

GREAT COMPOSERS & THEIR MUSIC

Lapbook & Biography Set

Created by Joy Morin - ColorInMyPiano.com



Dear Teacher,

Thank you for purchasing this composer lapbook and biography set! The **Great Composers & Their Music** series is designed to be an easy and effective way for teachers to include music history in a students' musical education. The materials included in this pdf can be used in a variety of ways: group classes with private music students, homeschoolers, music camps, etc. For each composer, here is a list of what is included in the pdf:

1. A **Teacher Page**, which includes the link to a playlist of music on YouTube, a photo of the completed lapbook, and additional composer information not included in the biography booklet.
2. A two-sided **Biography Booklet** about the composer, which is designed to be used in conjunction with the lapbook materials but is very useful separately too. The biography is carefully-researched and written to include all the important facts you would expect, while being relevant to and relatable by even your youngest students.
3. A series of printable **pages for assembling a lapbook**. A "lapbook" is an interactive book that a student can create about a particular subject. The composer lapbooks are designed to be a visual and memorable way for students to learn and remember historical facts about the composer's music, accomplishments, and the time in which s/he lived. Students will enjoy their assembled lapbook for years to come.

It is my hope that the **Great Composers & Their Music** series will leave your students with a greater appreciation for the efforts and genius of the great composers throughout history.

More tips for using the lapbook and biography set are explained below.

Best wishes in all your teaching!

Sincerely,

Joy Morin

ColorInMyPiano.com

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Time

The time needed to complete a composer study greatly depends on the age of the students as well as how much time you choose to devote to listening to musical excerpts. Junior high/high school students will be much faster at assembling the lapbook than 5- or 6-year-olds. However, I would estimate the minimum time needed is 45 minutes, if you allow them to color/cut as you read the biography aloud and play musical excerpts. If you would like the composer study to take more time, you probably won't have any trouble finding ways to expand on the terms and music mentioned in the biography!

(The lapbook is challenging to assemble without the teacher's help and direction, so I do not recommend sending the materials home with students to assemble themselves.)

Materials

For the teacher:

- ✓ The Teacher Pages.
- ✓ An assembled lapbook, as an example to show the class.
- ✓ 2-sided biography booklet.
- ✓ Playlist of music by the composer (a link to a playlist is included below).
- ✓ A copy of a one- or two-paged piano composition by the composer (optional).

For each student:

- ✓ The lapbook pages.
- ✓ 2-sided biography booklet. biography booklet for each student.
- ✓ A file folder (you can buy a box of 50 colored file folders for about \$8-10).
- ✓ Scissors.
- ✓ Plenty of glue sticks.
- ✓ Crayons/colored pencils.
- ✓ A copy of a one- or two-paged piano composition by the composer (optional).

Structuring the Lesson Plan

1. Start by handing out the biography booklets. Read the story aloud, stopping to discuss unfamiliar terms and to listen to recordings of mentioned pieces (a link to a playlist on YouTube is provided below). You can read the entire biography all at once before turning to the lapbook, or you can break it up by going back and forth. You may wish to allow students to color their composer page for the cover of the lapbook as they listen.

2. Hand out the lapbook pages one at a time. Point out each item on the page to the students to discuss what it is about, and instruct them how to cut/fold it. Start with the large pocket. Instruct students to cut **ONLY** on the solid lines; dotted lines indicate where to fold. Start with the large pocket (students will need help learning how to assemble the pocket for the first time), so other pieces can be stored in the pocket as the lapbook is assembled.
3. Instruct students not to glue any items into the lapbook (other than the large pocket) until **ALL** the items are cut out, so they can be sure to arrange everything in a way that will fit.
4. As students assemble their lapbooks, play music in the background from the composer playlist. You can also discuss/review various facts from the composer biography as they work.

Ways to Use *The Great Composers & Their Music*:

1. Hold monthly or bi-monthly group classes with your private students, where small groups of students meet to study a composer
2. Choose a Composer Of The Month, and hand out a copy of the biography booklet to each of your private students.
3. When a private student begins working on a piece by a particular composer for the first time, print out the biography booklet for them to read.
4. Use the lapbook page that features a large picture of the composer (intended for the cover of the lapbook) as a coloring page.
5. Hold a music history camp for your students. Read this blog post to read about how I used a few composer lapbooks to teach a “Music History Blast From The Past” camp in 2012: <http://colorinmypiano.com/2012/08/13/2012-music-history-camp/> (look for the FREE Music History Periods lapbook, too).

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Johannes Brahms

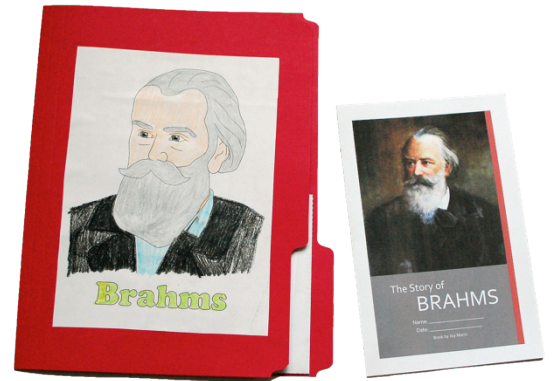
1833-1897 – Romantic Period – German

Playlist link: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCF587C0EBE1E7E79>

Suggestion for a short piece to print from [imslp.org](http://www.imslp.org): Waltz Op. 39 No. 9 (or No. 15) for piano solo, or *Intermezzo* Op. 118 No. 2.

