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Johannes Brahms, cello Sonata No. 2, Op. 99: a transcription and technical guide for alto saxophone and piano

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**JOHANNES BRAHMS, CELLO SONATA NO. 2, OP. 99:
A TRANSCRIPTION AND TECHNICAL GUIDE
FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO**

by

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JOHANNES BRAHMS, CELLO SONATA NO. 2, OP. 99:

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FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO

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ABSTRACT

Johannes Brahms's *Sonata No. 2, Opus 99* is considered an important work of the cello repertoire. With the lack of Romantic-era transcriptions, specifically Brahms, the purpose of this project was to create a new transcription to add to the alto saxophone repertoire. The paper examines Brahms's own transcription of *Sonata Nos. 1 and 2, Opus 120* as an example of a clarinet to viola transcription. Additionally, the paper discusses in detail the necessary changes to the music, as well as offering technical suggestions for the issues encountered when transcribing from a stringed to a wind instrument. The paper concludes with a complete transcription of Brahms's *Sonata No. 2, Opus 99* for alto saxophone and piano.

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CHAPTER ONE OVERVIEW OF TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR THE SAXOPHONE

History of Transcription

Defined as the arrangement of a music composition for a performing medium other than the original or for the same medium but in a more elaborate style, transcription occupies a fundamental place in the history of the saxophone and also in Western music.¹ Since the Middle Ages, composers, performers, and arrangers have constantly adapted music in order to learn various musical styles and to bring variety to concert programs.² During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, a composer's use of another's music was seen as a compliment. For example, during these eras there was a large increase in lute and keyboard intabulations of vocal compositions.³ Bach transcribed more than sixteen concertos by other composers including Vivaldi, Reinken and Albinon rewriting them from string compositions to works for keyboard.⁴ The art of transcription has continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as a tool for composers such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Copland.

¹ Michael Kennedy ed., "Transcription," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed Oct. 15, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e10386>.

² Kathryn Diane Etheridge, "Classical Saxophone Transcriptions: Role and Reception," (M.Mus. diss., Florida State University, 2008), vii.

³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴ Dennis Charles Crabb, "Renaissance and Baroque Compositions Transcribed for Saxophones Solo and Ensembles," (D.M.A. diss., University of Oregon, 1979), 8.

Discussion of Repertory

Since the saxophone's first public performance at Paris's Salle des Concerts Herz in 1844, transcriptions have played a prominent role in the instrument's history, the development of its repertoire, and the shaping of the saxophone as a classical instrument.⁵ On February 3, 1844 Hector Berlioz hosted a concert at Paris's Salle Herz in order to introduce the public to an ensemble of Adolph Sax's inventions. This first public performance of the saxophone occurred two years before Sax's patent for the instrument. To demonstrate these new instruments, Berlioz arranged a simple choral piece of his own that he had composed approximately fifteen years previously. The *Chant Sacré* was a sextet scored for three brasses and three woodwinds and the performance included Sax himself playing the B-flat bass saxophone.⁶ After this initial performance the saxophone quickly acquired a repertoire of both transcribed works and original compositions, thanks to a small group of Parisian composers close to Adolph Sax who were outspoken advocates of the saxophone.⁷ Besides Berlioz – who, surprisingly, did not write any original works for the instrument – four composers in particular created a number of solo pieces: Joseph Arban (1825–1889), Jules Demersseman (1833–1866), Hyacinthe Klosé (1808–1880) and Jean-Baptiste Singelée (1812–1876). Many of these pieces were *solo de concours*, used by the Paris Conservatoire for annual examinations of the saxophone students in Adolphe Sax's saxophone class.⁸ To further promote his new instrument,

⁵ Etheridge, 7.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Adolphe Sax personally published more than thirty-five original works for various saxophones and piano.⁹ In 1958 Marcel Mule embarked on a twelve-concert tour of the United States. During this tour he programmed many original works alongside his own transcriptions of such pieces as the Cazonetta, op. 19 by Gabriel Pierné (originally for clarinet, 1888) and Sonata BWV 1035 (originally for flute) by J.S. Bach.¹⁰

Rudy Wiedoeft, the most recorded saxophonist of the first half of the twentieth century, helped to bring the saxophone from quiet obscurity to phenomenal success in America. Although many vaudeville groups presented the more popular side of the saxophone repertoire, Wiedoeft also presented serious literature to his audiences. He performed many of his own light and popular compositions alongside classical transcriptions of Massenet, Romberg, Tchaikovsky and Verdi.¹¹ His published saxophone solos with piano and instrumental accompaniments exhibit one of the earliest attempts by an American to raise the level of saxophone performance above home entertainment, vaudeville routines, and show band performances.¹² On April 17, 1926 Wiedoeft mounted a major “classical” saxophone concert at Aeolian Hall in New York. His concert filled the hall and was heard by an estimated one million people over the radio.¹³ Wiedoeft played mainly his own compositions but a quartet he assembled for this performance played arrangements of Bach and Tchaikovsky.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Etheridge, 14.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid, 12.

¹³ Ibid.

The saxophone made only an occasional appearance in classical music in the early twentieth century due to the lack of substantial repertoire and what author Don Ashton calls the “disinterest of orchestral musicians.”¹⁴ The classical saxophone had a renaissance between the mid-1920s and the 1940s, mainly due to the concertizing of three international soloists: Cecil Leeson (1902–1989), Marcel Mule (1901–2001), and Sigurd Raschèr (1907–2001).¹⁵ It was during this time that the modern classical saxophone performance tradition was established, the foundation of which is a core of standard practice and concert repertoire composed by these artists.¹⁶ All three men were initially dependent on transcriptions due to the lack of repertoire that was available at the beginning of their careers.¹⁷ Beginning in the 1920s, American saxophonist Cecil Leeson made it one of his goals to effect the acceptance of the saxophone as a classical instrument in America. At the time, American audiences knew the saxophone only through its presence in dance and military bands, the emerging jazz movement, and the vaudeville stage. When Leeson began performing as a classical soloist in 1925, there were no American classical saxophonists, no stylistic or tonal traditions on which to build, and no concert repertoire.¹⁸ Leeson took it upon himself to transcribe short, one-movement works that his audiences would almost certainly have heard before, whether live or on the radio. Virtuoso violin solos, opera arias, and other pieces familiar to the general concert-going public appeared frequently on Leeson’s programs during his early

¹⁴ Ibid, 13.

