germany from 1905-1907.⁷¹ Ponce wrote his first intermezzo following his studies in Germany. While an exact date is also unknown, his first *Intermezzo* was written sometime before 1925.⁷² According to Ponce's student Carlos Vasquez, Ponce's *Intermezzo* could be described as a "miniature sonata, complete with an introduction and a coda." Vasquez notes the cohesion of compositional craft and expression. He remarks that Ponce's short work is the "perfect synthesis between technique and poetry."⁷³ Like Brahms and earlier composers, Ponce limits the work to a small rhythmic figure following a short introduction, an opening motive becomes the basis for the melody of most of the piece (Example 2.11 below). This graceful motive alternates between two lower and higher thirds. While the key area is E minor, Ponce delays clear confirmation of the key until the end of the first melodic phrase in m. 16. The overall effect of this lyrical piece is stylistically similar to the general attributes of Brahms's intermezzos, being slower, softer, and expressive.

⁷¹ Ricardo Miranda Pérez, "Ponce (Cuéllar), Manuel," (Grove Music Online 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000022072>.

⁷² Dahlia Ann Guerra, "Manuel M. ponce: A study of his solo piano works and his relationship to Mexican musical nationalism" PhD diss., (The University of Oklahoma, 1997) 68.

⁷³ Ibid, 60.



Example 2.11 Ponce's Intermezzo No. 1, m. 8-13 (around 1925).

Early Twentieth-Century Entertainment Intermezzos

1. Intermezzos and Romantic Idealism

By the early twentieth century, the piano gained relevance as a symbol of the “middle-class values of the Victorian age.”⁷⁴ The piano became an essential part of the home, and the industry boomed. Building pianos was easier and marketing techniques drew consumers to buy pianos, take piano lessons, and purchase sheet music. Amateur pieces were marketed with evocative titles and colorfully illustrated front pages. Many of these pieces recycled familiar musical idioms, often simplified for easier playing, while incorporating new musical trends. Thus entertainment intermezzos were consumer-based, and once these works fell out of the public eye, they were replaced by new pieces.

A strong current of Euro-centrism was present in America during the early twentieth century and the label *intermezzo* would have attracted the consumer who sought

⁷⁴ Craig H. Roell, *The Piano in America, 1890-1940*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989) xii.

to be elevated with loftier artistic ideals. The title was associated with serious romantic pieces, thus commercial pieces referred to the intermezzo as a label to indicate an artistic sophistication for public accessibility. Examples of these evocatively titled intermezzos began popping up in the late nineteenth century. One such intermezzo, titled *Rendez-vous*, was published in 1894 and was defined by the composer as a *Rococo Intermezzo*; the description “rococo” added for more intrigue rather than indicative of a particular musical style (Figure 2.5 below).⁷⁵



Figure 2.4 Aletter’s *Rendezvous* Cover.

Entertainment intermezzos existed in genres outside of solo piano; some of these pieces were also arranged for orchestra, military band, small ensembles, and songs. This

⁷⁵ Wilhelm Aletter, *Rendez-vous*, Kiev: Léon Idzikowski, n.d. (ca.1900).

practice was not new, as the practice of four-hand piano transcriptions of concert music had existed throughout the nineteenth century. Many popular tunes were treated this way during the early nineteenth century to increase their profit potential. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine each piece's origins, whether it was an instrumental composition or a piano composition. Regardless, the piano versions were essential for early dissemination of these popular tunes in a time before the wide use of the radio. The piano was also influential on the composition of the style of these pieces; many band ensembles functioned like a piano between the instrument groups.⁷⁶ The amount of sheet music reveals that entertainment intermezzos were widely popular around the globe, likely surpassing the popularity of most concert intermezzos composed during the early twentieth century (Table 2.3 below).

Unlike concert intermezzos, most of these entertainment intermezzos are straightforward works for the public. A similar flexibility of musical style as found in the nineteenth century continued in this category of amateur works. Intermezzo dance pieces were like the simpler *divertissement* intermezzos of the nineteenth century, in which the bass had a strictly accompanimental role, often in a stride or waltz. These pieces have a clear melody and accompaniment, the melody often doubled in thirds or octaves. Lyrical entertainment intermezzos were rarely harmonically, rhythmically, or texturally experimental. They sometimes had alterations in the score to allow for more simplified

⁷⁶ Paul Mayberry, "Hiawatha and the Indian Intermezzo," Chatfield Music Lending Library, accessed January 16, 2022, <https://chatfieldband.lib.mn.us/uncategorized/hiawatha-and-the-indian-intermezzo/>.

playing. Entertainment intermezzos continued to be of less than five minutes long; unlike the concert intermezzo cycles and sets, they were mainly published as individual works.

Table 2.3 Entertainment Intermezzos from the Early Twentieth Century.

Composer	Origin	Title	Date
Aletter, Wilhelm	Germany	“Rendez-vous”	1894
Beavois, Fernando	France	“Espèglerie” Op. 8	1901
Clerice, Justin	France	“Papillons bleus” Intermezzo	1901
Gillet, Ernst	France	“Pendant le Bal Intermezzo”	1903
Clerice, Justin	France	“Heures Grises” Intermezzo	1901
Aletter, Wilhelm	Germany	“Un Val a Trianon Intermezzo a la Gavotte”	1901
Clerice, Justine	France	“Billet doux” Intermezzo	1903
Beumacy, Roger de	France	“Pendant le Bal” Intermezzo	1905
Ward, Theo	London	“Bells of Hope” Intermezzo	1906
Kahn, Esther	Australia	“ Morceau de Ballet” Intermezzo Op. 25	1906
Kahn, Esther	England	“Echo” Intermezzo Op. 30 No. 2	1910
Dreyfus, Max	U.S.	“A Shady Lane”	1906
Auvray, George	France	“Intermezzo Waltz”	1909
Translateur, Siegfried	Germany	“Was Blumen Traumen” Intermezzo Waltz	1911
Montague, Seymour	U.S.	“Caresse Intermezzo”	1913
Frey, Adolf	U.S.	“Waltz Intermezzo”	1914
Herbert, Victor	U.S.	“Whispering Willows”	1915

Ketèlbey, Albert William	England	“In a Monastery Garden” Intermezzo	1915
Borch, Gaston	France	“Impish Elves” Intermezzo	1918
Logan, Frederick Knight	U.S.	“Summer Showers Intermezzo”	1918
Varley, Irene	English	“Love's Enchantment” (Intermezzo of Love)	1919
Ketelbey, Albert W.	English	“Victory Bells” Intermezzo	1919
Ketelbey, Albert W.		“In the moonlight” Poetic Intermezzo	1919
Berge, Irene	France	“Laughing Beauties	1920
Schendel, Julius	U.S.	“Blushing Coquette” Intermezzo	1921
Sanders, Alma	U.S.	“Fragrance of Spring” Intermezzo	1921
Ketelby, Albet W.	England	“Bells Across the Meadows” Characteristic intermezzo	1921
Fresco, Joan	U.S.	“Lady Lilly” Intermezzo	1922
Baron, Maurice	France	“Mamselle Caprice” A Parisian Intermezzo	1922
Baron, Maurice	France	“Promenade Amoureuse” Intermezzo	1922
Oswald, Albert H.	England	“Our Princess” Waltz intermezzo	1922
Wilhelmy. A.H.	Australia	“My Lady of Dreams” Waltz Intermezzo	1925
Lohr, Frederic Herman	England	“Autumn Gold” Intermezzo	1928

Many of these entertainment intermezzos are modeled after dance forms, marches, waltzes, or rags. One example by the English composer Esther Kahn is a dance-type piece with the title “Morceau de Ballet” (1906). The piece is of similar length to Mélanie Chasselon’s *Intermezzo*, but noticeably less difficult for the player. Aside from the octave leaps of rolled chords, there are less technical demands and is rhythmically simple (Example 2.12 below).



Example 2.12 Kahn’s *Intermezzo* “Morceau de Ballet” m. 5-8.

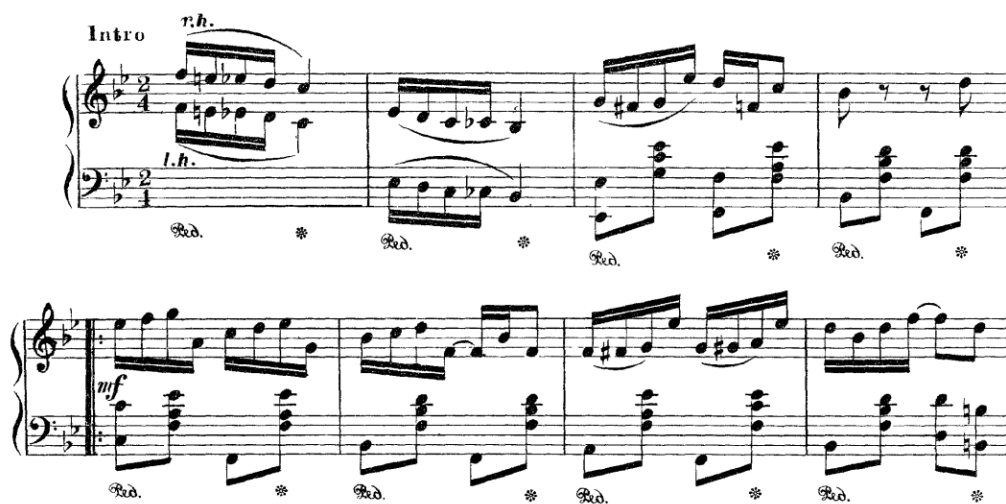
Maurice Baron’s *Promenade Amoureuse Intermezzo* (1922) is in a familiar stride bass accompaniment. The melody indicates smaller notes for the pianist who might choose not to play the eighth note doubled thirds or sixths (Example 2.13 below).



Example 2.13 Baron's Promenade Amoureuse Intermezzo m. 1-10 (1922).