Notable compositions:

- **Waltzes** (1865) – A set of 16 waltzes for piano duet/solo.
- **German Requiem** (1865-8) – May have been inspired by the death of Brahms' mother in 1865.
- **Hungarian Dances**, WoO 1 (1869) – 21 dances
- **Symphonies 1-4** – As Brahms' reputation grew, people wondered when he would write his first symphony. Brahms finally completed it in 1885. Brahms' second and third symphonies were written in 1877 and 1883. His fourth symphony, written in 1885, is considered to be his best and most well known.
- **Intermezzi**, Op. 117 and 118 (1892-1893) – Some of the introspective piano pieces within these sets are among Brahms' best-loved works.

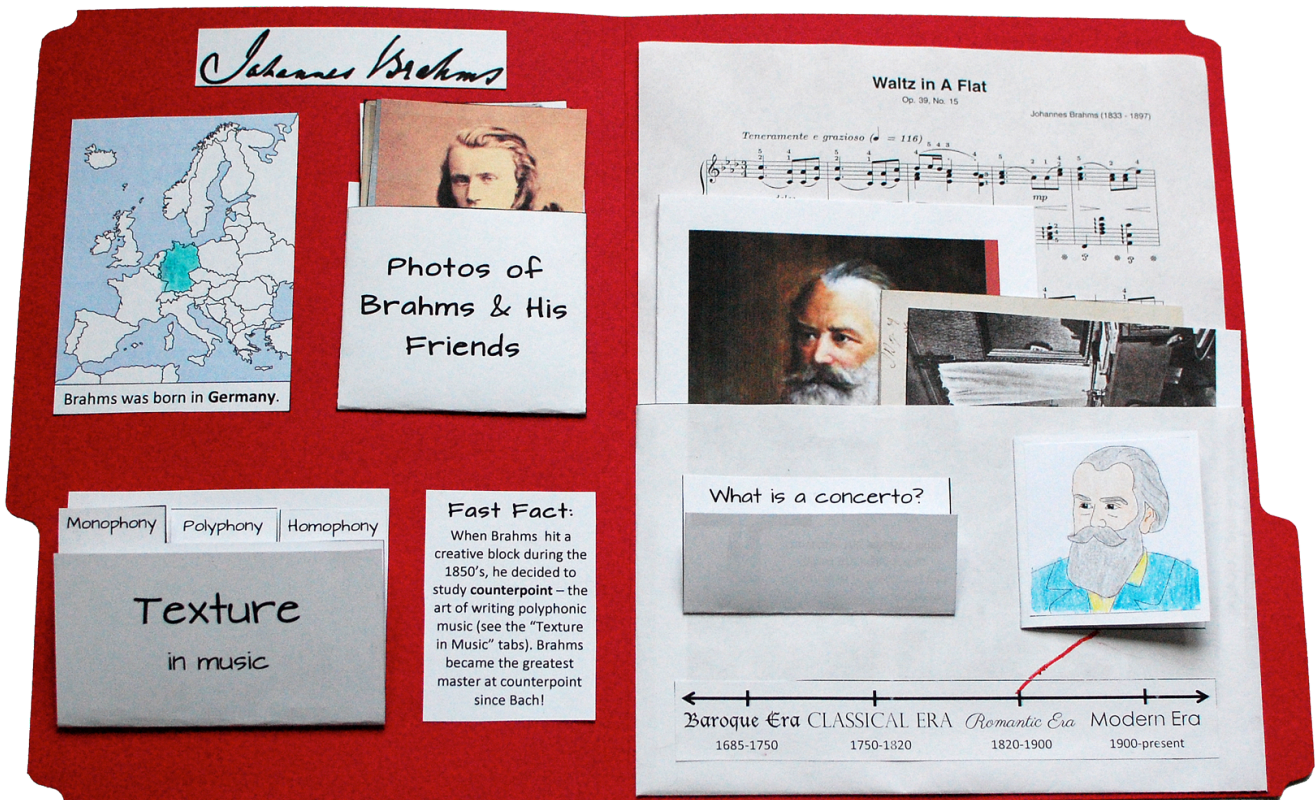


Fun Facts:

- On December 2, 1889, Thomas Edison made a recording on a wax cylinder of Brahms playing an excerpt from his Hungarian Dance No. 1! You can read more about this historical recording and listen to it online (such as [here](#)).

Resources:

- Detailed listening guides to Brahms' works: kellydeanhansen.com.