¹⁵ Etheridge, 13.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid, 16.

career.¹⁹ In an interview with Mark Hulsebos, Leeson mentioned, “vocalists have many beautiful-sounding things, and of course the style and tone that I had [by 1924] was eminently suited for playing that kind of music.”²⁰ On Leeson’s debut at New York’s Town Hall on February 5, 1937, the soloist performed four original saxophone works and nine transcriptions.²¹

Marcel Mule’s quartet Quatour de la musique de la Garde Républicaine’s early repertoire consisted of transcriptions. One work Mule recalled frequently performing with the quartet was the *Andante* from Tchaikovsky’s String Quartet No. 1, one of many transcriptions Mule himself created that today remains popular among saxophone quartets.²²

Importance of Transcription

In 1942, Claude Delvincourt, director of the Paris Conservatoire, allowed the reestablishment of a saxophone class after it was disbanded in 1870 and appointed Marcel Mule as Professor of Saxophone. While at the Conservatoire, Mule developed a system for teaching the concert saxophone that would be duplicated in saxophone studios across Europe.²³ Transcriptions figured prominently in Mule’s conception of saxophone instruction. He found the music of the Baroque, Classical and early Romantic periods excellent pedagogical materials for the teaching of various historical styles, and so arranged and transcribed more than one hundred classical studies from the early

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, 17.

²² Eugene Rousseau, “Marcel Mule His Life and the Saxophone,” *Saxophone Journal*, Fall 1985, 11.

²³ Ibid, 15.

repertoire of other instruments as well as transcriptions of concert solos and sonatas.²⁴

Many of his *Pièces Célèbres*, collections of short transcriptions designed for use by students, are still available today. These collections include works by Gluck, Lully, and Mendelssohn as well as complete sonatas by J.S. Bach and Handel. In a series of interviews with Eugene Rousseau for the book “Marcel Mule: His Life and the Saxophone,” Mule commented on these transcriptions:

As for study materials or method books, there simply weren't any... So I used scales, arpeggios, and transcriptions as teaching materials in order for my students to build the foundation that is absolutely essential for one to have command of the instrument in musical performance... From the teaching standpoint there is yet another dimension to the question of transcriptions, and it is a vitally important one. We have been speaking about the dearth of musical literature for the saxophone, a condition that was natural considering the fact that the instrument was barely one hundred years old when I began my teaching... if students of the saxophone do not play transcriptions of other music, there is no way that they will be able to develop their musical culture as performers. Music of Bach and Handel, all the music of the eighteenth century provides rich examples of ornamentation, staccato and legato style, various tempi, and the forms of that era... Without these kinds of transcriptions the saxophonist cannot develop his foundation in musical styles. Thus the use of transcriptions is musically proper and educationally indispensable.²⁵

The saxophone has no specific link with music prior to its invention, therefore transcription offers an opportunity to study and perform works in previously composed styles. By studying these works student performers become more complete musicians as studying music that lies beyond our instrument's specific repertoire assists in forming a better well rounded performer and educator. In addition to benefiting the performer, transcriptions help make a variety of music better known to a wider audience.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Rousseau, 15.

CHAPTER TWO
TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS, PERFORMANCE GUIDE
AND FINGERING SUGGESTIONS

Choosing an Edition

In creating an arrangement of Brahms' Opus 99, it is important that the score remains largely unchanged from the original manuscript. Beginning with a published Urtext edition will help avoid any changes made by an editor, as well as the performance practice opinions of a given arranger. Urtext is intended to provide a reproduction of the original work without any added or changed material. Urtext editions are typically far more legible than the autograph or early publications.

While there are many companies that publish urtext editions, one of the most respected is Wiener. Wiener Urtext Edition has a well-established reputation of vouching for a reliable urtext, with a catalogue that comprises the major works of classical music ranging from the Baroque period to the early 20th century.²⁶ The essential aim of Wiener Urtext Edition is to offer a musical text based on the sources, free of later additions and alterations, which comes as close to possible to the intentions of the composer.²⁷ As stated on the Wiener Urtext website, "the objective of the Wiener Urtext Edition is to make musical works from the Baroque to the Early Modern period available for practical use in critical editions, so-called Urtext editions."²⁸ With these points in mind, Wiener's publication of Brahms's Sonata No. 2 for Violincello and Piano, Opus 99 was selected as the reference source for this arrangement.

²⁶ www.weiner-urtext.com/en/wiener-urtext-edition, accessed Aug. 5, 2015.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Selecting a Saxophone Voice

When choosing a saxophone voice for a string arrangement, a good point of reference is to consider how the string quartet compares with the saxophone quartet. Both chamber ensembles consist of four voices, although the saxophone quartet uses four different types of saxophones. One of the earliest saxophone quartets by Jean-Baptiste Singeleé, *Premier Quatour*, written in 1857, may be the catalyst for the instrumentation, which is now considered “standard” for the saxophone quartet.²⁹

In selecting a voice for cello works, the most obvious choice would be the baritone saxophone as it is the lowest voice in the saxophone quartet. However, the range of the cello spans from C2 to C6, whereas the range of the baritone saxophone is Db2 to Eb4. Although the low end differs by a semi-tone, issues would occur in the high range. The saxophone range can be extended using altissimo, extending an octave and a major sixth will limit the study and performance of the piece to professional performers. Students may be excluded from studying this transcription due to the limitations of their altissimo range. Due to the range complications, the baritone saxophone is not well suited for this arrangement. Instead, the alto saxophone would better serve this specific piece, as its range is Db3 to Eb6. Although the low range of the cello starts at C2 and the low range of the alto saxophone begins at Db3, the range issue can be compensated through using octave displacement. The upper range matches up nicely and the alto saxophone altissimo range can be used for upper range octave displacement.

