

Brahms: The Four Symphonies, Walter Frisch, Yale University Press, 2003, 0300099657, 9780300099652, 226 pages. This book is the definitive guide to Johannes Brahms's four symphonies. It presents an engaging and thorough treatment of the genesis, structure, reception, and performance history of these internationally admired and frequently performed works. Walter Frisch provides a sensitive analytical commentary on the symphonies as well as a consideration of their place within Brahms's oeuvre, within the symphonic repertory of his day, and within the broader musical culture of nineteenth-century Germany and Austria. Frisch also pays particular attention to the evolution of performance style since Brahms's symphonies were first heard. The book begins with an investigation of the different ideologies of the symphony in the decades leading up to Brahms's First. Brahms's early development as a composer is also examined. Frisch then devotes a detailed chapter to each of the four symphonies, including an in-depth analysis of each movement. A separate chapter treats the reception of Brahms's symphonies, and the book concludes with a history of the performances of the symphonies in the concert hall and in early recordings..

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