Other examples draw from popular genres outside of classical music. Scott Joplin's "The Chrysanthemum" was subtitled an "Afro-American Intermezzo" and is essentially a piano rag (Example 2.14 below). The main title "Chrysanthemum" may have been inspired by Joplin's reading of *Alice in Wonderland*, while *Afro-American* was likely a source of cultural pride for Joplin.⁷⁷ While Joplin wrote a variety of piano waltzes, marches, and rags, he did not write any other piano work as an intermezzo. The dedication of this piece to his second wife suggests a possible poetic application of intermezzo. Perhaps Joplin's romantic sentiments were best suited with the label intermezzo for this piece.

⁷⁷ Elisabet Omarene de Vallée, "Building Blocks of a National Style: An Examination of Topics and Gestures in Nineteenth-Century American Music as Exemplified in Scott Joplin's 'Treemonisha'" PhD diss., (University of Northern Colorado, 2017) 202.



Example 2.14 Joplin's "The Chrysanthemum" m. 1-8 (1904).

Some entertainment intermezzos crossed into popular orchestral genres. Albert William Ketèlbey's piece, *In a Monastery Garden* (1915), was subtitled *characteristic intermezzo*. This programmatic work gained popularity as an orchestral arrangement accompanying silent films.⁷⁸ Marked *andante espressivo*, with a *molto legato* indication for the chordal opening, the music of the piece is intended to describe the scenes in the garden. The piano part uses trills (Example 2.15, m. 9-16) for bird song. A new theme is indicated in m. 49 as a "chant of the monks" with lyrics written above the piano part and switch to a chorale for the piano with low bass C notes to act as the church bell. This theme returns for the ending, using a plagal cadence to close the work with another religious reference. Ketèlbey's piece also indicates smaller notes for the rolled chords, likely for an easier reduction of the piano part.

⁷⁸ Philip L Scowcroft, "Ketèlbey, Albert W(illiam)," (Grove Music Online 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000014934>.

m.9-12

SONG OF THE BIRDS.

The musical score for 'SONG OF THE BIRDS.' is written for piano. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a melody with fingerings (1, 2, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1) and a trill. The bass staff has a 'marcato melodia' with 'con ped.' (con pedale) marking. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

m.49-56

CHANT OF THE MONKS.

Ky - ri e E - le - i - son, Ky - ri -

The musical score for 'CHANT OF THE MONKS.' is written for piano. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a melody with lyrics 'Ky - ri e E - le - i - son, Ky - ri -'. The bass staff has a 'Religioso. e sostenuto. P (a la Organ)' marking. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. There are 'Bell.' (bell) markings and '8va lower' instructions in the bass staff.

- e E - le - i - son, E - lei - son.

dim.

8va lower Bell.

Example 2.15 Ketèlbey's *In a Monastery Garden* m. 9-12 and m. 49-56.

The intermezzo title was so popular, it was later mainstreamed through film. The 1936 Swedish movie, *Intermezzo* (*Intermezzo: A Love Story*), was remade in 1939 as an American film starring Leslie Howard and Ingrid Bergman. The premise of the movie

revolves around two classically trained instrumentalists having an affair, the connection of the title and their brief romance is an obvious metaphor in the story. The theme from Howard's famous violin piece, also titled "Intermezzo," is played throughout the film. This title track song is a duo between piano and violin, and most appropriately, a sentimental, lyrical piece.⁷⁹

2. Exotic Intermezzos

The late nineteenth century and turn of the twentieth century was a time of increased travel and exposure; musicians chose to write with non-western influences in what is called exoticism. The musical exoticism of these works was mainstreamed to fit public tastes, rather than exhibit the actual music of other cultures. *Exotic intermezzos* were popular and included impressions of Native-American, Hispanic, Chinese, Middle-Eastern, and African-American music. Composers aimed to introduce listeners to "novel" cultures through "sanitized" depictions, making the exotic non-threatening.⁸⁰ This is exemplified in the cover page of "Anona," written in 1903, depicting a gazing Victorian styled woman's face for the Native American, dressed with feathers and beaded necklaces (Figure 2.6 below).⁸¹

⁷⁹ Heinz Provost, *Intermezzo, Souvenir de Vienne*, Edward Schubert & Co., New York: 1936.

⁸⁰ William J. Schafer, and Johannes Riedel. "Indian Intermezzi ('Play It One More Time, Chief!')." *The Journal of American Folklore* 86, no. 342 (1973): 384. <https://doi.org/10.2307/539362>.

⁸¹ Score



Figure 2.5 McKinley's *Anona* Cover (1903).⁸²

Exotic-themed intermezzos were widely popular. Like many entertainment intermezzos, there were multiple instrumental versions of these pieces. Usually these intermezzos were published as an individual piece rather than in a set or cycle. Stylistically, these pieces had far less in common with classical traditions; most often they were in popular dance forms of the day (Table 2.4 below). One such subgenre of entertainment intermezzos, known as “Indian Intermezzi,” was a global craze that followed a band piece titled “Hiawatha” (1901). Indian Intermezzos were an offshoot of the “coon song” movement and piano ragtime of the 1890’s.⁸³ The popularity of these pieces set off a string of other composers who wrote in this fad.

⁸² Mabel McKinley, “Anona,” (Leo Feist, NY: 1903).

⁸³ Ibid., 382.

Table 2.4 Exotic Intermezzos from the Early Twentieth Century.

Composer	Origin	Dance type	Title	Year
Mckinley, Mabel	US	Intermezzo two-step	“Anona”	1903
Herbert, Victor	U.S.	Intermezzo two-step	“Al Fresco Intermezzo”	1904
Helf, J. Fred	U.S.	Intermezzo two-step	“A Bit o Blarney”	1904
Smith, Lee Olean	U.S.	Intermezzo two-step	“Katunka”	1904
Cummins, Ella	U.S.	Intermezzo two-step	“Acoma”	1904
Logan, Frederic	U.S.	Intermezzo two-step	“Wisteria” (A Japanese Intermezzo)	1905
Morse, Theodore		Intermezzo two-step	“Arrah Wanna” (An Irish Indian Intermezzo)	1906
Meyers, Clyve	U.S.	Intermezzo two-step	Mexican-issimo	1906
Aletter, Wilhelm	Australia	Intermezzo two-step	Japanese Intermezzo	1909
Johnson, Charles Leslie	U.S.	Character Piece	“Iola”	1906
Alstyne, Egbert Van	U.S.	Intermezzo two-step	“Golden Arrow”	1909
Sartorio, Arnold	Germany	Rag inspired	“On the Plantation” (Negertanz Burlesque Intermezzo)	1914
Pollack, Lew	U.S.	Fox Trot	“Cairo”(Oriental Intermezzo)	1918
Thiele, Edmund	Unknown	Character Piece	“The sing song Girl” A Chinese intermezzo	1920

Many intermezzo two-steps were conventionalized in a popular dance or ragtime style but included musical figures to represent other cultures. These stereotypical devices lasted for decades in entertainment music. One such musical cliché can be found in the



Example 2.16 “Hiawatha” Piano Arrangement (1912).

Lee Pollack's "Cairo," written in 1918, indicated as a *foxtrot*, and begins with a bass accompaniment rhythm reminiscent of stereotype "oriental" ostinato. The dotted melody would suggest more of a ragtime piece in the key of a minor (Example 2.17 below).



Example 2.17 “Cairo” by Lee Pollack m. 1-4.

Another piece titled “The Sing Song Girl” was labeled as a “Chinese Intermezzo” (1920). The work has a similar stereotypical musical figure to suggest an oriental sound. This piece begins with open fifths in the bass and a pentatonic-based scale melody (Example 2.18 below).



Example 2.18 “The Sing Song Girl” m. 5-8.

Following the 1920’s, there was a significant reduction in sheet music published with intermezzo titles. What brought entertainment intermezzos to fame likely brought their eventual demise; fads died away and were replaced with new fads and titles. At the same time, the piano industry boom faded in the 1920’s as the radio became the preferred access to music in the home, providing even easier access to all kinds of music that did not require piano scores.

Conclusions

An intermezzo was defined by versatility in the nineteenth century; this persisted in early twentieth-century piano music to an even greater extent. This character piece was not only common in concert music, but also crossed into the realms of entertainment music of a variety of types. Within concert music, the intermezzo followed trends of the nineteenth century, although, rather than being solely a short form piece amongst other movements, piano intermezzos were increasingly published as single works. Many of these concert intermezzos were composed in a lyrical-style tradition, often resembling

aspects of Brahms's pianistic influence and his late intermezzos. Piano intermezzos composed outside of Europe demonstrate the appeal of this title to a wider group of composers.

At the same time, intermezzos existed as a romantic cliché in entertainment music. The Italian title was appealing with its European associations, appearing more sophisticated and eye-catching to the emerging middle-class consumer who sought elevation in society. While using this title, hyper-romanticized intermezzo pieces included poetic imagery of romantic ideals. Intermezzos also became uniquely attached to exotic pieces which romanticized the idea of the foreign into an approachable westernized image with familiar musical style. Most entertainment intermezzos were written in the United States between the years of 1900 and 1925. The disappearance of entertainment intermezzos after these years is likely due to a general falling out of fashion.

CHAPTER THREE

Twentieth Century to Today: Modern Piano Intermezzos

By the later twentieth century, piano intermezzos were composed primarily in concert music. No longer representing public taste, intermezzos of the later twentieth century are intended for a specific type of performer: one who is aware of classical music tradition and innovations. These intermezzos are not amateur pieces; extended techniques and intricacies of the score require an experienced pianist. The audience, performer, and composer diversity of the early twentieth century lessened throughout these years.

In prior years, intermezzos had enormous flexibility of function, such as the connecting intermezzos in sonata cycles or the intermezzo two-step in entertainment music. An intermezzo title was applied prolifically to many types of music; the title remained abstract and generic throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. During the twentieth century to today, the piano intermezzo often showed stylistic connections toward the romantic time period, often along with the use of modern techniques. Other genres, like the prelude or sonata, retained more plasticity in the twentieth century and had less ties to a particular style period. Compared to the intermezzo, these genres had longer histories in piano repertoire, and a greater variety of genre models by significant composers.

Notable modern works during this time reveal composers' avoidance of the title intermezzo; whereas in previous years, an intermezzo or intermezzi title would have

suited the work. For example, Pierre Boulez wrote twelve short works titled *Notations* (1945) that could have been titled *Intermezzi*. In some cases, the Italian translation was avoided and instead, the English translation was used, such as John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes*, (1946-1948) for prepared piano. Other avant-garde composers chose traditional nineteenth century titles that remained more generic in their present day, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke* (1952- 1961).

