

Brahms Lectures  
Pablo's Objectives

Dear All,

Other than what I expressed in the FMCC newsletter article, some of my objectives with these lectures are (starting with a selfish one):

- Have another opportunity to take a close look at the four symphonies by Brahms. I find in the symphonies of Brahms (and in his chamber music, and a Capella choral music) a world that resonates in me. This is clearly linked to my upbringing and my sensibilities. In other words, to me, Brahms has sculpted how I feel. Contemplating these works makes me feel connected.
- I would like to share this journey with fellow musicians of varying degrees of expertise on formal analysis and score reading. I like participating in music, first singing, then playing. Conducting however, has removed me from touching the music. Compared to singing, playing feels like touching fruit with gloves, and conducting feels like operating a mechanical arm to touch the music. However, the pressure of being a decent conductor makes me spend *a lot of time* with the scores, and that feels like having a permanent pass to visit an art museum after hours, when you have the works for yourself.
- Prepare us all for future encounters with this music. Brahms wrote for the dying and respected breed of connoisseurs who could engage with a piece of music beyond its melodies, and perceive form and compositional procedures. Looking closer at these symphonies will leave us all better able to "hear" them more profoundly.
- Share my way of approaching the studying of a piece of music: I hope that by gaining more familiarity with a score, all of us will at the end be encouraged (less intimidated) to get a score of the next chamber music you play and study it with an eye to understand the general structure that shapes a multi-movement piece, or perceive how a minimal group of notes can generate meaning throughout.
- Go beyond the limited (superficial) scope of a good set of program notes, or a "guide to." I think repeated hearings of favorite recordings, or reading program notes, is no substitute for engaging with a score (what a composer actually wrote). This is the only way of arriving at an informed interpretation, especially of music where more than a melody is happening at any given time.