²⁹ Stephen Charles Page Jr., “A Performance Edition and Technical Guide to Johann Sebastian Bach’s ‘Chaconne’ from ‘Partita in D minor’, BWV 1004, for Alto Saxophone,” (D.M.A. diss., University of Iowa, 2011), 5.

Treatment of Multiple Stops

One of the most difficult aspects of transcribing Brahms's Sonata, Opus 99 is the frequent use of multiple stops. On a bowed, stringed instrument multiple stops are achieved when more than one note is played at the same time. Although the saxophone is a versatile instrument, it would be beyond the instrument's ability to recreate an appropriate multiple-stop sound that would fit the context and style of Brahms. There are a few options to treat the use of multiple stops in this piece.

Saxophonists are able to produce multiple pitches concurrently through the use of multiphonics. A multiphonic is defined as a sound generated by a normally monophonic instrument in which two or more pitches can be heard simultaneously.³⁰ Multiphonics are produced through rapid vibrations between two or more notes, rather than actual simultaneous sounds, although this is the perception. Due to the acoustical design of the saxophone, multiphonics do not contain every interval available on the instrument; therefore, their use is much more limited. Additionally, it is difficult for the performer to control the intonation of the separate tones in a multiphonic sound, which will compromise the harmonic intention of the composer.

Another option is to omit the extraneous notes in the multiple stops and proceed with a simplified line. Through examination of the score, the arranger can determine which notes are harmonically important and which notes are less important or are doubled in the piano part. By arranging multiple-stop passages as simplified lines, the

³⁰ Murray Campbell. "Multiphonics." *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed August 7, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/43536>.

integrity of the piece may be kept more intact: the rhythm will not have to be altered as it may have to be using rolling grace notes. The idea of simplifying multiple-stop passages is used by Yoshiko Kline in her arrangement of Frédéric Chopin's *Sonata in G minor, Opus 65* for alto saxophone and piano. Figure One shows the original cello line in the fourth movement of Chopin's Opus 65.

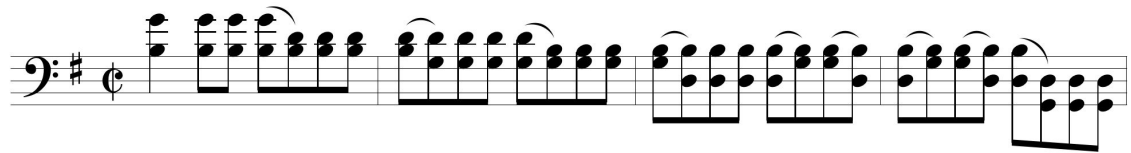


Figure 1: Chopin, Opus 65, movement IV, measures 193–196

Figure Two demonstrates Kline's adaptation of the multiple stops for the saxophone.



Figure 2: Chopin, Opus 65, movement IV, measures 193–196 (transposed)

In Brahms's Opus 99 the first incidence of a multiple stop occurs at measure forty on beat one. Figure Three is taken from the original score with cello:



Figure 3: Opus 99, movement I, measures 39–40

In rewriting the cello part with a simplified line we would lose the depth of the multiple stop but maintain the style of Brahms.

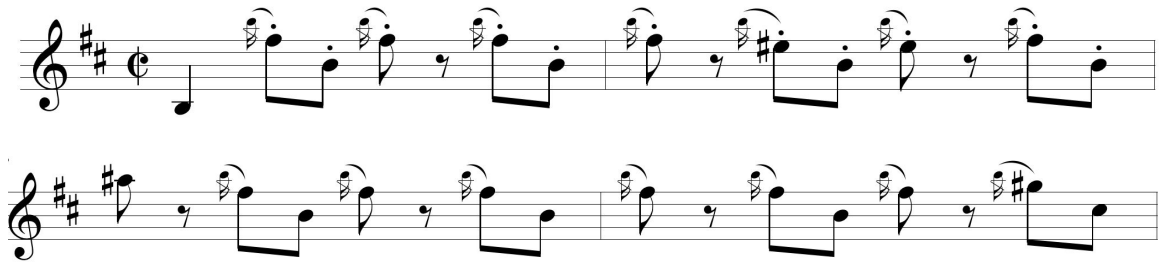


Figure 7: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 102–105 (transposed)

If implementing the grace notes in this passage is a technical concern for the performer, they can simplify the line by omitting the grace notes entirely.

Altissimo Passages

When arranging string music for saxophone, range can be problematic and, at times, the altissimo register of the saxophone is required for specific passages. Altissimo is used to extend the traditional range of the saxophone upwards, starting on the F-sharp above C3. As the altissimo register of the saxophone can sound thin and intonation is a concern, at times it is necessary to use octave displacement to maintain the character and intent of the original composition. For my transcription of Opus 99 I used both altissimo and octave displacement where I felt it was best suited.

The following section will provide practical performance solutions for the passages that use altissimo. The fingerings suggested are an option for the performer as there are numerous finger combinations on the saxophone to produce altissimo pitches. The fingering suggestions were chosen for ease of accuracy and intonation in the context of the passages found in Brahms's Opus 99.

The first occurrence of the altissimo register in the saxophone occurs at measure 209 in the first movement. Written as a G-sharp four lines above the staff in the saxophone score, the altissimo note is preceded by the note B. Crossing the break from the normal range of the saxophone into the altissimo range can be extremely difficult but with the combination of notes, the fingerings are straightforward. The most effective fingering combination requires a minimal amount of movement by the fingers. With the proper fingering, air speed and tongue position the performer will be able to execute this transition smoothly and with good intonation and tone. Figure Eight shows the transcribed saxophone passage with suggested fingerings for the altissimo passage.

The image shows a musical score for saxophone in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score consists of three measures. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note B4. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note G#5 (altissimo), written four lines above the staff. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note F#4. Below the staff, three diagrams illustrate the suggested fingerings for these notes. The first diagram shows the fingering for B4 (left hand: index, middle, ring; right hand: thumb, index, middle). The second diagram shows the fingering for G#5 (left hand: index, middle, ring; right hand: thumb, index, middle). The third diagram shows the fingering for F#4 (left hand: index, middle, ring; right hand: thumb, index, middle).