The overall presentation of intermezzos in the twentieth century remains similar to the nineteenth century, sets and cycles appear frequently (Table 3.1 below).

Intermezzos continued to be short, with an average length under 6 minutes. Within sets or cycles, intermezzos were often stylistically varied, whereas individual intermezzos were often in a lyrical style. Additionally, there seems to be little evidence in the later part of the twentieth century that intermezzos were used as connecting movements unless in a cycle.

Table 3.1 Concert Intermezzos from 1919-2015.

Composer	Origin	Title	Context	Date
Leifs, Jón	Iceland	<i>Torrek- Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1919
Schoenberg, Arnold	Germany	Op. 25 No. 4 <i>Intermezzo</i>	Set- 6	1921-1923
Ponce, Manuel	Mexico	<i>Intermezzo</i> No. 2	Individual	1925-1936
Lourie, Arthur	Russia	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1928
Tansman, Alexandre	Poland/France	24 <i>Intermezzi</i> (4 Cycles of 6)	Cycle	1939-1940
Poulenc, Francis	France	Intermezzos	Individual (No. 1-3)	1934-1947
Valen, Fartein	Norway	<i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 36	Individual	1940
Kochurov, Yury	Russia	<i>Intermezzi</i> Op. 12 No. 1	Individual	1947
Bowen, York	England	<i>Intermezzi</i> Op. 141	Cycle - 2	1951
Ornstein, Leo	U.S.	4 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	1956-1968
Goldmann, Friedrich	Germany	2 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	1963
Leibowitz, René	Poland	3 <i>Intermezzi</i> Op. 87	Cycle	1970
Láng, István	Hungary	<i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle- 10	1972
Rochberg, George	U.S.	Partita Variations No. 2 <i>Intermezzo</i>	Set- 6	1976
Binkerd, Gordon	U.S.	Essays for Piano No. 1 <i>Intermezzo</i>	Set- 6	1976
Viollette, Andrew	U.S.	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1977
Binkerd, Gordon	U.S.	<i>Suite for Piano: Intermezzo on Meine Lieder</i>	Set- 6 (No. 2, 3, 4)	1978
Soproni, József	Hungary	4 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle	1979
Kapustin, Nikolai	Russia	8 Concert Etudes Op. 40 No. 7 <i>Intermezzo</i>	Set- 8	1984
Górecki, Henryk	Poland	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Individual	1990
Widmann, Jörg	Germany	<i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle- 5	2010
Sabooi, Esahn	Iran	<i>Green Iran</i> (Six <i>Intermezzi</i> for Piano)	Cycle-6	2009
Meyer, Krystoff	Germany	6 <i>Intermezzi</i> Op. 121	Cycle- 6	2013
Gilbert, Peter	U.S.	4 <i>Intermezzi</i>	Cycle - 4	2015

Around the 1920's, a notable shift of more progressive intermezzos appeared in concert repertoire. The twentieth century was a time of many compositional innovations occurring alongside each other in concert music. Thus, one example does not exhibit the entire spectrum of possibilities during one time, as one work may be more innovative and another from the same time more traditional. The existence of multiple styles and trends at the same time, makes this chapter the most difficult to organize. Many of the intermezzos of this period are quite original works.

Some intermezzos in this chapter show a correlation with style periods of this century. Prior to 1950, *neoclassical* intermezzos, use the label of an intermezzo superficially, simply to indicate a short character piece rather than indicate musical style. Varying approaches of tonality differentiate these works; some composers wrote dodecaphonically. Intermezzos during the middle of the century, continue to show complexity, yet often retain aspects of romantic musical tradition through performance markings and pianistic textures. Some more specifically are influenced by Brahms's intermezzos. Following 1950, *neoromantic* intermezzos return to romantic style, using tonality in varying degrees. Most recent works continue to integrate musical influences with original approaches.

Notable examples throughout this chapter show that the piano intermezzo title is often an indicator of a romantic tradition.⁸⁴ In many cases, intermezzos are influenced by

⁸⁴ A few exceptions of pieces which clearly do not reflect on romantic tradition are Istvan Laang's *Intermezzi* (1972), clearly more influenced by pointillism and Nikolai Kapustin's *Intermezzo* from his etudes Op. 40, in a virtuosic jazz style. Interestingly, Eshan Saboohi's cycle of *Intermezzi* (2009) are more virtuosic modern examples that draw from a baroque and classical tradition, like the neoclassical works from earlier in the century.

Brahms, either with composer dedication and commentary, stylistic imitation to Brahms's pianism, or even direct musical references. Additionally, certain Brahms intermezzos, particularly from Op. 118, seem to have a compositional legacy of their own, being a relevant musical source in examples from this time.

1. Intermezzos from 1919-1950

Piano intermezzos composed before the middle of the twentieth century exhibit many innovations and trends.⁸⁵ Some intermezzos are nationalistic, incorporating folk aspects with modernism. Other intermezzos mix progressive techniques with various style periods. Certain intermezzos are specifically, *neoclassical*, relating to an intermezzo tradition broadly. Aside from the general title and performance indications, these pieces often avoid outright romanticism. While short, these intermezzos often have inventive forms and a variety of influences. Various classical traditions are drawn upon. Some of these works reflect a baroque influence, being highly contrapuntal. Others draw from classical period techniques, using sonata-like development. Traditional tonality was infrequent; composers explored original, and often more chromatic tonal systems. Within this mixture of stylistic influence, an intermezzo could have occasionally been an homage to Brahms. The critical history of Brahms was being developed during this time. Many

⁸⁵Some piano intermezzos from this time are less focused on innovation, embracing traditional approaches over modernism, never leaving romanticism to begin with. These intermezzos could be considered as extensions from the concert intermezzos in the early part of the twentieth century. Notable examples include the later intermezzos by the Manuel Ponce, Francis Poulenc's *Intermezzos* (1934-1937), and the English composer York Bowen's *Intermezzi* (1951).

composers revered Brahms as being a classicist during the romantic era, in contrast to other romantic composers like Wagner.⁸⁶ The variety of examples from this time show this diverse atmosphere.

One early intermezzo by Jón Leifs is both innovative and blends nationalist interests. Leifs's *Torrek- Intermezzo* (1919) is an individually published intermezzo. Leif composed the work while he was studying piano and composition at the Leipzig Conservatory between 1916-1921. The title incorporates Icelandic folk influence with the added word *torrek* to the title.⁸⁷ Otherwise, very little is known about this work. Leifs's intermezzo opens softly and slowly, centered around d minor, with more triadic areas highlighted in key structural points. A compositional process of contrary voice leading begins in the bass melody for the A theme (Example 3.1 below), accompanied by static repetitive chords. The A theme is rhythmically and intervallically transformed for accompaniment for a new more melodic B theme. The stepwise chromatic process is later combined for the melody and accompaniment for the climax of the piece that culminates to a triumphant B major chord. The inner stave accompaniment is juxtaposed against the outer staves, and both use some aspect of contrary, chromatic voice leading. Leif returns to the same rhythmic version of the opening theme for the ending but altered and doubled between the hands.

⁸⁶ George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes," (Grove Music Online 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051879>.

⁸⁷ Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, "Leifs [Thorleifsson], Jón," (Grove Music Online, 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000016341>. Unfortunately, it is unknown what the word *torrek* referred to.

m.1-3



Example 3.1 Leifs's *Torrek- Intermezzo* (1919).

Another very progressive piano intermezzo is Schoenberg's *Intermezzo* (1921-1923) from his Op. 25 piano pieces. This neoclassical work is also significant in being Schoenberg's first serial work based on a twelve-tone row. While some sections suggest a romantic pianism, other elements suggest a baroque influence. Schoenberg's Suite for Piano Op. 25 is a set of six pieces, each piece modeled after movements of a Baroque suite. The intermezzo was composed prior to the rest of the movements and an intermezzo is not a customary baroque title in a piano suite. Additionally, when compared to the other movements of the suite, the intermezzo is more lyrical. The "texture and flowing quality of the middle and lower voices in the Intermezzo are suggestive of Romantic-period writing."⁸⁸ Schoenberg was a proponent of Brahms's

⁸⁸ Deborah How, "Arnold Schoenberg's Prelude from the Suite for Piano, Op. 25: From Composition with Twelve Tones to the Twelve -Tone Method." PhD diss., (University of Southern California, 2009), 123.

compositional approach, particularly Brahms's ability to develop and compose new material out of original themes. Schoenberg coined this technique as "developing variation."⁸⁹ It is possible Schoenberg's insertion of an intermezzo piece in this set is a homage to Brahms.⁹⁰ Schoenberg's *Intermezzo* uses the range of only a few octaves between the hands, perhaps influenced by a baroque keyboard. Brahms's pianism would typically use a much wider span, particularly in the bass.

Schoenberg's *Intermezzo* retains unity through similar sounding motives; a technique he admired in Brahms's composition. The opening motive, indicated *espressivo*, is varied intervallically and registerally in the first three measures, and later in m. 20, when the treble takes the melody, and the bass repeats the opening theme idea on different pitches. The accompanying chord gesture becomes a familiar unifying device; rather than an octave and doubled-third texture, this tetrachord is of a third and ninth (Example 3.2 below). Schoenberg avoids triadic sounding harmony but suggests a dominant relationship to the tetrachord by transposing the tetrachord down a fourth in m. 2. The changing meters and irregular phrase lengths create a freer rhythmic feeling throughout the work.

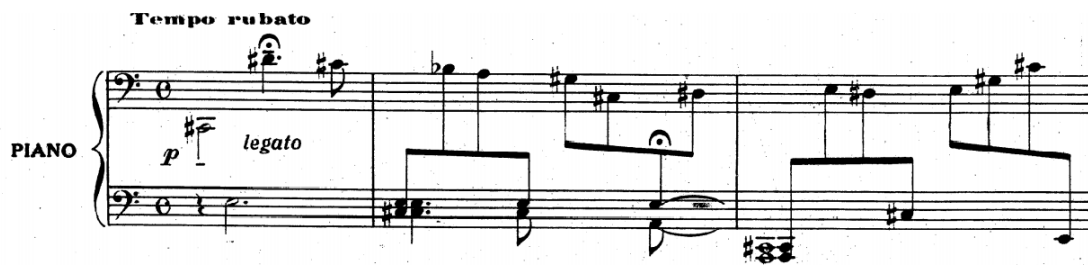
⁸⁹ Arnold Schoenberg and Stein Leonard, "Style and Idea : Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg," (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1984.

