

Brahms as a nationalist inherited from the tradition of German-Austria

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Abstract: Brahms, as a nationalism, truly devoted himself into his whole composition life with both love and faith to his own country. His masterpiece *Ein Deutsches Requiem Op.45* is exactly the product of Patriotic. On the other side, Brahms' abundant composition on folk music reveals his exuberant feelings, which specially originated from relationship with Schumann's family. Throughout his whole composition life, he usually features romantic themes- particularly lost love as a symbol of the poet's thoughts. Also since he thought the occupation of folk music was the ideal media of expression, he ultimately wrote *Deutsche Volkslieder* and *Hungarian Dance*.

Keywords: Johannes Brahms, folk music, nationalism, German-Austria, classic and romanticism

1. Introduction

Johannes Brahms who was born in 1833 had lived during a period when the whole European Country had been experiencing all kinds of revolutionary. Specially in German and Austria, the failure of 1848 German revolution and the crucial repression of Prime Otto von Bismarck after the worldwide financial panic in 1857, as well as the "War of the Romantics" between the Leipzig and Weimar parties in the second half of 19th century, which led to a deep depression, helpless and struggling inside Brahms's inner moods although he lived during the high peak of the Romanticism. Within the complicated emotion struggling insides Brahms, he first went to Vienna in 1862. Moreover, he was strongly tend to classical structure and inherited from the Classical period, especially influenced by Beethoven under severe political environment. Like what Brahms always saying: he could always hear the pace of Beethoven in his back. So during his composition life, he really strived to maintain the tradition from German-Austria quality. In such aspect, Brahms was so conscious and vigorous compared with other composers in the same generation. He paid most of his attention to the introverted and profound expression with purity in music that is full of philosophy rather than shallow interpretation of vanity.

2. Principal Argument

Upon this sense of nationalism, the most huge and prominent composition that reveals the influence of nationalism on Brahms is *Ein deutsches Requiem Op.45* that was composed began from 1861-1868. But the second movement was already composed 4 years before. Other requiems than this one follow similar structure and use the language of Latin for memorial ceremonies of Catholicism. However, in this Requiem, Brahms totally abandoned this tradition. Since he was born in a Christian family so he grew up as a sincere Christian. He got the libretto from the Bible that Martin Luther translated. The whole libretto was fluency and dignified. The setting for piano and voice was perfect with sadness, lament but no fear, devotion or atonement, which instead of a different faith of life and death: everything in nature such as flowers and grass will languish in the future; but death is not a horrible thing with faith since the God will comfort us and we will gain the peace through that. He treated this piece as a way to remember his lost friends and families, especially his mother and Clara Schumann. These sorrows made Brahms experienced the heavy time and them he truly believed the rescue of Jesus. This piece can be seen as a witness of Brahms's whole life.

The whole piece can be divided into two parts: the first three movements and the last four movements. The first three movements are full of the feeling of lament with a feeling of peace and comfort stayed through the rest of the piece. The emotion transmitted perfectly through the end of third movement. In the first movement, Brahms use low registration strings like viola, cello and harp instead of violin to set a peaceful atmosphere with sadness underneath. It started with a prelude played by cello. Then in the second movement, it begins with Funeral Marches in a style of Sarabande. Early in 1854 before the first

performance of the piece, Schumann escaped from the mental hospital and jumped into Rhine. After Schumann was rescued, Brahms wrote the manuscript of this piece during the period of accompanying and comforting Clara Schumann. The music is full with sadness and agitation before the repeat of Funeral Marches section. After that, the music is dignified like traditional Requiem. Followed by baritone with chorus in the third movement, chorus in the fourth movement with the join of woodwinds and French horn with warm tonal color to express a sense of hope and desire of the beauty in future life. Moreover, in the next three movements, it played respectively by Soprano with Chorus, baritone with chorus and Chorus. What the special is, the fifth movement was added couple weeks after first performance. The melody and text reveals the memory of his mother. The sixth movement was the high peak of the whole work. The Fugue presents a message that Jesus have overcame the death. The music is glorious and splendid like the work of Handel. The final movement is peaceful, sweet and calm like the beginning of the piece to express the feeling of deep rest and death is unavoidable.