Figure 8: Opus 99, movement I, measures 209–211 (transposed)

To execute this passage smoothly, the performer will have to work diligently with slow practice to achieve a seamless transition between the normal range and the altissimo range of the saxophone. The performer will likely encounter more issues going from the G-sharp altissimo note to the F-sharp that follows as the hands are slightly out of position to reach the palm keys. The staccato articulation aides the performer to achieve this passage successfully.

The next appearance of a passage that contains the altissimo range is found in the third movement in measure 77, shown in Figure Nine. Also an articulated passage, the altissimo note G is approached and left by the palm key D in the normal range. The palm key D requires only C1 to be use; this helps to free up the fingers to move more easily to the altissimo G fingering.

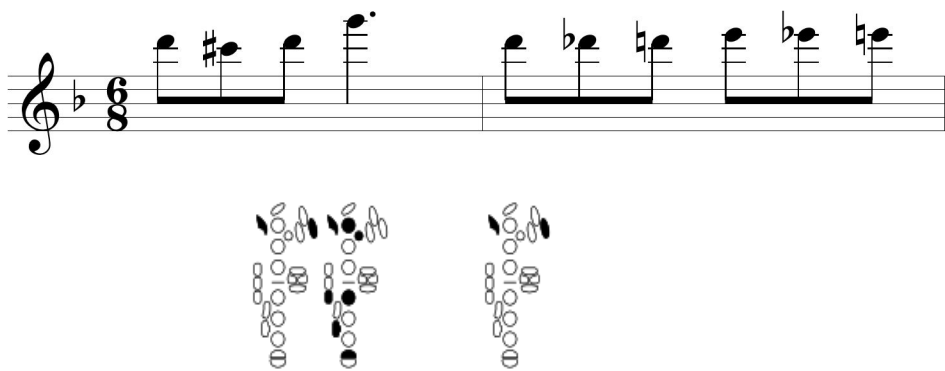


Figure 9: Opus 99, movement III, measures 76–77 (transposed)

Altissimo appears again a few measures later in the third movement; see Figure Ten. The altissimo G is approached by a B-natural and then moves to the palm key E in the normal range of the saxophone. This is the most complicated fingering combination in the transcription so far, as the right hand needs to slide from the side B-flat key up to C3 on the descending notes. This passage has a few fingering combinations that performers can experiment with to determine which combination gives the best response between the normal register and the altissimo register.

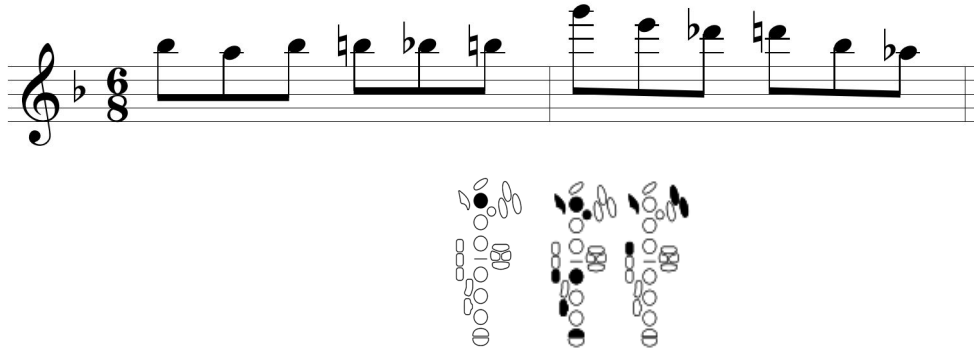


Figure 10: Opus 99, movement III, measures 88–89 (transposed)

In the fourth movement there are a few sporadic occurrences of altissimo. The first appears in measure 46 with an altissimo G on beat one followed by a palm key F-sharp in the normal register of the saxophone. This altissimo passage is unique from the others discussed; it is the first time we encounter altissimo notes in a slurred passage. Performing altissimo while slurring can be challenging due to the combination of keys that needs to be pressed to perform altissimo pitches. Slurring from the normal register to the altissimo register and back down needs to be done with careful analysis of air speed and tongue position to create a seamless line, as shown in Figure Eleven.

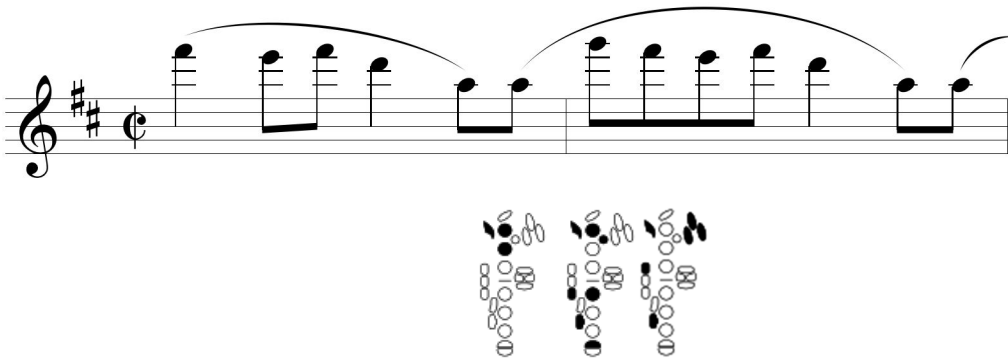


Figure 11: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 45–46 (transposed)

The next appearance of altissimo is in measure 76 in the fourth movement. This passage is also slurred, but only from the altissimo G down to the palm key F in the natural range of the saxophone. Similarly to Figure Ten, this passage needs to be prepared with care to connect the altissimo G to the natural range F as seamlessly as possible.