⁹⁰ Ibid.



Example 3.2 Schoenberg's *Intermezzo* from Op. 25 m. 1-3 (1921-1923).

Arthur Lourié's *Intermezzo* (1928) is a unique piano intermezzo, being the longest example at around nine minutes. Like Leifs's *Intermezzo*, Lourié's intermezzo is an introverted piece, opening softly in the lower registers of the piano (Example 3.3 below). Lourié writes two contrasting theme areas that use differing tonal approaches and musical accompaniments. The opening section is chromatic and sparse, contrasted by a new theme section characterized by rhythmic chords in major keys. His alternation between avant-garde and familiar idioms creates a unique form and progression for this intermezzo. Lourié did not write dodecaphonically, choosing to center material around certain pitches, such as C# in the opening measures (Example 3.3 below). Additionally, Lourié's pianism is unique, often favoring bass registers for melody and accompaniment.



Example 3.3 Lourie's *Intermezzo* m. 1-3 (1928).

"Intermezzo" by Arthur Lourie © 1933 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. All Rights Reserved.
For The Sole Use Of Michelle Laurent, George Mason University.

Fartein Valen's *Intermezzo* (1940) also draws on influences outside a romantic tradition. This neoclassical work was published individually rather than in a set or cycle and is atonal and highly contrapuntal. Valen wrote in an original atonal style which he described as "dissonant counterpoint."⁹¹ Little is known about Valen's compositional influence on this piece other than it might have been inspired by a painting.⁹² Like many individually published intermezzos, his work is slow, emphasizing long melodies. Valen's use of developmental procedures on the A theme is notable throughout the piece.⁹³ The intermezzo is a singular study on a collection of motives from the opening. Despite the use of chromaticism, Valen suggests a dominant polarity at the transposition of the opening motive in measure 4 to a fifth on A (example 3.4 below). The work

⁹¹ Arvid O. Vollsnes, "Valen, Fartein." (Grove Music Online. 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000028907>.

⁹² Bjarne Kortsen. "Fartein Valen. Life and Music." (diss., University of Glasgow, 1965), 133.

⁹³ Ibid, 134. Kortsen suggests Valen being influenced by sonata form principles in his writing.

consists of a polyphonic treatment of highly chromatic counterpoint, unified by motives from the first two bars.



Example 3.4 Valen's *Intermezzo* m. 1-4 (1940).

Alexandre Tansman's 24 *Intermezzi* is a cycle that truly embodies the twentieth century musical environment, mixing innovative and traditional approaches between intermezzo movements. His is the most prolific output of any composer in this genre for the later twentieth century. Tansman's works are extremely eclectic; some of these intermezzos are neoclassical and influenced by other composers of the time, such as Stravinsky; others are more romantic, dedicatory pieces to Brahms. Tansman wrote his intermezzos in four cycles of six intermezzos, between the years of 1939-1940.⁹⁴ While

⁹⁴ Hanna Holeska, *Tansman Piano Music*, (Dux Recording Producers, Warsaw: 2021), 4. Biographically, Tansman's works are a unique reflection on the title within his own life's events. During WWII, he was forced to hide due to his Jewish background. This break in Tansman's performing life was a

each book is separated, the 24 intermezzos are reminiscent of preludes, some pieces are sometimes extremely short—only a page.

Tansman's *Intermezzo* No. 19 is an example of a neoclassical intermezzo that is more progressive. The markings *allegro* and *secco* accompany the opening theme, which is more Stravinskian rather than Brahmsian. The repetitive rhythmic component becomes an essential aspect of this piece (Example 3.5 below). While tonal, a new theme area in the middle of the piece uses short atonal counterpoint in two voices; baroque-like independent lines yet modernized.

No. 20

Allegro molto ritmato

N.B. *p secco*

The image shows the first five measures of Tansman's Intermezzo No. 20. The music is written for piano in 3/4 time. The tempo is 'Allegro molto ritmato'. The dynamics include 'p secco'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1-4, and the second system contains measure 5. The bass line features a repetitive rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The treble line has a more complex melodic line with some atonal counterpoint in the middle of the piece.

Example 3.5 Tansman's *Intermezzo* No. 20 Book 4 m. 1-5 (1940).

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literal “intermezzo” in the sense that he had to cease all public appearances for the safety of himself and his family.

In many ways Tansman's intermezzos retain a Brahmsian aesthetic. Tansman's 24 *Intermezzi* are a synthesis between an "economy of means" approach and deep "concentration of thought."⁹⁵ This is exemplified in the No. 2 Intermezzo which is highly connected by motives. The opening motive from Tansman's No. 2 Intermezzo is reminiscent of the opening motive of Brahms's Op. 118 No. 2, step down followed with a leap of a third. Each repetition is extended by adding to the pattern or altering the pitches, but the overall shape of the motive is identifiable (Example 3.6 below). The motive is transposed up a fourth for repeat of the A theme (Example 3.6, m.4). The work is highly chromatic, but with occasional tonal centers in the bass.



Example 3.6 Tansman's Intermezzo no. 2 m. 1-4 (1939).

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⁹⁵ Jean-Pierre Armengaud, "Quelques aspects d l'oeuvre pour piano d'Alexandre Tansman : identité et influences," in *Hommage au Compositeur Alexandre Tansman*, (Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Paris, 2000), 110-111.

Unlike other neoclassical composers, Tansman was more directly influenced by romantic traditions and Brahms. *Intermezzo* No. 23 Book 4, subtitled “Hommage a Brahms,” is a romantic piece, much like a lyrical intermezzo. Tansman was fond of Brahms, and a direct reference indicates a strong link between his intermezzos and Brahms’s intermezzos.⁹⁶ The graceful opening motive is reminiscent of Brahms’s pianism in texture, with the melody in sixths accompanied by wide-spaced intervals in the bass. The motive is characterized by a suspension and stepwise resolution toward the dominant (Example 3.7 below). Tansman avoids clearly confirming the key area (Bb) until the final measures of the piece; another Brahmsian device.



Example 3.7 Tansman’s *Intermezzo* No. 23 “Hommage a Brahms” m. 1-7 (1940).

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⁹⁶ Gérald Hugon, in “Alexandre Tansman 24 *Intermezzi*, *Petite Suite*, *Elaine Reyes*,” (World Premiere Recordings: 2010).

2. Intermezzos after 1950

Intermezzos following the middle of the century continue to be influenced by compositional trends. A few composers wrote piano intermezzos that were influenced by serialism, being highly complex in all compositional aspect of harmony, dynamic, rhythm, articulation, and texture. While many of these works are innovative, some retain aspects of tradition intermezzo tradition. Following the 1970's more, neoromantic intermezzos show a stronger association to romanticism and Brahms's legacy in this genre.

Many modern intermezzos retain aspects of intermezzo tradition, particularly in cycles which continue to employ variety between movements. Goldmann's *2 Intermezzi* (1963) and René Leibowitz's *3 Intermezzi* (1970) were European composers who followed the Second Viennese school.⁹⁷ Both were influenced by total serialism which became highly popular amongst composers in the middle of the century.⁹⁸ Their intermezzos are highly complex, nontonal works. Like many intermezzo cycles throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they contain diverse

⁹⁷ Sabine Meine, "Leibowitz, René," (Grove Music Online 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000016331>.

⁹⁸ Gerhard Müller, "Goldmann, Friedrich," (Grove Music Online 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011382>.

movements. Goldmann's set includes a contrasting pair, the first piece titled "Sehr leicht" and the second titled "Sehr langsam." René Leibowitz also alternates between tempi and style.

Leibowitz highlights lyricism and melody amidst complexity. One example, Leibowitz's No. 2 *Adagio, poco mosso*, has a long soprano melody in the first two measures marked *expressivo*. The complexity is apparent with the lower voice accompaniment layered between triplet eighths, sixteenths, and duple eighths while having contrasting articulations. The expressive gestures take place across constantly changing meters.⁹⁹

Another intermezzo by the American composer Andrew Violette is stylistically similar to a lyrical intermezzo. Violette's *Intermezzo* (1977) is an individual piece, and less polyphonically complex in the opening bars when compared to Leibowitz's *Intermezzi*. Violette's *Intermezzo* features the sonic textures so often attributed to Brahms's pianism; a wide arpeggiated bass, doubling in the melody of thirds or sixths, and legato articulation. Violette begins with a bass accompaniment of wide arpeggiated intervals in the depth of the bass register. The melody is accompanied with thirds and sixths in the first few measures, creating a more familiar triadic sound while being dodecaphonic (Example 3.8 below).

⁹⁹ René Leibowitz, "Intermezzi," in "René Leibowitz Complete Piano Music Vol. 7," (Mobart Music Publications: New York, 1976-1978), 4. This work has been retracted and permissions were unavailable.



Example 3.8 Viollette's *Intermezzo* m. 1-3 (1977).¹⁰⁰

Neoromantic Intermezzos

Neoromantic piano intermezzos integrate musical aspects associated to the romantic period. Many of the composers of these intermezzos went through multiple compositional phases throughout their careers, often experimenting with serial techniques early on, and then returning to tonality. Some neoromantic examples are indistinguishable from the nineteenth century. Other neoromantic works use modern techniques in combination with romantic idioms.

Following a period of serialist composition, George Rochberg wrote a neoromantic intermezzo in his *Partita Variations* (1976). Like Schoenberg's Op. 25 *Intermezzo*, Rochberg's *Intermezzo* is within a set of pieces. Each piece embodies a different musical influence, a more poly-stylistic approach. George Rochberg's *Intermezzo* is placed between a baroque piece titled *Praeludium*, and a lively piece titled

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Viollette, "Intermezzo for Piano," (Andrew Viollette 1977).