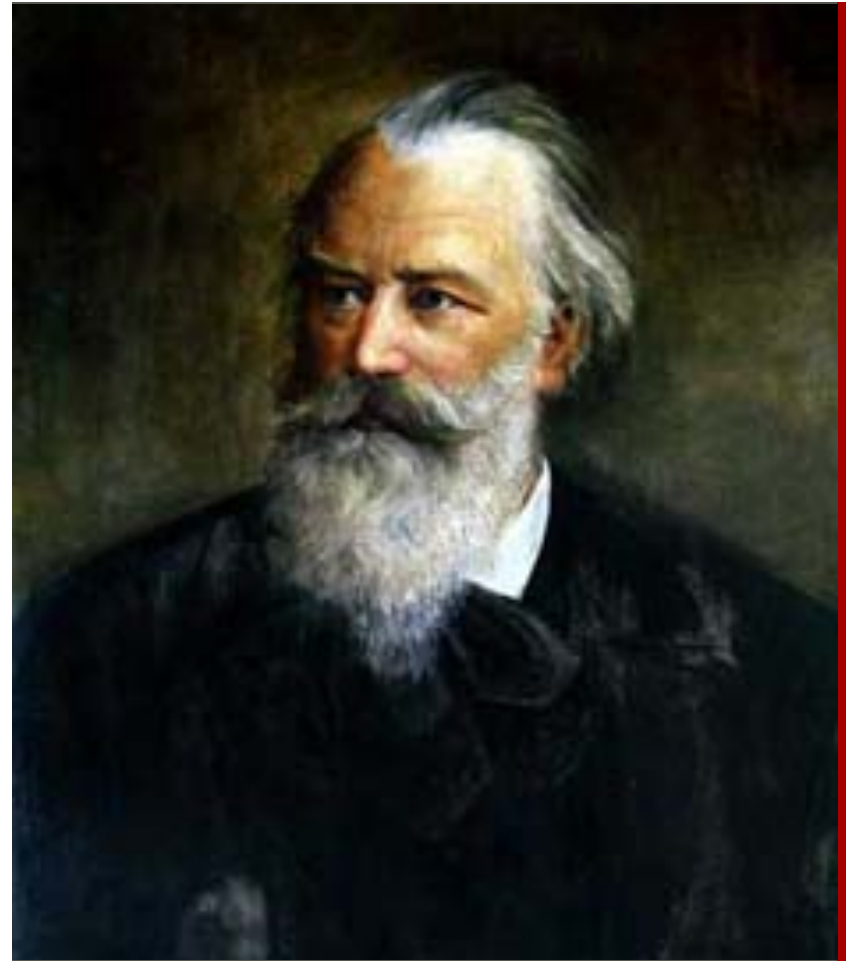
Brahms' Later Years

Schumann's death in 1856, Brahms and Clara remained friends until her death in 1896.

In 1859, Brahms premiered his first Piano Concerto. In contrast to many of the concertos written during the Classical Era, this **concerto** was written with interesting and complex music for the orchestra (instead of merely accompaniment) and a deeply musical part for the piano (much more than a show of technical skills). However, audiences in Leipzig did not respond positively to this work – they hissed and booed! After a few years, audiences grew to love this concerto as much as they still do today.

As his popularity spread, audiences began wondering when Brahms would write a symphony. Some people called Brahms "Beethoven's successor." In 1868, Brahms completed his famous *German Requiem*, which was likely inspired after his mother's death in 1865. In 1876, after 14 years of work, Brahms finally finished his first symphony. Brahms went on to compose three more symphonies, the last of which (1885) is considered one of his best works.

Throughout his life, Brahms enjoyed great popularity and was a careful businessman who always lived within his means. Brahms was also a perfectionist: he constantly revised his works and even destroyed many of his early works. Brahms continued composing and publishing compositions until his death in 1897 from liver cancer, at age 63.



The Story of BRAHMS

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book by Joy Morin

Brahms' Early Years

Johannes Brahms was a great composer and pianist of the Romantic Era. He was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1833 to Johann Jakob Brahms and Christiane Nissen. Brahms' father knew how to play many instruments – including the double bass, horn, and violin – and worked as a musician around town. Brahms' mother worked as a seamstress.

Brahms' first music teacher was his father. In 1840, Brahms started taking lessons with Otto Cossel at about age 7. He showed great promise as a pianist. At age 10, Brahms gave his first public performance in 1843. Cossel felt Brahms should pursue being a creative musician; so, after a few years Cossel recommended Brahms take music theory and composition lessons with his own teacher, Eduard Marxsen. In 1847, Brahms gave his first recital that included some of his own piano compositions.

During the 1850's, Brahms encountered a creative block. He decided to study **counterpoint** – the art of setting melodies or “voices” against each other in a harmonically pleasing way while maintaining their linear independence. Brahms became a master at counterpoint – perhaps the greatest since Bach – and it influenced and filled his music.

In the years following 1853, Brahms began meeting other important musicians, such as pianist-composer Franz Liszt. When Brahms decided to travel to Düsseldorf to meet Robert Schumann in person, he took with him a letter of

Brahms' Growing-Up Years

introduction written by the famous violinist Joseph Joachim.

