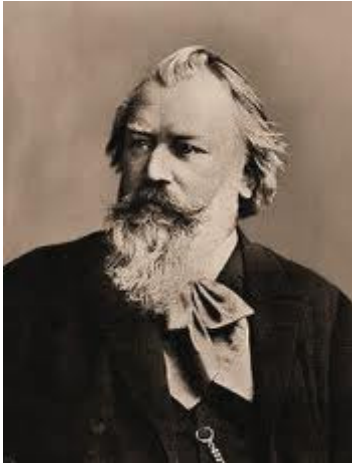


## Johannes Brahms (1833-1987)



Born: 1833 (Hamburg, Germany)  
Died: 1897 (Vienna, Austria)

### FAST FACTS

- Took lessons on piano, cello, horn and music theory
- Close friends with composers/pianists Robert and Clara Schumann
- Used popular and folk tunes and styles in much of his compositions
- His symphonies were very rich and expressive, in the dying Romantic-era style

As one of the last major Romantic-era composers, Johannes Brahms is often grouped with J.S. Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven because of his popularity and influence during his lifetime and after.

Brahms' childhood music studies included lessons on piano, cello, horn, and music theory, and led him to an affection for the music of prominent historic composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. He made a living at first performing popular music in restaurants and taverns, which solidified his lifelong preference for popular and folk music. Brahms also met Robert and Clara Schumann, a married couple of Romantic-era composers, when he was around 20 years old. Robert publicly praised Brahms' work and helped his friend launch his career as a published composer.

Brahms' works employ large ensembles (mainly orchestra works and choir pieces) and are all standard and popular works even today, within the classical music world as well as in popular culture. He wrote four very expressive symphonies, which was typical of the Romantic period in music, the first of which was labeled as "Beethoven's 10<sup>th</sup> Symphony" because of its resemblance to Beethoven's later large-scale and emotional symphonies (Beethoven only wrote nine before his death). The melody from the fourth movement of Brahms' *Symphony No. 1* is known as one of the most beautiful melodies in all of classical music. Brahms also produced many works for piano, his primary instrument, that were often variations based on themes written by other popular and important composers. One of his "Variations on a theme..." is based on his own friend Robert Schumann's music. Brahms' *Lullaby* is also a famous and easily recognizable tune that Brahms wrote to honor the birth of his friend's son.

Throughout Robert Schumann's attempted suicide and eventual death some years later, Brahms maintained a close friendship Robert's wife Clara, who primarily had a career in piano performance.



### Let's Listen!

- Brahms' *Lullaby* theme is one of the most famous in the world: [click here](#) to listen.
- *Symphony No. 1* contains one of the most beautiful melodies ever written in the fourth movement: [click here](#) to listen.