Burlesca.¹⁰¹ Rochberg's *Intermezzo* is very similar to the construction of Brahms's *Intermezzo* Op. 119 No. 1, with the opening of descending thirds and use of triadic arpeggiated material throughout the A theme.¹⁰² The triadic arpeggiated material outlining a major seventh chord ends on a fermata on F# (Example 3.9 below). This motivic device is repeated but harmonically changed, not resolving. Interestingly, the tempo of Rochberg's *Intermezzo* alternates between a brooding legato gesture and playful staccato theme, much like both the lyrical and scherzo intermezzos of the nineteenth century. The piece ends quietly in b minor (Example 3.9, m. 58-63). This technique to delay tonic confirmation toward the end of the work is reminiscent of the ending of Brahms's Op. 118 No.1 (Example 3.10 below).

m. 1-9

Comodo (♩ = ca. 96)

mp *pp* *breve* *sotto voce* *poco* *cresc.*

poco mf *pp*

Subito allegro grazioso (♩ = ca. 108)

f *dim.* *e* *rit.* *simile*

¹⁰¹ Yu-Ching, "Rochberg," 43

¹⁰² Ibid.

m. 58-63

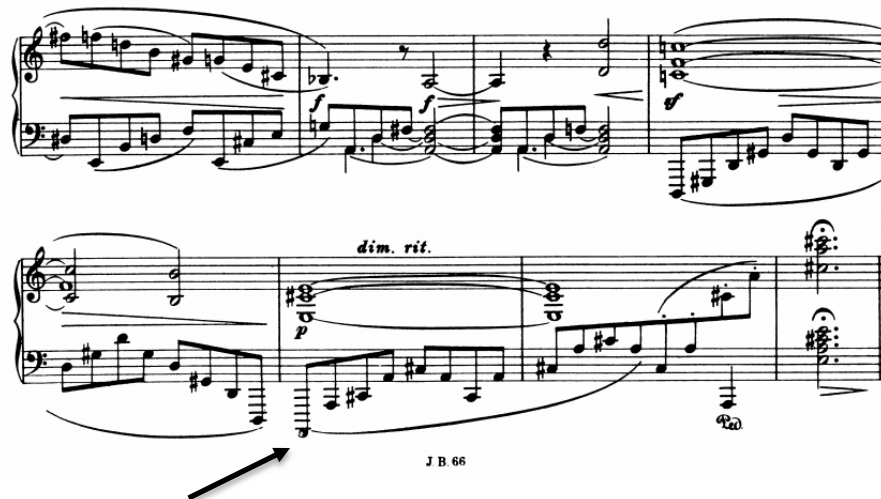


Example 3.9 Rochberg's *Partita Variations No. 2 Intermezzo* m.1-9 and 58-63 (1976).

"Intermezzo" from *Partita Variations* by George Rochberg © 1976 By Carl Fischer, LLC, on behalf of the Theodore Presser Company.

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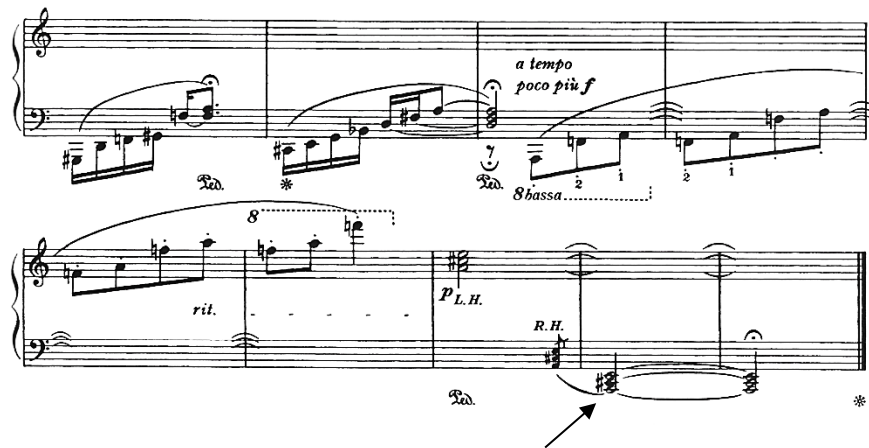


Example 3.10 Brahms's *Intermezzo* Op. 118 No. 1 m. 34-41 (1893).

Gordon Binkerd's *Intermezzo* from *Essays for Piano* (1976) is less adoptive of romantic musical idioms, but nonetheless influenced by Brahms's intermezzos. Binkerd's harmonic palette evolved from conventional tonality in his early years, later to serialism, and then to a more "highly chromatic tonality" from the 1950's- 1980's.¹⁰³ The dissertation by Kyung-Ah Noh explores the connection between Binkerd's *Intermezzo* and Brahms's *Intermezzo* Op. 118 No. 1. Binkerd writes an unaccompanied melodic line of fast 16th notes that is often highly chromatic but suggestive of harmonic material from Brahms's Op. 118 no. 1.¹⁰⁴ Similar to Rochberg's intermezzo, Binkerd's ending for this piece is evocative of the ending to Op. 118 No. 1 (Example 3.10 above). Binkerd uses a rising arpeggiation of diminished seventh chords that avoid a key area. The confirmation of the key is delayed until the final bars (Example 3.11 below). Binkerd ends in the key of A major, the same ending key as Brahms's Op. 118 No. 1, which ends on a Picardy third.

¹⁰³ Theodor Duda, "Binkerd, Gordon." (Grove Music Online, 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000003106>.

¹⁰⁴ Kyung-Ah Noh, "Gordon Binkerd's ..." 28-38.



Example 3.11 Binkerd's Intermezzo No.1 from Essays for Piano m. 99-107 (1976).

"Intermezzo" by Gordon Binkerd © 1990 By Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers, Ltd.
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Binkerd also wrote with more familiar romantic piano textures for his *Suite for Piano: Five Fantasies* (1978). The set of five pieces includes a capriccio, three intermezzos, and a rhapsody; all the intermezzos are transcriptions of Brahms's songs overlaid with lyrics. Each intermezzo transcription is true to Brahms's pianism; however, much less chromatic and experimental when compared to Binkerd's *Intermezzo* from *Essays*. The No. 4 *Intermezzo on Jungfräulein, soll ich mit euch gehn* is the most original of the cycle, with an extended improvisatory coda on the main theme. Binkerd seemed conscious of the practice to separate the intermezzos outside of the set, as the last intermezzo has an optional ending to allow the songs "to be excerpted and played by themselves."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Gordon Binkerd, *Suite for Piano*, (Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., Milwaukee, 1978), 19.

A later neoromantic example by Henryk Górecki is a uniquely short work that is equally influenced by romanticism and minimalism. Górecki's career was originally associated with the Polish avant-garde; then later in life he adopted a more simple and expressive style.¹⁰⁶ Górecki's *Intermezzo* (1990) follows the twentieth century trend of an individual intermezzo as an intimate and lyrical piece. It is entirely slow and in a soft dynamic. His intermezzo is part of a larger dedication to compose a short, single variation on Poul Rovsing Olsen's, *The Planets*, in dedication to Olson's passing in 1982. Górecki's *Intermezzo* is restricted to repetitive chord gestures in a more static section. He notably seems to reference the motive from Brahms Op. 118 for the B section (Example 3.12 below). The *teneramente* marking is the same marking as Brahms's Op. 118 No. 2, which is marked *andante teneramente*, and the melody is characterized by a stepwise descent and fourth leap. Although the piece does not establish a major key or use tonality in a traditional sense, the ending unexpectedly closes on a Db major chord.

¹⁰⁶ Adrian Thomas, "Górecki, Henryk Mikołaj," (Grove Music Online, 2001) <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.mutex.gmu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011478>.

m. 10-14

Pesante - mesto

10

p

poco più p

Teneramente

allarg.

(Ped.)

Ped. sempre

m. 26-32

Lento dolce

26

p

allarg.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Example 3.12 Górecki's *Intermezzo* m. 10-14 and 26-32 (1990).

"Intermezzo" by Henry Gorecki © 1990 By Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.
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3. Recent Intermezzos

Brahms's poetic connotation, *Rückblick* (reflect) from his Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 5 (1853), could not be more fitting to the modern piano intermezzo. Recent intermezzos are most often treated as a genre of reflection on Brahms's tradition. Peter Burkholder's idea of an "intellectual tradition" also describes the piano intermezzo genre, which has often been treated with a "historicist" approach. *Historicist* composers "write music with a concern both for continuing the tradition of European art music....and for distinguishing their own work stylistically from other composers, both predecessors and contemporaries."¹⁰⁷ Two unique examples of modern piano intermezzos, Jörg Widmann's *Intermezzi* (2010) and Peter Gilbert's *Intermezzi* (2015), reveal the unique ways a composer uses the piano intermezzo genre to look back on tradition and their own compositional voice. Both credit Brahms as an influential factor for their intermezzo cycles, yet further expand sonic possibilities.

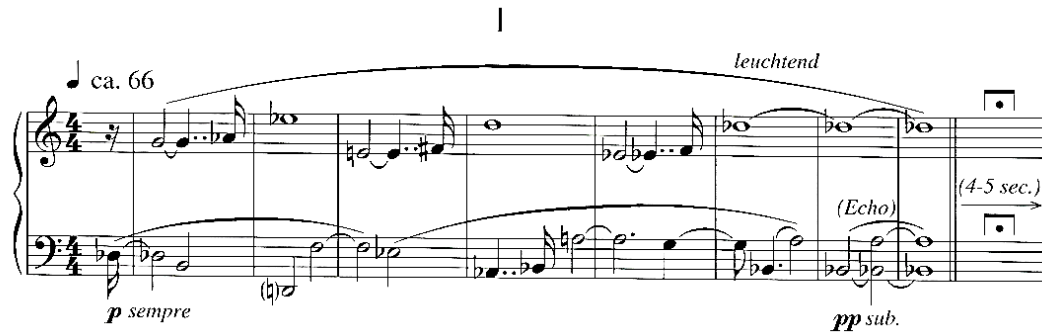
Widmann describes Brahms's intermezzos as having a "perturbing concentration and succinct dimensions... conjuring up beauty from almost nothing."¹⁰⁸ By this time, Widmann's remarks echo familiar sentiments regarding the intermezzo genre, recalling Armengaud's description of Tansman's intermezzos as having an "economy of means" approach, requiring a "concentration of thought."¹⁰⁹ Such limitation of musical materials

¹⁰⁷ Burkholder, "Museum Pieces....," 116.