When Brahms arrived at the Schumann's home, Schumann was indeed impressed with Brahms. In fact, in October of 1853, Schumann wrote and published an article that praised Brahms' genius in his music journal, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Journal for Music). Schumann's article helped Brahms' reputation and popularity to grow. This marked the beginning of a long friendship between Brahms and the Schumann family.

When Brahms heard of Schumann's mental breakdown in 1854, Brahms traveled and moved to Düsseldorf to be near the Schumann family and support them during this difficult time. Brahms became very attached to the Schumann family, especially to Schumann's wife Clara and daughter Julie. Brahms ran the household so Clara could earn money as a touring concert pianist. Clara, in return, served as Brahms' closest friend and musical advisor. Even after

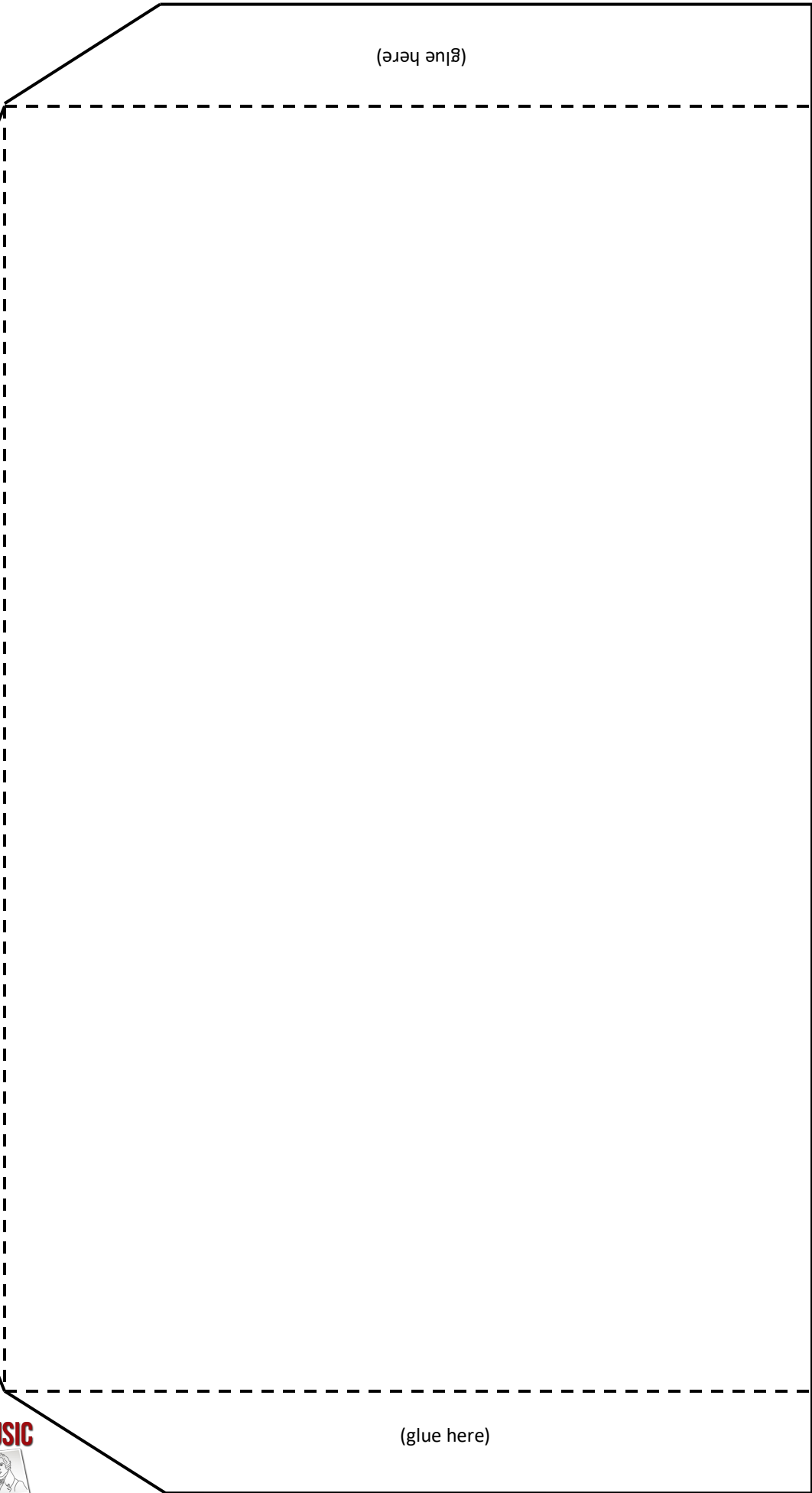
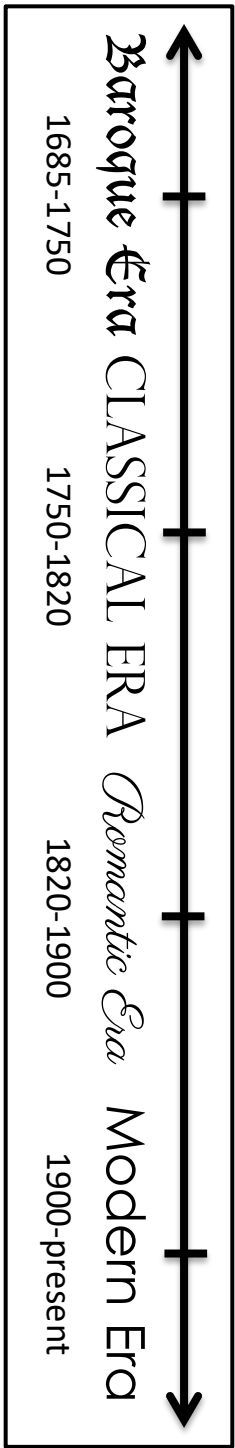
Listen to
Brahms'
*Intermezzo in
A Major, Op.
118 No. 2.*