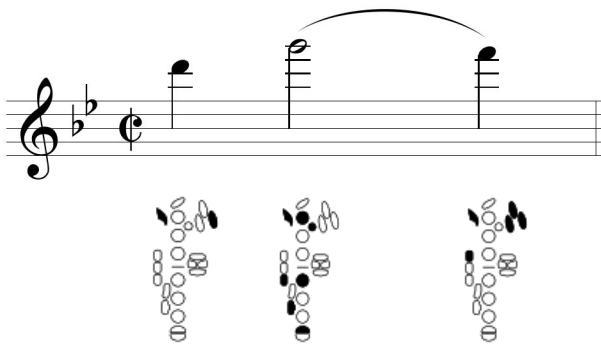


Figure 12: Opus 99, movement IV, measure 76 (transposed)

The last occurrence of altissimo appears in measure 130 in the fourth movement. This is one of the more challenging passages due to the quick tempo and rhythms within the measure. The notes leading up to the altissimo G are staccato and there is a large leap from the normal register A up a minor seventh to the altissimo G. The altissimo G is notated as a sixteenth note, which is the quickest altissimo rhythm in the transcription. As demonstrated in Figure Thirteen, the sixteenth note altissimo G is slurred to an eighth note F-sharp.

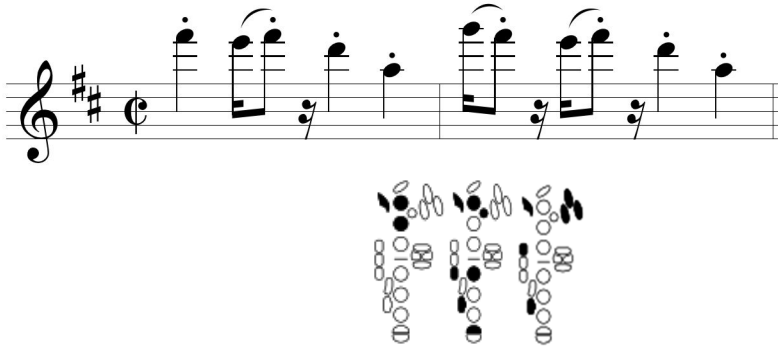


Figure 13: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 129–130 (transposed)

Compared to modern saxophone works that implement extended techniques such as altissimo, the passages in the transcription are reasonable for most saxophonists with the proper consideration. Care needs to be taken with intonation and tone in the altissimo register and fingering combinations carefully chosen. Each fingering suggested is one of many options a performer could use. Some fingering combinations will be more stable than others, it is up to the discretion of the performer to choose what works best.

Treatment of Pizzicato Passages

A string technique that can be problematic in a wind transcription is the pizzicato marking. Pizzicato is produced on a string instrument by plucking the string rather than using the bow. Opus 99 uses pizzicato passages in the second and the fourth movements. As it is difficult to achieve a perfect imitation, the challenge in dealing with the passages that contain pizzicato markings is to develop articulation styles that will suit the music while also producing a pizzicato-like sound. An initial solution to this obstacle would be to rewrite the pizzicato passages as slap tongue passages for the saxophone. A slap tongue is produced by laying the tongue flat against the reed, at the same time sucking so

as to create a vacuum between the reed and the tongue. By drawing the tongue quickly away, the vacuum is broken and the reed is released; a dull popping sound will be produced.³¹ This technique can be effective when imitating an aggressive pizzicato but a slap tongue on the saxophone will produce more of a percussive sound versus a pitched sound.

The second movement of Brahms's Opus 99 opens with a pizzicato passage in the cello. As the movement is marked *Adagio affettuoso*, a slap tongue sound produced by the saxophone would not match the style of the tender opening. The same passage occurs again at measure 40 an octave higher. To navigate these passages on the saxophone, I would suggest a light, open-ended staccato on the instrument. To aide the performer, I have added the marking "lightly" to the pizzicato passages, as shown in Figure Fourteen and Fifteen. To produce this sound, the saxophonist must start the note with their tongue but also use adequate air support and control to create the effect of a bouncing staccato. The player must take great care to not end the note with their tongue, as this will produce a sharp and edgy articulation. The goal is to create as similar a sound to the pizzicato cello as possible.



Figure 14: Opus 99, movement II, measures 1–2

³¹ Alyn Shipton, "Slap-tonguing," *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed. *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed November 2, 2015.

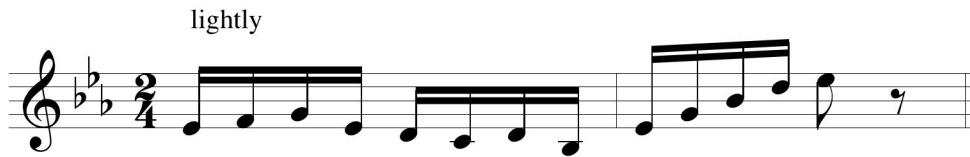


Figure 15: Opus 99, movement II, measures 1–2 (transposed)

As shown in Figure Sixteen, the fourth movement of Opus 99 contains multiple-stop pizzicato figures in measures 37 and 38. On the cello, the pizzicato multiple-stop would be played with the thumb from the bottom note to the top. As each string is plucked by the thumb, the multiple stop notes will not be played together but will sound like a rolled chord. In my transcription I have mimicked this effect by making the bottom two pitches grace notes leading to the highest pitch, as shown in Figure Seventeen. In measure 85, I would approach the pizzicato passages as in the second movement. Pizzicato multiple stops return in measures 116 and 117. As shown in Figure Eighteen and Nineteen, this passage will be approached in the same way as the multiple-stops in measures 37 and 38.