¹⁰⁸ Jörg Widmann, *Intermezzi*, (Schott Music, Mainz: 2011) 4.

¹⁰⁹ Armengaud, "Quelques aspects de l'oeuvre pour piano d'Alexandre Tansman," 110.

is audible in the first intermezzo from Widmann's cycle, opening with single, sparse pitches in the treble and bass clef lines (Example 3.13 below).



Example 3.13 Widmann's Intermezzo No. 1 m. 1-8 (2010).

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Along with varying tempi between movements, the collection of five intermezzos creates a unique arch form, each movement getting progressively longer for the third movement (12 minutes) and shorter for the outer movements (about one minute).

Widmann creates a juxtaposition of nineteenth-century tradition alongside modern techniques in a postmodern fashion. Sections of traditional harmony, familiar chord progressions and accompanimental textures follow sections of more modern effects; sparsity, extreme keyboard range, and chord clusters. A notable musical similarity in Widmann's *Intermezzo* No. 4, "Wiegenlied", is a possible Brahms quotation. Rather than using Brahms's famous lullaby Op. 49 No. 4, the melody is reminiscent of the *Romanze* from Brahms Op. 118; a motive based on a rising fourth, displaced by an octave, and

stepwise descent (Example 3.14 below).¹¹⁰ Widmann uses the opening fourth as a unifying device throughout the movement and returns to the theme toward the end of the work (example 3. 15 below). The thematic return is in canon with a higher voice and raised by a half step. Widmann uses different triplet divisions in every voice, resulting in a complicated moment of rhythmic layering reminiscent of Brahms’s hemiolas, but to more complex extremes (Example 3.16 below).



Example 3.14 Brahms’s Op. 118 No. 5 m. 1-2

IV “Wiegenlied”
 (♩ = 56) (Ruhig fließend)
 poco accel. – poco rall. – poco accel. – poco rall. – accel.
p semplice *dimin. poco a poco loco loco loco* *ppp*
 8b-1 8b-1 (-) (-) (-)
 *) Oberstimme: führen (ad lib. wechseln) 54 169

Example 3.15 Widmann’s Intermezzo No. 4 m. 1-4.

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¹¹⁰ Cai, "Brahms' Short, Late Piano Pieces," 186.

(rall. poco a poco) ————— $\text{♩} = 40$ ————— $\text{♩} = 50$ (pochiss. più mosso)
 (calmo)

(molto *f* espr.)
mp *p* *mf* *ppp* *p* *pp*
 (sub.) *loco*
 (minimale Wechsel ad lib.)

(8)
 Poco più calmo
 (con tenerezza!)
 accel.

71
p *mf* *p* *f* *p* *poco f*
ppp *dolciss.* *sub.* *loco*
 54 169

Example 3.16 Widmann's Intermezzo, m. 66-73.

©Schott Music, Mainz

Peter Gilbert's *Intermezzi* (2015) also reflect on Brahms's intermezzo tradition as a basis expanded with modern approaches. Gilbert remarks that his works are intended to "encounter" Brahms's style exhibited by "rich relationships" between notes and smooth transitions that hide the "meshing gears" behind the sound.¹¹¹ Unlike Widmann's inventiveness in form, Gilbert writes four similar-length character pieces in slower tempos, much like Brahms's Op. 117. Gilbert includes a preface of Heine's poetry from his *Lyrisches Intermezzo*.

One such example of Gilbert's encounter with the idea of a Brahmsian "sound" is in his No. 1 *Intermezzo*. Gilbert writes with a clear melody and accompaniment texture that uses a smaller range of the piano for the opening, mainly staying in a vocal range for the treble. The movement also uses a modern harmonic palette with a wide intervallic range in the piano to be played "with depth." The opening is characterized by a suspended chord that resolves toward Ab minor with an added seventh (Example 3. 17 m. 1-3 below). This chord is repeated in m. 2, and again toward the end of the piece in m. 12 and 13. The final arpeggio begins on a low Db (m. 17), suggesting a possible long scheme dominant-to-tonic relationship. Additionally, the last chord uses most of the piano's range and contains the highest melody note. This chord is held with a fermata by an entire line in the score (Example 3. 17 below). The visual effect exaggerates Gilbert's point of deep listening concentration and expansion—the relationships behind pitch, range, and decreasing dynamic.

¹¹¹ Peter Gilbert, *Intermezzi for Piano*, (Peter Gilbert, 2012-2015), 2.

m. 1-3

Gently (♩ = 60)
molto espressivo e con licenza
accelerando -----, (*a tempo*) *accelerando* -----,

p *sub. pp* *mp* *sub. p* *pp*

(with depth)

m. 12- 16

Intermezzo No. 1

Slowly floating (♩ = 54) *poco accel.* ----- *rall.* ----- (♩ = c. 40) *now expansive*

mp *mf* *mp* *f* *mf*

Expansive and ringing
with motion (♩ = 60) *rall.* ----- (♩ = 44) *molto rall.* -----

pp *mp* *f* *ppp*

Example 3.17 Gilbert's *Intermezzi* No. 1 m. 1-3 and 12-16 (2015).

©Peter Gilbert

Conclusions

The twentieth century to today is the time period of the greatest compositional changes in classical music. Piano intermezzos reflect these compositional innovations but also retain aspects of classical music tradition. Many composers incorporate familiar elements, such as Schoenberg's *Intermezzo* which uses a melody and accompaniment style, or Leibowitz's *Intermezzi* which continues to have traditional Italian or German tempo and performance markings. Intermezzo cycles are far more popular than individual intermezzos, suggesting that the intermezzo's definition has returned to its historical roots of relying on a group presentation. One can also notice an increase in direct references to Brahms and allusions to his pianistic style, especially in neoromantic and more recent intermezzos. By the end of the century, one could make the case that the intermezzo genre has become one with clear connections to a Brahmsian tradition.

EPILOGUE

On May 23, 1889, Brahms wrote a letter to Elizabeth von Herzonberg in which he concluded with the sentiments, “I wish you all things good and beautiful, with my visit to Berchtesgaden as an intermezzo!”¹¹² The German town of Berchtesgaden was a destination for many artists during the nineteenth century, being well known for its natural splendor in the countryside near the Kehlstein mountain in the alps. Brahms implies the vacation as an intermezzo, using this term in casual daily discourse, as a break away from everyday life.

After all the close analysis of intermezzos in this dissertation, it is possible to broaden our perspective and speculate that this title may have been a symbol for the kind of idiom Brahms describes. In other words, it may have been programmatic. Some composers clearly hinted at the intermezzo with programmatic connotations, such as Mussorgsky’s *Intermezzo*, which was influenced by musings about a Russian peasant scene. Brahms’s intermezzos were described quite poetically by others, notably Hanslick’s description of them as “dreamy.”¹¹³ The piano intermezzo could have been widely perceived as an escape, or a daydream; transporting the listener away from their life for a moment.

¹¹² Brahms, *Johannes Brahms, the Herzogenberg correspondence*, 377.

¹¹³ Ring, “The Learned Self: Artifice in Brahms’s Late Intermezzi,” 25.

At the same time, the lyrical intermezzo embodies qualities of intimacy and privacy. When one imagines Brahms composing his late intermezzos, in the quiet moments of reflection toward the end of his life, these pieces become extremely personal. The piano as an instrument, lends itself to this intimate atmosphere, whether in moments of solo practice or in the casual home performances of parlors and living rooms. Perhaps the lyrical intermezzo is a natural product of nineteenth century music making, the epitome of sentimental pieces.

Yet Brahms's intermezzos are also pieces of significant mental demands. Tim Howell discusses this dualism in regards to Brahms's Op. 117 *Intermezzi* as having a "distinction between what can be seen to be compressed and what may be perceived as being expansive," having both "sheer economy of form" and "heightened expressivity."¹¹⁴ Clara Schumann also noted Brahms's later works for their "delicate understanding" and the *geistige* technique. One hundred years later, intermezzos have continually been commented on for their economy, concentration, and expressivity, such as the intermezzo works of Ponce, Tansman, Widmann, and Gilbert. Brahms's intermezzos pose a sort of compositional challenge, a dualism of efficiency and beauty.

Pianists' perceptions of the piano intermezzo are likely too narrow or even confused by the complex history of this title. In all the piano intermezzos I found, rarely were these pieces influenced by comic opera. To the orchestral or vocal musician, the greater musical tradition of theatrical and operatic intermezzos as amusement works may be more general knowledge. At the same time, it is possible to have opinions about piano

¹¹⁴ Howell, "Brahms, Kierkegaard and Repetition: Three Intermezzi," 102.

intermezzos that are opposite the true nineteenth-century history of this genre. Brahms likely had no intention of creating a branch of this title in piano music, yet history shows his significant influence on pieces with this title. For most pianists today, the piano intermezzo has a centralized awareness on his legacy.

It is natural for pianists and composers for piano to focus on Brahms's intermezzos, but not everyone has interpreted this title as an intimate character piece. There is no requirement that dictates the intermezzo as slower, softer, and introspective. Furthermore, intermezzo cycles can have lots of energy. Some modern cycles exhibit great variety such István Láng's *Intermezzi* (1972) and John McCabe's *Intermezzi* (1968). These are works of extremely short, interconnecting movements in many different moods, that do not give much time for lulling the listener. Notably, composers throughout the early twentieth century to today often incorporate both traditions of a diverse intermezzo cycle and a Brahmsian intermezzo within the same work, such as Tansman's 24 *Intermezzi*. The piano intermezzo has a vibrant history, the knowledge of which hopefully renews our modern understanding of this title and its use in classical music.

APPENDIX

*Most of the pieces for this dissertation were collected from digital searches from Worldcat.org, the Petrucci Music Library Project, and Naxos Music Library. Others were from personal references.