Brahms



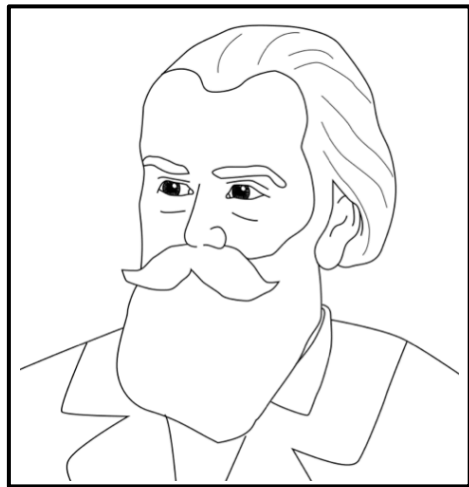


This is the large pocket. Fold on the dotted lines.



Composer: _____	
Year of birth: _____	Year of death: _____
Country: _____	
Facts/Compositions: _____	

Johannes Brahms



Fold this into a booklet so that the words are on the inside.



Glue this picture to the front of the booklet above.



Fast Fact:

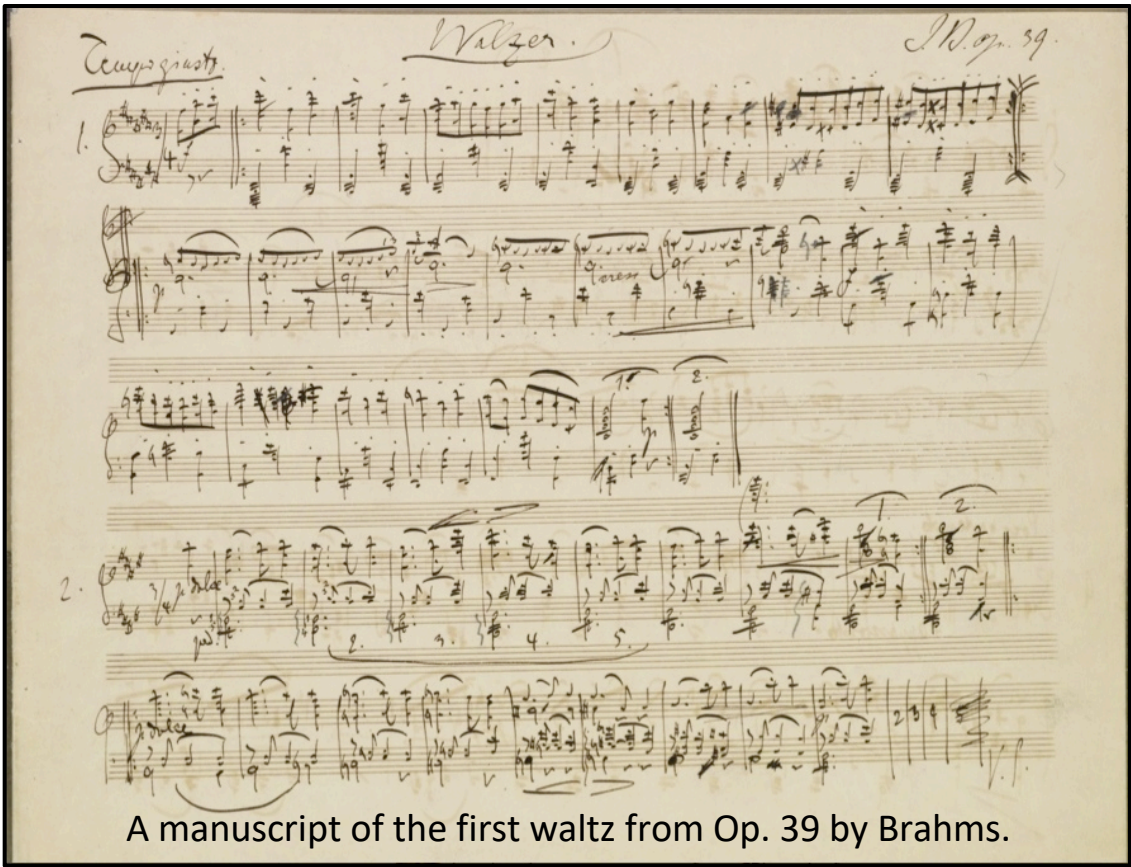
When Brahms hit a creative block during the 1850's, he decided to study **counterpoint** – the art of writing polyphonic music (see the “Texture in Music” tabs). Brahms became the greatest master at counterpoint since Bach!