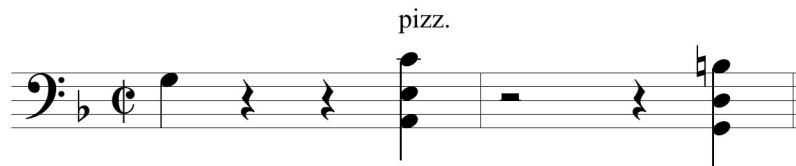


Figure 16: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 37–38



Figure 17: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 37–38 (transposed)



Figure 18: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 116–117



Figure 19: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 116–117 (transposed)

The final occurrence of pizzicato begins in measure 128. As shown in Figure Twenty, this passage is unique from the rest of the piece as it is the first time we see a pizzicato marking with slurs. On the cello this is achieved by stopping a string with the left-hand finger, plucking that string with the right hand and then removing or putting down another finger on the same string. The two notes are thus successively produced, but both must be within the compass of the player's hand or a slide effect would result.³²



Figure 20: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 128–130

To transcribe this passage for the saxophone, the notation will look identical to the cello part, as shown in Figure Twenty-One. Using measure 128 as an example, the saxophonist will slur as marked and interpret the staccato marking under the slur as a

³² Sonya Monosoff, "Pizzicato," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 2, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/21883>.

“lift” to the end of the note before the rest.



Figure 21: Opus 99, movement IV, measures 128–130 (transposed)

In order to achieve an accurate articulation in Brahms’s cello sonata, saxophonists must listen to recordings of cellists performing Opus 99 and experiment on the saxophone to achieve a sound that suits the style and character of Brahms. My findings are merely suggestions and one way of approaching the music of Brahms.

Phrasing Concerns

With any string-to-wind-instrument transcription, breathing is going to be a concern. Advanced string music generally has long phrases with little time to rest and places to catch ones breath. The muscles that are used in forming a saxophone embouchure are small and not used for much other than playing. This can cause fatigue in the player and, partnered with breathing concerns, great care needs to be taken to prepare to perform these works. The performer needs to plan out and practice their breathing so as to have stamina to make it to the end of the work. I have included breath marks in my transcription as suggestions to the performer. Where the phrasing marks become problematic is during the tremolo passages that occur in the first movement of Opus 99. The first incidence of tremolos occurs in measure 60 and continues to measure 65 with a repeat back to measure 60, as shown in Figure Twenty-Two. It is possible for the performer to play the total ten measures of tremolos in one breath but if the performer is

struggling an alternative solution must be found. As the tremolos are background figures, it is possible to drop an eighth rest value at the end of a measure to create space to breathe, as shown in Figure Twenty-Three. It is important to not plan these breaks for moments when the piano has a rest, as the piece may lose intensity and momentum.

The musical score for Figure 22 shows three staves of music. Each staff contains six measures of eighth-note tremolos. The first two staves are identical. The third staff is identical to the second but includes a first ending bracket over the final measure, which ends with a repeat sign. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Figure 22: Opus 99, movement I, measures 60–65 (transposed)

The musical score for Figure 23 is identical to Figure 22 but includes a quarter rest at the end of each of the six measures in all three staves. The first ending bracket in the third staff is also present.

Figure 23: Opus 99, movement I, measures 60–65 (transposed), with added rests

An alternative method to performing long, continuous passages is using circular breathing. This technique is used principally by wind players to enable them to produce a continuous stream of notes without breaking the breath. The player inhales through the nose, filling the lungs with air; simultaneously, using the diaphragm, the performer replenishes the reservoir of air in the mouth cavity, while continuing to expel air from the mouth into the instrument.³³ Generally, circular breathing is most commonly incorporated in passages that are slurred, as the technique of articulation is not an issue. If possible, the natural passage to use circular breathing is the extended tremolo section in the first movement, which begins at measure 92 and lasts for twenty-six measures. The low register may be problematic for some performers so a combination of circular breathing and replacing notes with eighth rests may be necessary. Figure Twenty-Four demonstrates the lengthy tremolo passage on the alto saxophone.

³³ Barry Kernfeld, "Circular breathing," *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 5, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/J088100>.

The musical score consists of ten staves of music, all in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The first six staves feature a continuous sequence of eighth-note triplets, with dynamic markings *ff* (fortissimo) and *dim.* (diminuendo) in the first staff, and *pp* (pianissimo) in the second. The seventh staff begins with a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The eighth staff starts with a *f* (forte) marking and includes a *cresc.* marking. The final two staves continue the triplet pattern. The score is characterized by its rhythmic complexity and dynamic range.

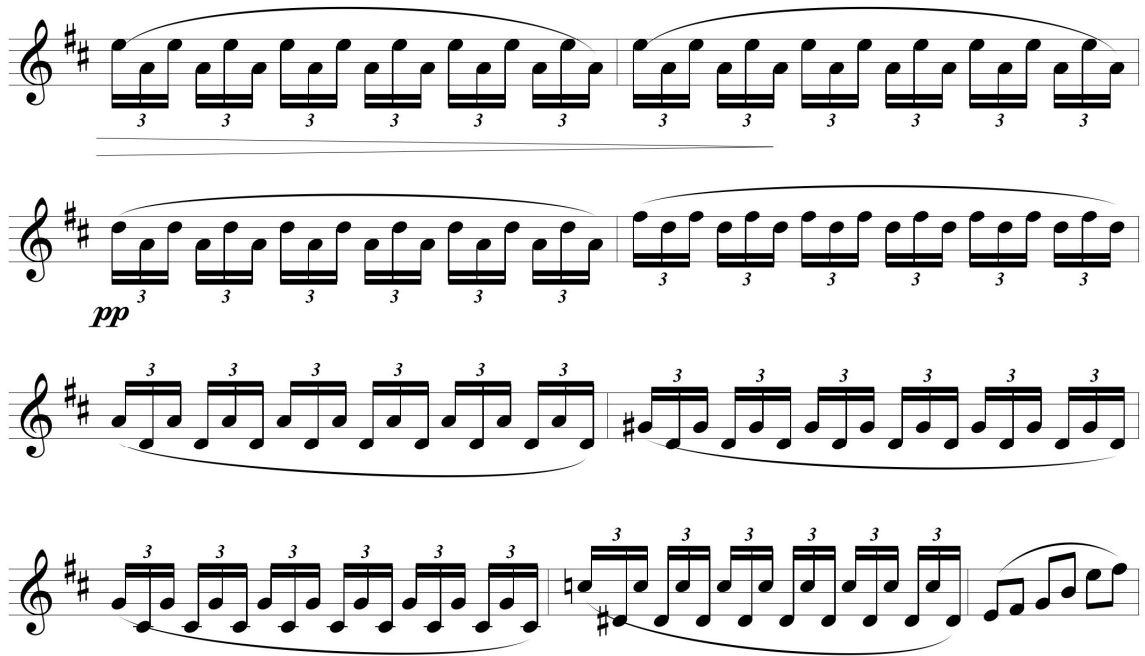


Figure 24: Opus 99, movement I, measures 92–118 (transposed)

Overall this passage is not technically demanding but the passages where the extreme lower register of the saxophone is used may be problematic for circular breathing. If circular breathing is a technique chosen by the performer, care should be taken to not use the technique in the lower register. As each performer becomes more familiar with the work, they may decide when, if at all, to use circular breathing.