Schumann, Robert	Germany	<i>Intermezzi</i> , Op.4	1832
Heller, Stephen	Hungary	<i>L'art de phraser: Etudes</i> Op. 16, No. 2 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1840
Gade, Niels	Netherlands	O. 9 <i>Aquarellen</i> No. 8 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1849-1850
Kjeuralf, Halfden	Norway	<i>Intermezzo and Springdans</i> , Op.27	1851-1852
Rubinstein, Anton	Russia	<i>Le bal: fantaisie pour le piano en dix numeros</i> , No. 5 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1855
Volkman, Robert	Germany	<i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 25b	1857
Kreuzhage, Eduard	Germany	4 <i>Intermezzi</i> , Op.19	?1838-1898
Mussorgsky, Modest	Russia	<i>Intermezzo in modo classico</i>	1860-1861, 1867
Jadassohn, Salomon	Germany	<i>Serenade</i> , Op.35 No. 5 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1865
Jenson, Adolf	Germany	<i>Lieder und Tänze</i> , Op.33, No. 3, 9	1866
Dubois, Théodore	France	<i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 20	1870
Borodin, Alexandre	Russia	<i>Petite Suite</i> , No. 2 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1870
Seiss, Isidor	Germany	Op. 9, No. 2 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1871
Brahms, Johannes	Germany	Op. 76, No. 3, 4, 6, 7	1871
Heller, Stephen	Hungary	Op. 135, 2 <i>Intermezzi</i>	1873
Scharwenka, Xaver	Poland	<i>Scherzo con 2 intermezzi</i> , Op. 19	1875
Jaëll, Alfred	France	<i>Intermezzo élégiaque</i> , Op.160	1875
Tchaikovsky, Pyotr	Russia	Suite No. 1, Op. 43 No. 3 <i>Intermezzo</i> Arr. Piano Four hands	1879
Kirchner, Theodore	Germany	Op. 45, No.5 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1879
Reinhold, Hugo	Austria	<i>Intermezzo Scherzoso</i> Op. 14, Op. 29	1880-1882

Dvořák, Antonín	Czechoslovakia	6 <i>Piano Pieces</i> Op. 52, No 2 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1880
Teilman, Christian	Norway	<i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 77	1882
Arensky, Anton	Russia	Op. 13 (Piano Version)	1882
Lyadov, Anatoly	Russia	2 <i>Intermezzos</i> Op. 7	1882
		2 <i>Intermezzos</i> Op. 8	1883
Panderewski, Ignacy	Poland	<i>Intermezzo</i> in G minor	1885
		<i>Intermezzo Polacco</i> Op. 14, No.2	1886
Boëllmann, Léon	France	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1885
Moszkowski, Moritz	Germany	<i>Suite d'Orchestre</i> No.1, Op.39, No. 4 <i>Intermezzo</i> for two pianos	1886
Gautier, Léonard	Germany	<i>Le Secret: Intermezzo</i> <i>Pizzicato</i>	?1886
Rheinberger, J.	Germany	<i>Intermezzo</i>	?1887
Reinhold, Hugo	Austria	4 <i>Intermezzi</i> Op. 48	1887
		24 <i>Miniaturbilder</i> op. 39, No. 21	1889-1890
Macdowell, Edward	England	12 <i>Etudes</i> Op. 39, No. 9	1889
Chaminade, Cécile	France	<i>Pas des Sylphes: Intermezzo</i> <i>Pour Piano</i>	1890
Czibulka, Alphons	Hungary	<i>Songe d'amour après le bal</i> , Op.356 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1890
		<i>Murmure de bal: Intermezzo</i>	
Gregh, Louis	France	Op. 66	1891
German, Edward	England	<i>Intermezzo</i> in a minor	1892
Brahms, Johannes	Germany	Op. 116-119	1892-1893
Kalinnikov, Vasily	Russia	<i>Russian Intermezzo</i> in f minor	1894
		<i>Rendez-vous: Intermezzo</i>	
Aletter, Wilhelm	Germany	<i>Rococo</i>	1894
Korganov, Genary	Russia	<i>Miniatures, Op.10</i> , No. 4 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1884
Dohnányi, Ernő	Hungary	4 <i>Klavierstücke, Op.2</i> , No. 2,3 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1896-1897

Leschetitzky, Theodore	Germany	<i>Pastels</i> Op. 44, No. 4. <i>Intermezzo in Octaves</i>	1897
Grainger, Percy	Australia	<i>Eastern Intermezzo</i> for two pianos	1899
Chasselon, Mélanie	France	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1899
Reger, Max	Germany	Op. 32, No. 4 and 5	1899
Juon, Paul	Russia	6 <i>Piano Pieces</i> , Op.12, No. 5 <i>Intermezzo</i>	1899
Klein, Robert	Germany	<i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 44 No. 2	1899
Redman, Harry Newton	England	<i>Six pieces for the pianoforte.</i> Op. 13., No. 5 <i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 45 <i>Intermezzi</i>	1899 1900
Sarola, Jean	England	<i>Pom-Pom: March Intermezzo</i> <i>En el Alcazar</i> , Op. 119	?1900-1932
Costa, Vicente	Spain	<i>Intermezzo</i>	?1852-1919
Marchant, Arthur	England	<i>Tazende Elfen: Intermezzo</i>	?1850-1921
Alves of Mesquita, Henrique	Brazil	<i>Intermezzo</i>	?1830-1906
Hofmann, Józef	Poland	<i>Intermezzo</i> Op. 34 No. 1	1900
Loraine, William	U.S.	<i>Zamona: an Arabian</i> <i>Intermezzo</i> <i>Zallah: An Egyptian</i> <i>Intermezzo</i>	1901 1903
Clérice, Justin	Argentina	<i>Papillons bleus: Intermezzo</i>	1901
Engelmenn, ,H.	France	<i>Intermezzo pizzicato</i>	1901
Clerice, Justin	U.S.	<i>Heures Grises: Intermezzo</i> <i>Un Bal à Trianon: Intermezzo</i> <i>a la Gavotte</i>	1901 1901
Aletter, Wilhelm	Germany	<i>Olama: Arabian Intermezzo</i>	1902
Corinne, J.	Unknown	6 <i>Pieces for Piano</i> No. 6 <i>Intermezzo-Serenata</i>	1903-1905
Respighi, Ottorino McKinley, Mabel / Robert Kaiser King	Italy U.S.	<i>Anona: Intermezzo two-step</i>	1903
Gillet, Ernst	France	<i>Pendant le Bal: Intermezzo</i>	1903
Sinding, Christian	Norway	8 <i>Intermezzi</i> , Op. 65	1903
Sibelius, Jean	Finland	<i>Dance Intermezzo</i> , Op.45 No.2	1904

Rawlings, Charles Arthur	England	<i>Tres Piquant: Intermezzo</i>	1904
Herbert, Victor	U.S.	<i>Al Fresco: Intermezzo</i>	1904
Helf, J. Fred	U.S.	<i>A Bit O' Blarney: Irish Intermezzo</i>	1904
Franke, Theodore	Unknown	<i>Russian Intermezzo</i>	1904
Smith, Lee Olean	Unknown	<i>Katunka: Intermezzo</i>	1904
Joplin, Scott	U.S.	<i>The Chrysanthemum: Afro- American Intermezzo</i>	1904
Cummins, Ella Uhrig	Unknown	<i>Acoma: Indian Intermezzo</i>	1904
Albert, Eugen d'	Scotland	<i>5 Bagatelles, Op.29 No. 4 Intermezzo</i>	1905
Sinding, Christian	Norway	<i>8 Intermezzi, Op. 72</i>	1905
Logan, Frederic Knight	U.S.	<i>Wistaria: A Japanese intermezzo two-step</i>	1905
Beaumercy, Roger de	France	<i>Pendant le bal: Intermezzo, Op. 122</i>	1905
Ward, Theo	England	<i>Bells of Hope: Intermezzo</i>	1906
Morse, Theodore	U.S.	<i>Arrah Wanna: An Irish Indian Intermezzo</i>	1906
Kahn, Esther	England	<i>Morceau de Ballet: Intermezzo Op. 25</i>	1906
Johnson, Charles Leslie	U.S.	<i>Iola</i>	1906
Palmgren, Selim	Finland	<i>Intermezzo for the left hand</i>	1906
Kirchner, Fritz	Germany	<i>Intermezzo à Capriccio</i>	1906
Wiklund, Adolf	Sweden	<i>Tre Intermezzi, Op. 8</i>	1906
Myers, Cleve	Unknwon	<i>Mexican - Issimo : Intermezzo</i>	1906
Dreyfus, Max	Germany/U.S.	<i>A Shady Lane: Intermezzo</i>	1906
Haas, Joseph	Germany	<i>Intermezzo in B Minor</i>	1907
Cui, César	Russia	<i>Trois Morceaux : No. 1 Intermezzo Op. 69</i>	1907
Oldberg, Arne	U.S.	<i>3 Miniatures, Op.27, No. 2 Intermezzo</i>	1907
Rivers, Seaton	Unknown	<i>Intermezzo in A Major</i>	1908
Melartin, Erkki	Finland	<i>Intermezzi Op. 16</i>	1908
Paans, Willem Jan	France	<i>Pampus : Intermezzo two- step</i>	1908