Find Germany and color it.



Brahms was born in **Germany**.

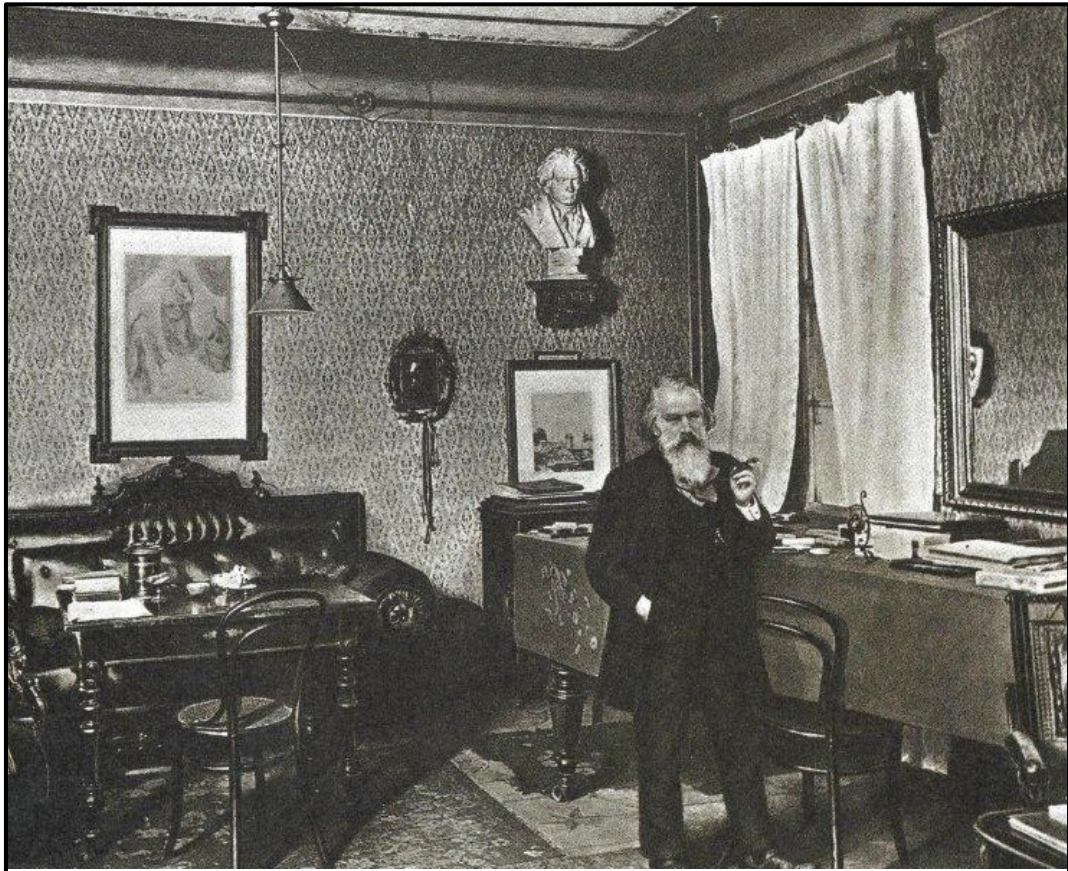




A manuscript of the first waltz from Op. 39 by Brahms.



This manuscript belongs in the large pocket.



