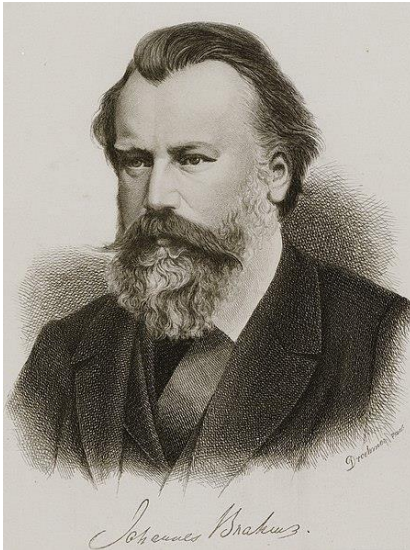




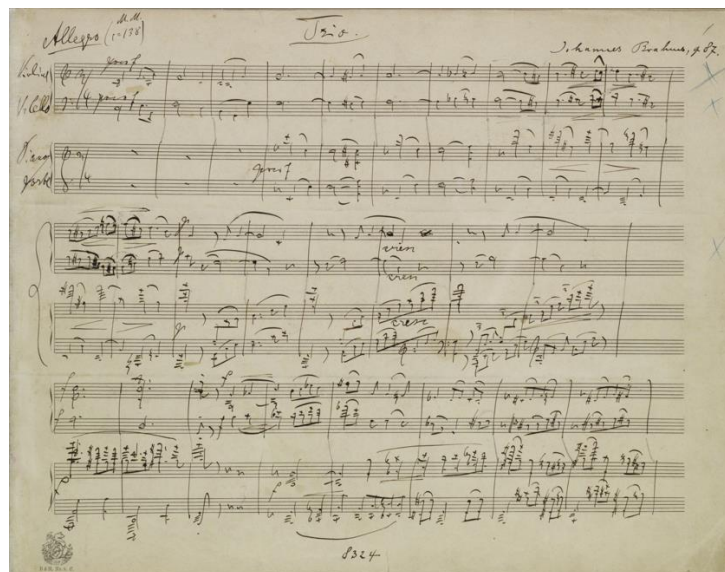
## Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)



Portrait by Hermann Dröhmer, 1882

Johannes Brahms is considered one of the *Three Bs*, along with Bach and Beethoven. His family noticed his talent at a very young age; he started playing the piano at seven and composing in his teen years. His compositions include symphonies, chamber music, sonatas, piano works, concerti, choral pieces, and more than 200 art songs. Brahms trod a delicate line between Classicism and Romanticism, meaning while keeping the traditional structures and compositional techniques, his creativity brought renewed flavors in the Romantic period.

In 1882, then 49-year-old Brahms was beginning to embrace his middle age fully. He had grown internationally successful as a composer with his first two symphonies. His piano virtuosity was declining, so much so that his life-long friend Clara Schumann wrote in her diary that his piano playing was “abominable, bump, bang, and scrabble.” Needless to say, his diminishing piano technique did not manifest in his compositions. We know that we are our own worst critics, but Brahms infamously and relentlessly criticized his own works. Even so, this piano trio, the second of his three piano trios, pleased him so much, he wrote to his publisher Simrock, “You have not yet had such a beautiful trio from me and very likely have not published its equal in the last ten years.”



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## Piano Trio No. 3 in F minor, Op. 65

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Dvořák was one of the first Czech composers to be recognized worldwide. Especially in the United States of America, Antonín Dvořák is most well-known for his Ninth Symphony, "From the New World." In 1892, he accepted his invitation to become the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Dvořák's life in the United States is traceable in his symphony mentioned above, *American Quartet*, *American Quintet*, *Violin Sonatina*, and *American Suite*.



Dvořák, 1882

Unlike Brahms, Dvořák was a sanguine and serene man. However, this piano trio, the third out of his four piano trios, unveils the mournful and troubled state of his mind. He began writing this work six weeks after losing his mother in December 1882. He was also struggling with both his musical and personal Czech identity amid the anti-Czech political atmosphere in Austria, where his beloved mentor resided. This trio perhaps signifies the complicated layers of the tribulations. The Piano Trio in F Minor stands out in its darker timbre; what's more, the trio is often considered Dvořák's most "Brahmsian" composition.



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