Johnson, Charles Leslie	U.S.	<i>Fawn Eyes: Intermezzo two-step</i>	1908
Auvray, George	France	<i>Intermezzo-valse, Op.238</i>	1909
Ponce, Manuel	Mexico	<i>Intermezzo No. 1</i>	1909
Aletter, Wilhelm	Germany	<i>Hanako: A Japanese Intermezzo</i>	1909
Johnson, Charles Leslie	U.S.	<i>Sunbeam: Intermezzo</i>	1909
Van Alstyne, Egbert	U.S.	<i>Golden Arrow: Intermezzo two-step</i>	1909
Joseffy, Rafael	Slovakia	<i>Oriental Intermezzo</i>	1909
		<i>A Silver Star: Intermezzo</i>	1910
Kahn, Esther	England	<i>Intermezzo No. 2, Op. 30</i>	1910
Szalit, Paula	Poland	<i>Intermezzo Op. 3, No. 3</i>	1910
Beauvois, Fernande	France	<i>Espièglerie, Op.8</i>	1910
Churcher, Sydney	Unknown	<i>Arcadia: Intermezzo</i>	1910
Clarke, Robert Coningsby	England	<i>Charmeuse Waltz: Intermezzo</i>	1910
Mankell, Henning	Sweden	<i>24 Intermezzi Op. 10</i>	1910
		<i>2 Intermezzi Op. 12</i>	1911
Huber, Hans	Switzerland	<i>6 Kleine Konzertstücke, Op.131 No. 5 Intermezzo</i>	1911
Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel	England	<i>The Forest of Wild Thyme, Op.74, No. 3 Intermezzo</i>	1911-1925
Translateur, Siegfried	Germany	<i>Was Blumen träumen, Op.156 Waltzer- Intermezzo</i>	1911
Sinding, Christian	Norway	<i>3 Intermezzi, Op.116</i>	1913
Cairos-Rego, Rex de	Unknown	<i>2 Intermezzi, Op. 3</i>	1913
Frey, Adolf	Germany/ U.S.	<i>Valse-intermezzo</i>	1914
Maykapar, Samuel	Russia	<i>2 Oktaven Intermezzi, Op.13</i>	1914
		<i>On the Plantation: Negertanz</i>	
Sartorio, Arnaldo	Germany	<i>Burlesque Intermezzo</i>	1914
Herbert, William Rhys	England	<i>On A Moonlight Night: Intermezzo</i>	1915
		<i>Whispering Willows: Intermezzo</i>	
Herbert, Victor	U.S.	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1915
Ketèlbey, Albert William	England	<i>In a Monastery Garden: Characteristic Intermezzo</i>	1915

Weill, Kurt	Germany	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1917
Fletcher, Percy Eastman	England	<i>Wonder-Eyes: Song Intermezzo</i>	1917
Borch, Gaston	France	<i>Impish Elves: Intermezzo</i>	1918
Logan, Frederic Knight	U.S.	<i>Summer Showers: Intermezzo</i>	1918
Pollack, Lew	U.S.	<i>Cairo: Oriental Intermezzo</i>	1918
Wilhelmy, A.H.	Unknown	<i>Kilmeny Intermezzo</i>	1918
		<i>Loves Enchantment: Intermezzo D' Amour</i>	1919
Varley, Irene	England		1919
Leifs, Jón	Iceland	<i>Torrek-Intermezzo</i>	1919
Ketèlbey, Albert William	England	<i>Victory Bells: Intermezzo</i>	1919
Ketèlbey, Albert William	England	<i>In the Moonlight: Poetic Intermezzo</i>	1919
Nizhankovsky, Nestor	Ukraine	<i>Intermezzo</i>	?1893-1940
Reis, Julio	Brazil	<i>Intermezzo, IJR6</i>	?1909-1920
Montague, Seymour	Unknown	<i>Caresse: Intermezzo</i>	?1920
		<i>Laughing Beauties: Intermezzo</i>	1920
Bergé, Irénée	France		1920
Calvo, Luis Antonio	Spain	<i>Lejano Azul: Intermezzo</i>	1920
		<i>The Sing Song Girl: A Chinese intermezzo</i>	1920
Thiele, Edmund B.	Unknown	<i>Pieces Pour Piano, No. 2 Intermezzo</i>	1920
Blockx, Jan	Belgium		1920
Bannister, Robert	Unknown	<i>Intermezzo Op. 2</i>	1920
Ponce, Manuel	Mexico	<i>Intermezzo No.2</i>	?1921-1936
		<i>Intermezzo No. 3</i>	?1921-1936
		<i>Blushing Coquette: Intermezzo</i>	1921
Schendel, Julius L.	U.S.		1921
		<i>Fragrance of Spring: Intermezzo</i>	1921
Sanders, Alma M.	U.S.		1921
Vomáčka, Boleslav	Czechoslovakia	<i>Intermezza</i>	1921
		<i>4 Intermezzi for Piano, Op. 42</i>	1921
Różycki, Ludomir	Poland		1921
Bendix, Victor	Denmark	<i>Intermezzo</i>	?1921
		<i>Suite for Piano Op. 25, No. 4 Intermezzo</i>	1921-1923
Schoenberg, Arnold	Austria		1921-1923

Ketèlbey, Albert William	England	<i>Bells Across the Meadows: Characteristic Intermezzo</i>	1922
Fresco, Joen	U.S.	<i>Lady Lilly: Intermezzo, Op. 10</i>	1922
Baron, Maurice	France	<i>Mamselle Caprice: A Parisian Intermezzo</i>	1922
		<i>Promenade amoureuse: Intermezzo</i>	1922
Oswald, Albert H.	England	<i>Our Princess: Valse-Intermezzo</i>	1922
Foulds, John	England	<i>La belle Pierrette : intermezzo impromptu</i>	1923
Wilhelmy, A.H.	Australia	<i>My Lady of Dreams: Valse-Intermezzo</i>	1926
Hall, Frederick	Australia	<i>Intermezzo Brillante</i>	1927
Beck-Slenn, Edgar	England	<i>Intermezzo, Op. 36</i>	1927
Graener, Paul	Germany	<i>3 Intermezzi, Op. 77</i>	1927
Zins, Daniel	Unknown	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1927
Lourié, Arthur	France	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1928
Lohr, Hermann Frederic	England	<i>Autumn Gold: Intermezzo</i>	1928
Fabini, Eduardo	Uruguay	<i>Intermezzo</i>	?1929
Heykens, Jonny	Netherlands	<i>Der treue Hampelmann Intermezzo</i>	1934
		<i>Stelldichein Mit Columbine Intermezzo</i>	1934
Tansman, Alexandre	Poland	<i>24 Intermezzi</i>	1939-1940
Poulenc, Francis	France	<i>Intermezzos No. 1-3</i>	1934-1947
Valen, Fartein	Norway	<i>Intermezzo Op. 36</i>	1940
Kochurov, Yury	Russia	<i>Intermezzi Op. 12 No. 1</i>	1947
Bowen, York	England	<i>2 Intermezzi Op. 141</i>	1951
Ornstein, Leo	U.S.	<i>4 Intermezzi</i>	1956-1968
Goldmann, Friedrich	Germany	<i>2 Intermezzi</i>	1963
McCabe, John	England	<i>Intermezzi for Piano</i>	1968
Leibowitz, René	Poland	<i>3 Intermezzi Op. 87</i>	1970
Pike, Jeremy	England	<i>Intermezzo for Piano</i>	1974

Rochberg, George	U.S.	<i>Partita Variations, No.2</i> <i>Intermezzo</i>	1976
Binkerd, Gordon	U.S.	<i>Essays for Piano No. 1</i> <i>Intermezzo</i>	1976
Viollette, Andrew	U.S.	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1977
Binkerd, Gordon	U.S.	<i>Suite for Piano: Intermezzo</i> <i>on Meine Lieder No. 2,3,4</i>	1978
Soproni, József	Hungary	<i>4 Intermezzi</i>	1979
Eisenbrey, Keith	U.S.	<i>6 Intermezzi</i>	1982-1983
Kapustin, Nikolai	Russia	<i>8 Concert Op. 40 No. 7</i> <i>Intermezzo</i>	1984
Gann, Kyle	U.S.	<i>Paris Intermezzo</i>	1989
Górecki, Henryk	Poland	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1990
Plante, Cyril	Unknown	<i>4 Intermezzi Op. 8</i>	1997
Freckleton, Rory	England	<i>8 Intermezzi</i>	1998
Turchetto, Andrea	Italy	<i>Omaggio A Brahms</i>	1998
Sakamoto, Ryuichi	Japan	<i>Intermezzo</i>	1999
Plante, Cyril	Unknown	<i>Intermezzo Op. 61</i>	2000
Alfagüell, Mario	Costa Rica	<i>Estudios, corales, intermezos,</i> <i>y apendices Op. 143</i>	2005
Saboochi, Ehsan	Iran	<i>Green Iran (Six Intermezzo</i> <i>for Piano)</i>	2009
Widmann, Jörg	Germany	<i>Intermezzi</i>	2010
Meyer, Krzysztof	Germany	<i>6 Intermezzi Op. 121</i>	2013
Knoll, Moshe	U.S.	<i>Intermezzo</i>	2013
Shmarygin, Ivan	Russia	<i>Intermezzo No. 1-2</i>	2013-2015
Bologna, Antonia	Italy	<i>Intermezzo</i>	2014
Zwaag, Wim	Netherlands	<i>Intermezzo No. 1-4</i>	2014
Gilbert, Peter	U.S.	<i>4 Intermezzi</i>	2015
Masy, Jean Eudes	France	<i>3 Intermezzi Op. 20</i>	2015
Zhang, Shuwen		<i>Chinese Suite in Baroque</i> <i>Form No. 4 Intermezzo</i>	2015
Adler, Samuel	Germany	<i>Music for the Young (and the</i> <i>Young at heart): No. VII</i> <i>Intermezzo</i>	2021

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BIOGRAPHY

Michelle Richardson received her Doctorate of Musical Arts in piano performance with Dr. Anna Balakerskaia. Highlights of Michelle's solo and chamber performances include her solo debut with the George Mason Symphony Orchestra playing Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, chamber recitals at the Lyceum in Alexandria, the "Music with the Angels" Concert series at the Church of the Holy City, Fairfax County "Spotlight on the Arts" festival, as well as at George Mason's All-Steinway Concerts and ARTS By George series. In the summer of 2010, Michelle was invited to attend the Orfeo International Music Festival in Vipiteno, Italy. There, she was featured on multiple programs as a soloist and was a finalist in the Orfeo International Music Competition. In May of 2013 and 2016, Michelle was a feature in the GMU School of Music Honors Recital.

In August of 2015 she was on faculty at the Corcoran Chamber Music Institute (formerly known as the Summer Piano and Chamber Music Institute at George Washington University). She has served as a graduate lecturer at George Mason University, teaching keyboard classes throughout from 2015-2018. In August of 2016- 2020, she directed the Summer Piano Academy Program, a Mason Community Arts Academy summer camp for piano students of various levels that takes place in the School of Music at GMU. Michelle is experienced in teaching all levels of piano and has prepared students for successful auditions to their top choice music schools with scholarship.