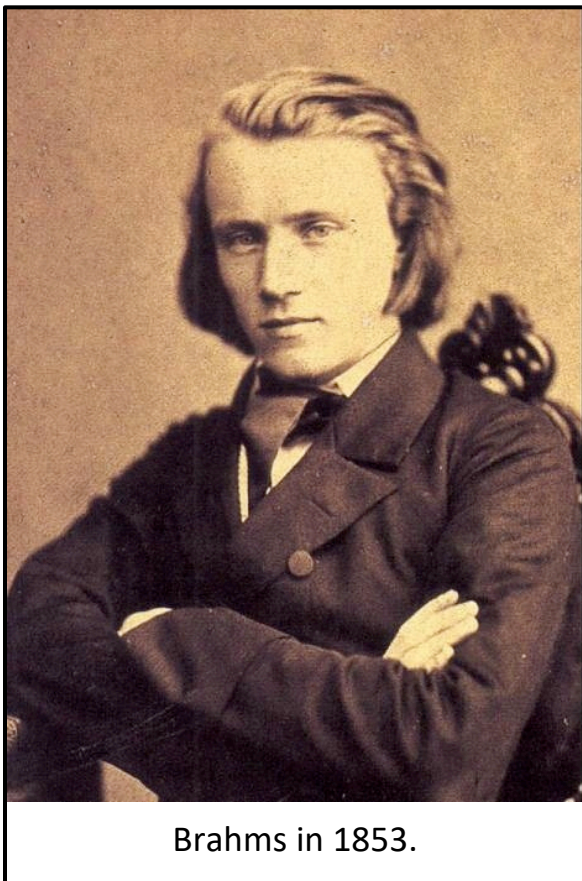
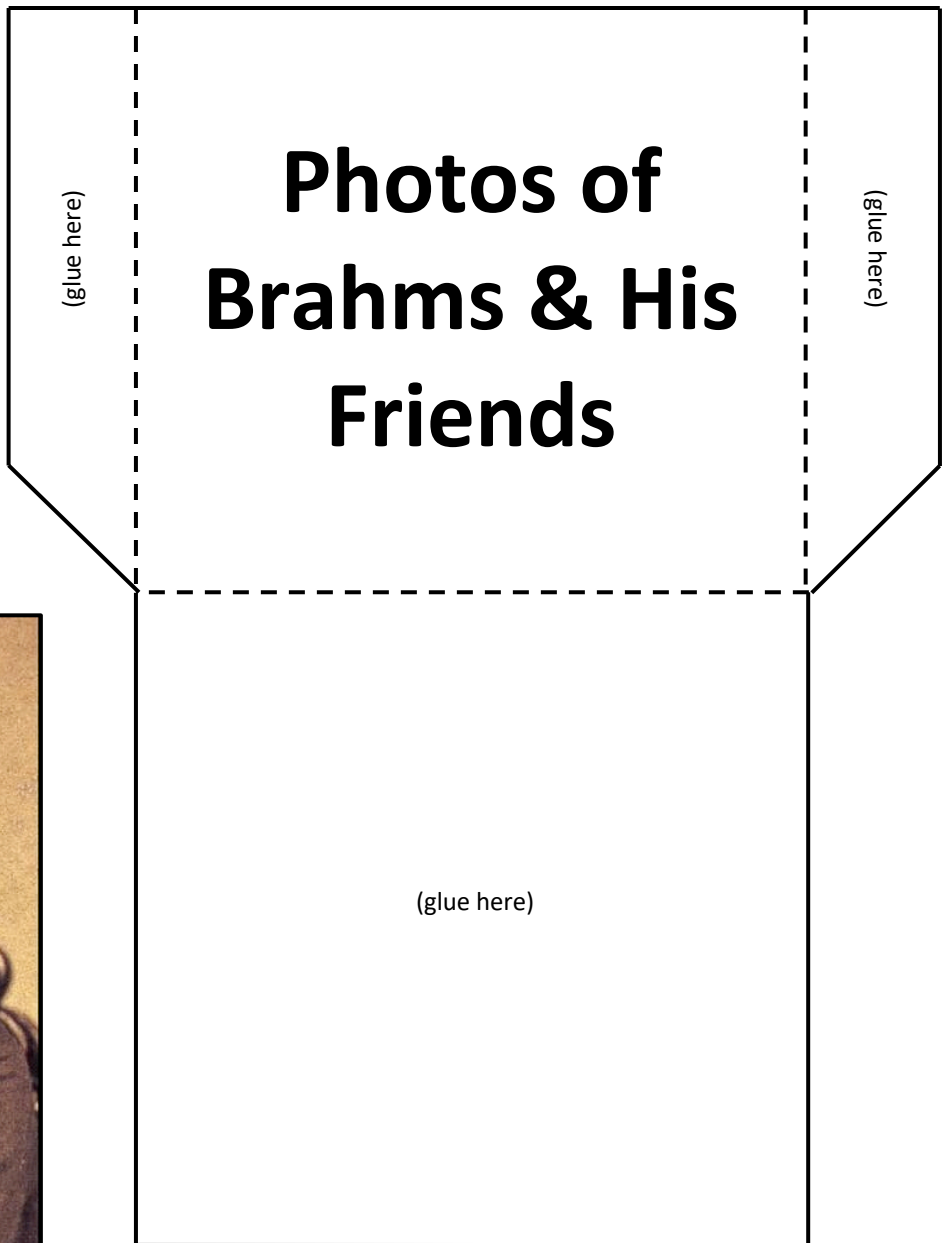
This photograph belongs in the large pocket.

A photo of Brahms in his studio.



Cut out the little pocket and fold it outward on the dotted lines. Glue the pocket into the lapbook.

Cut out the 5 cards with photos of Brahms and his friends and store them in the little pocket.