It is important for the performer to be rhythmically accurate during the tremolo passage so the figure doesn't turn into a trill. If it is a challenge to maintain the rhythmic tremolo an option is to simplify the rhythms into triplet figures. Not only does this allow for more accuracy on the rhythm, it is less fatiguing for the performer. Figure twenty-five demonstrates an example of the modified tremolo passage.

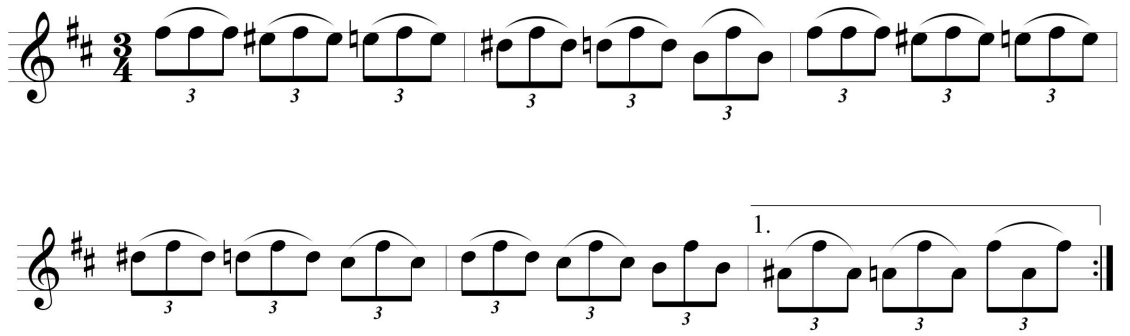


Figure 25: Opus 99, movement I, measures 60–65 (transposed)

CHAPTER THREE
ANALYSIS OF BRAHMS, CELLO SONATA NO. 2, OPUS 99
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR A SAXOPHONE TRANSCRIPTION

Background and Significance of Work

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) wrote twenty-four chamber works, which represent approximately one quarter of all his compositions. He was one of the great figures of nineteenth-century German music, a master of traditional forms in a period when they seemed to be increasingly replaced with new modern aesthetic attitudes. Brahms was the symbol of the conservative side of composition, and he was deeply interested in the past. Writing in 1947, however, composer Arnold Schoenberg sought to “prove that Brahms, the classicist, the academician, was a great innovator in the realm of musical language, that, in fact, he was a great progressive.”³⁴ Brahms understood that he needed to compose for audiences whose tastes were formed by the classical masterpieces of the last two centuries. He needed to create pieces that were like those already popular but different enough to offer listeners something new and attractive.³⁵ In Brahms’s works there are no sudden changes of manner and no phases dominated by specific genres. His process seems to be one of continuous integration and re-absorption of principles to new ends, and it is characterized by long consideration, endless revision, and ruthless self-criticism.³⁶

What Brahms achieved in the serious instrumental genres was immensely significant because it represented a revitalizing of forms, which had lost their dominance

³⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, “Brahms the Progressive,” *Style and Idea*. (London: Faber & Faber, 1975).

³⁵ Grove, Brahms, 718.

³⁶ Michael Musgrave, *The Music of Brahms* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 7.

in Germany.³⁷ He wrote his first cello sonata, Opus 38, in 1964–65. This is the first of seven sonatas for piano with solo instruments. He wrote two with cello, three with violin, and two with clarinet. Opus 99 was composed in 1886 for Robert Hausmann (1852–1901), the cellist of the Joachim String Quartet.³⁸ Opus 99 was composed at around the same time as Brahms’s Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Violin Sonata no. 2 in A major, and Piano Trio No. 3 in C minor.

Opus 120 Nos. 1 and 2 for Clarinet and Viola

Brahms composed his Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Opus 120 in 1894 and shortly after transcribed the works for viola and piano. This is an excellent opportunity to examine how Brahms himself would transcribe his works, although he transcribed from a wind to a stringed instrument.

The principal alteration in the viola part, as compared to the clarinet version, was to change the register of several sections. The clarinet has a large range of pitches spanning almost four octaves. The viola is slightly more limited with a range of just under three octaves. In Opus 120/2 Brahms took the viola part down an octave from the clarinet part, likely because this better suited the rich, lower tones of the viola. Figures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven demonstrates a comparison between the clarinet and viola line.

³⁷ Musgrave, 89.

³⁸ John Henken, “Cello Sonata No. 2 in F major, Op. 99,” L.A. Philharmonic.



Figure 26: Opus 120, No. 2, movement I, measures 146–149, clarinet



Figure 27: Opus 120, No. 2, movement I, measures 146–149, viola

The viola version also incorporates multiple stops in some passages. By employing multiple stops, Brahms took full advantage of the viola's potential, for a sound more voluminous than the single tones of the clarinet. The double stops added in measures 147–50 add a sense of urgency and tension to the music. Figures Twenty-Eight and Twenty-Nine demonstrate how Brahms implemented double stops in the viola transcription.