Furthermore, since his youth, he found himself have a special interests in folk music and was keen to collected German folk music. Before Brahms leaving Dusseldorf to have a position in Detmold, he wrote 28 Deutsche Volkslieder in 1856, 15 Volkskinderlieder (folk Children Song) in 1858, which specially dedicate to Schumann's family. Additionally, he composed 49 Deutsche Volkslieder almost in the end of his life in 1894, which was a profound contribution to the Study of German-Austria Folk Song history begun from 1854. The major quality of German folk song is simplicity of the melody and rhythm, but also the favor to use arpeggio in the melody line. These characteristics are present obviously in Brahms's folk setting: advanced in technique and poignant emotion from his past. Brahms used many ways to form his folk setting: the use of pedal point, counterpoint and contrapuntal techniques; use of hemiola and syncopation; use of predominant diatonic handling of the melody that are simple and fluent; discontinued melodies that cover a wide range; moving bass with most chromaticism in the inner parts; steady rhythmic pattern in melody line with complex rhythmic pattern in accompaniment; short piano postludes, interludes; musically difficult and challenging piano accompaniment; his preference for themes of sadness and of the lower voices. Besides, many Hungarian composers came to Hamburg after the failure of Hungary Nationalism through 1848-1849. Among those composers, violinist Eduard Remenyi let Brahms begin to be familiar with rich Hungarian folk music. After that, he also created 21 Hungarian Dance. He used Hungarian folk music style when prepared for his father's orchestral. Other than the volumes Brahms arrange, he totally wrote 90 German folk song settings for piano and voice and many of them reflect folk themes or depict scenes of rural life. His interests in classical form and folk music are obviously. In his life, folk song is the ideal toward which the composition of songs must attempt. His setting of folk music was more considered actual folk songs themselves. They have strong and different impact on Brahms. Later, the sense of love and reverence is fulfilling throughout his works. Continuing over this forty years, folk songs had a big influence on Brahms's work as he thought the occupation of folk music was the ideal media of expression. Brahms's lieder are called what German marked "volksthumlich", which is "artistically idealizing the folk song style."

In Brahms's life, he composed nearly 400 lieder, as well as about 100 folk songs and children songs. Unlike Robert Schumann, Brahms is not aimed to a perfect match between the music and poem, and though the music is always well connected to poem, Brahms was more concerned about the development of the music. Within the composition, Poetry was a source of inspiration for Brahms and careful text setting was important for him. Except a few settings of Goethe, Heine, Schiller and Tieck, Brahms's song texts are most chosen from minor poets such as Daumer, Groth, who has musical potential. In choosing text, Brahms was seem to stand more on his own inner moods and needs. The collection published by Zuccamaglio and Kretzschmer, *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Original-Weisen* was the favorite source of folk song material for Brahms. Brahms experienced a great deal of emotion during his life with the beginning of the relationship with Schumann's family. Handling severely by both Schumann's illness and Clara's lonely with 8 children to raise, his internal emotions were to merge in late works. Throughout his whole composition life, he usually features romantic themes such as love-particularly lost love- as a symbol of the poet's thoughts, respect for childhood memories and the past.

A clear evidence showing the influence by folk music is Wiegenlied, Op.49, No.4, composed in 1868. In Brahms's life, the one Op.49, no.4 was more famous and stylistic among the 2 Wiegenlied. This one was widely known as Brahms's lullaby. It was in 1858, Brahms had a deep impression of Frau Bertha Faber's beautiful sound when he conducted women chorus in Hamburg. Ten years after in 1868, Brahms wrote this Wiegenlied as a gift to Ms. Frau Bertha Faber to celebrate the birth of her second child. This F major Wiegenlied was originated from Waltz with 8 measures in every verse. The graceful accompaniment also came from the Waltz that Ms. Frau Bertha Faber sung in 1859. As for the texts was rearranged from Vienna's love song, which shows the strong influence on Brahms by Vienna folk songs. The soft, tender and narrative melody with grace notes and syncopation to express the care and protect

of mother and reveal a picture of parents' best wishes on their children. Especially the syncopation in the accompany give a sense of cradling by mother. The piece interprets the most elevated emotion- parents' love. This Wiegenlied was also the origin of Cradle Song afterwards, which is the common name for Children's lullaby with similar lyrics. Ten years after when Brahms composed the D major No.2 Symphony, the motif of the this Wiegenlied also appeared in the first movement. Because of the beautiful melody, many composers and musicians would like to transcript into different instruments such as cello, piano, violin, flute and so on.

Furthermore, the term "folk" was also derived from the German interpretation Volk, in the sense of "the people as a whole" as applied to popular and national music by Herder and the German Romantics over half a century earlier.

3. Conclusion

In all, Brahms's life and composition was tightly connected to the complicated and contradicted reality in German-Austria in 19th century. Although the current era and class in late 19th has a restriction on Brahms's composition, Brahms still connected himself to great classical composers--J.S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven to Schubert and Schumann-- due to a kind faith and love to his citizens and country. Thus, he composed all-inclusive works to fight with the decadent phenomenon in the late 19th century. At same time, Brahms was urgent to absorb the Romantic traits. The Op.45 Ein Deutsches Requiem was clear of the combination of Classic and Romanticism. Since Brahms moved to Vienna in 1862 and lived most of his rest life in Vienna, his music represents not only the simplicity and purity of North German but also charm and grace of Vienna. His works are huge and strict structured with deep and rich emotion. He rarely use title for his music. His symphony imitate Beethoven's symphony, which is large and mighty but meticulous and delicate with variety of expression. Sometimes a feeling of madrigal is clear in his work but also with his own feature. He put his respect of the world into his music. Brahms's most truly emotion what can touch us was the insist of ideal personality and ideal future life. Brahms's love originated from family but surpassed the family and lasted forever. So he wrote bunch of compositions filled with creation, personality, strong ideological and emotional nationalism. In summary, Brahms was the outstanding composers in the 19th century and seen as a "revival" of Romanticism in 19th century.

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