

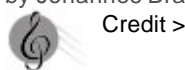
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Brahms/Handel



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Music Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24 (1861)
 by Johannes Brahms



Orchestrations Composed for solo piano and orchestrated by Edmund Rubbra

Choreography Jerome Robbins and Twyla Tharp

Premiere June 7, 1984, New York City Ballet, New York State Theater

Original Cast Merrill Ashley, Maria Calegari, Ib Andersen, Bart Cook

In spite of the powerfully Romantic characteristics of his music, German composer Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) imposed a classical sense of order on his work, rejecting the use of free variation only tenuously connected to the theme. By taking as his models Bach's Goldberg Variations and Beethoven's technique of thematic modification, he came to realize that the type of variation Beethoven developed did not arise from clinging to the melody and rhythm of the theme, but from its transformation into something new, based on its phrase structure and harmony. For his Handel Variations, Op. 24, Brahms chose a long fugue as a conclusion appropriate to his theme. While his earlier variations were composed for private audiences, this work and the Paganini Variations were written for the concert hall. Edmund Rubbra (b. 1901) is an English composer, pianist, teacher, and writer. His orchestration is faithful to Brahms' instrumental style.

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