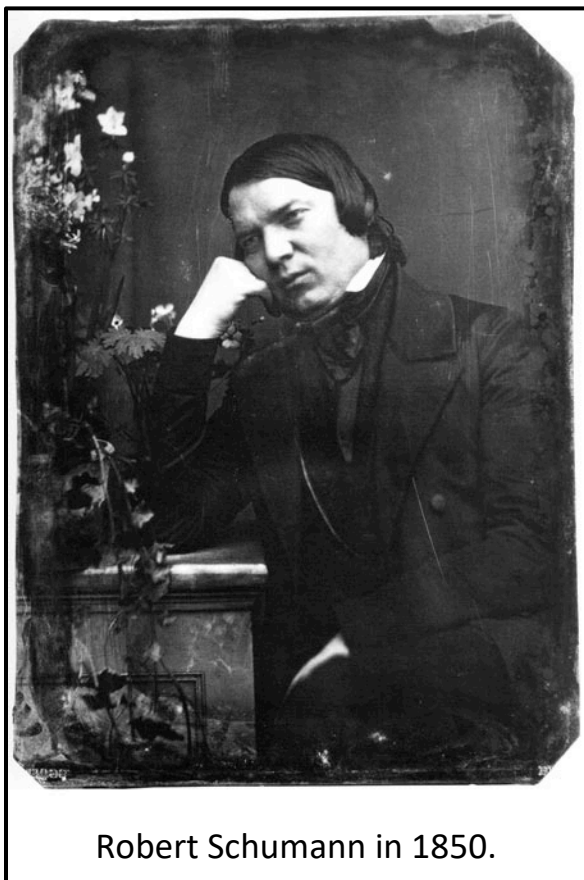
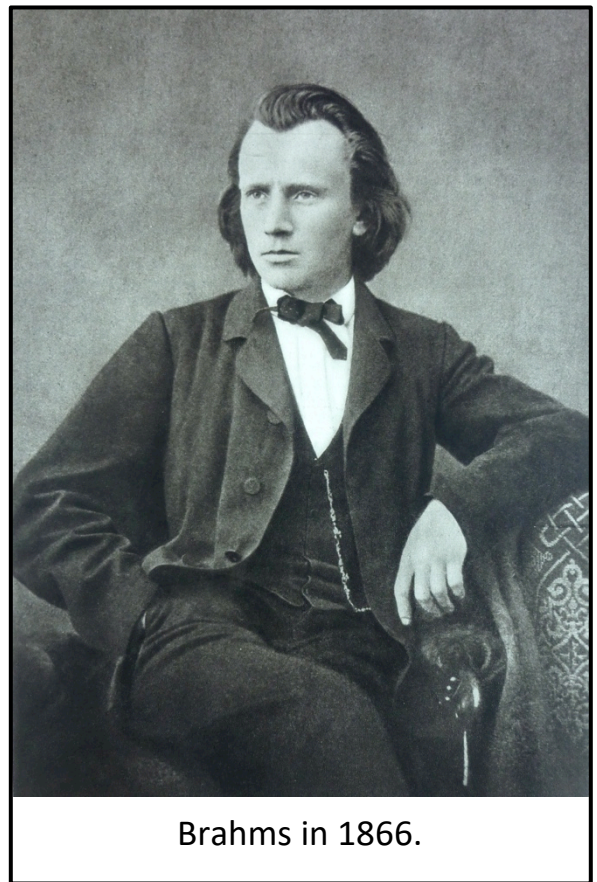
But out and fold upwards on the dotted line.

What is a concerto?

A **concerto** is a piece of music written for a soloist and accompanied by an orchestra.

Concerti usually have three movements (or sections) and often are intended to showcase the soloist's skills.

A silhouette of a conductor in a tuxedo, holding a baton, is positioned to the left of the text. A horizontal dotted line is drawn across the card, separating the definition from the explanation of movements.



Texture

in music

(glue here)

Cut out everything on this page. Fold the largest piece on the dotted line. Stack the tabbed pieces in order, and set them inside the large folded piece. Staple through the 4 layers, so that the tabbed pieces are attached inside.

Monophony



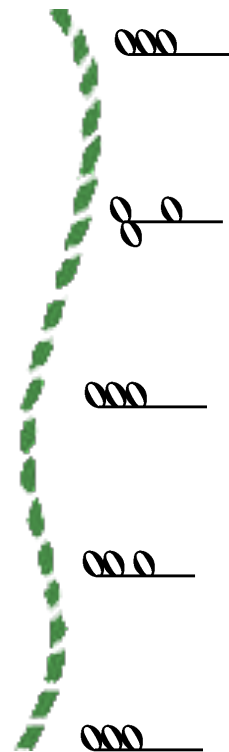
Monophony: Music that has all players playing the same melody line.

Examples: Gregorian chant.

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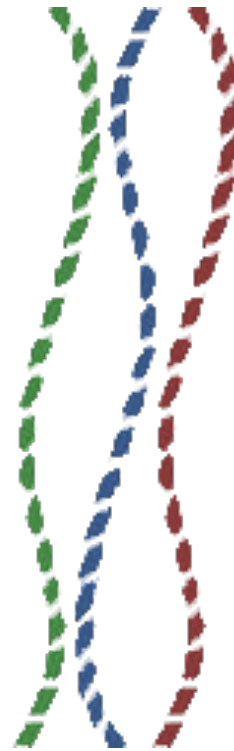
Homophony



Homophony: Music that has a melody line with chordal accompaniment. Popular during the Classical Era.

Examples: Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525.

Polyphony



Polyphony: Music that has multiple melody lines at once. Popular in the Baroque period.

Examples: Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, Mvt. III.