Figure 28: Opus 120, No. 2, movement I, measures 147–151, clarinet

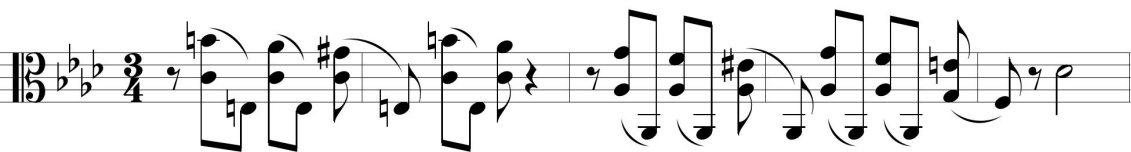


Figure 29: Opus 120, No. 2, movement I, measures 147–151, viola

Rhythmically the transcriptions are very similar. Brahms did change the rhythm in Opus 120, Number 2 in the second movement, as shown in Figures Thirty and Thirty-One. In this passage he also added double stops to the viola part and rather than have the

viola rest in measures 119–20 he adds a dotted half note, the pitch doubled from the right-hand piano line. Brahms extends this passage by two measures in the viola part in measures 132–35. The viola additions are taken from the right hand of the piano part, which thickens the texture.

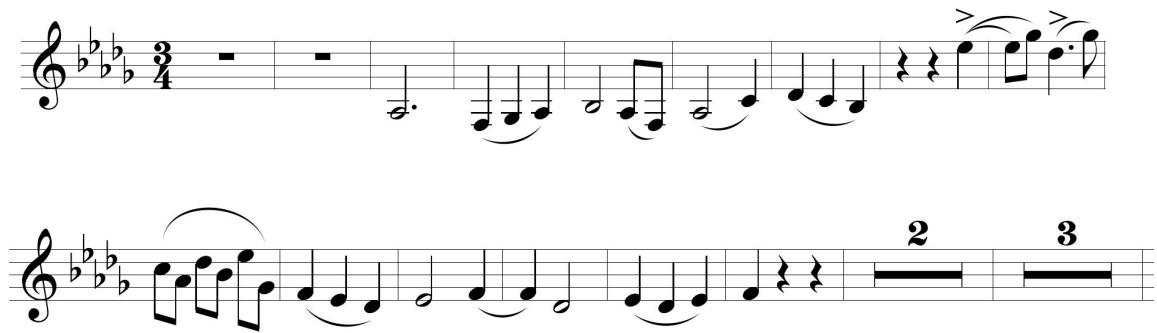


Figure 30: Opus 120, No. 2, movement II, measures 119–138, clarinet

Figure 31: Opus 120, No. 2, movement II, measures 119–138, viola

In addition to multiple stops, Brahms also added grace notes to the beginning of some of the viola phrases in Opus 120/1. These occur in measures 79, 86, 125, 199, and 201 of the first movement. Opus 120/2 contains fewer grace note additions with Brahms adding the notation only in measures 18 and 63 of the first movement. Figures Thirty-Two and Thirty-Three demonstrate where Brahms implemented grace notes in the viola part.

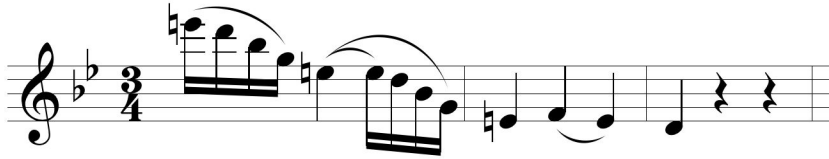


Figure 32: Opus 120, No. 1, movement I, measures 79–81, clarinet



Figure 33: Opus 120, No. 1, movement I, measures 79–81, viola

Implications of Opus 120 on the Opus 99 Transcription

In the case of Opus 120 Numbers 1 and 2, it seems that Brahms composed two characteristic works and not just direct transcriptions from clarinet to viola. Brahms knew that this was a natural fit from the clarinet to the viola due to the minimal alterations in the viola part. Although there are few alterations between the parts, both versions sound very unique depending on the instrument. With a large range, the clarinet has the ability to sound warm and rich, at other times hollow, and in the higher register it has a more piercing quality. The viola is overall a richer-sounding instrument with deep, warm tones. Because of the different timbre each instrument possesses the clarinet and viola versions almost sound like two different works rather than a transcription. By adding multiple stops and changing the register in the viola part, Brahms took into consideration what would suit the viola the best.

Through listening to and studying the Opus 120 scores, I have an indication of how to proceed with my own transcription from cello to alto saxophone of Opus 99. I made registral adjustments that would suit the saxophone and attempted to stay out of the

altissimo register as much as possible in order to maintain the warm, cello tones. I found that staying in the natural range of the saxophone suited the character of the work much more than playing passages in the altissimo register. Through modification of the multiple stop passages to grace-note figures in the saxophone, the harmonic integrity of the work is maintained. My goal with this transcription is to add to the repertoire of the saxophone and create a work that makes sense in the Romantic time period in which it was composed.

Sonata for Piano and Violoncello Opus 99, No. 2

Johannes Brahms, arr. Kristine Gray

Alto Sax *Allegro vivace*

6 A. Sax. *f*

12 A. Sax. *dim.*

18 A. Sax. *dim.* *p*

24 A. Sax. *cresc.*

32 A. Sax. *f*

40 A. Sax. *mf* *f*³

46 A. Sax. *p*

I

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

I

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

I

A. Sx. Musical staff starting at measure 178. It features a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first three measures contain eighth-note triplets. A hairpin crescendo leads to a dynamic marking of **fz** (forzando) at the start of measure 183. The staff continues with various rhythmic patterns and rests.

A. Sx. Musical staff starting at measure 184. It begins with a dynamic marking of **dim.** (diminuendo) and a hairpin decrescendo. This is followed by a dynamic marking of **p espr.** (piano esprimo) and a hairpin crescendo. The staff concludes with three eighth-note triplets.

A. Sx. Musical staff starting at measure 191. It consists of a continuous sequence of eighth-note triplets, each group of three notes beamed together and marked with a '3' above it.

A. Sx. Musical staff starting at measure 195. It begins with a dynamic marking of **p** (piano) and the instruction **grazioso**. The staff features a mix of quarter notes, eighth notes, and eighth-note triplets.

A. Sx. Musical staff starting at measure 201. It begins with the instruction **poco cres.** (poco crescendo) and a hairpin crescendo. A dynamic marking of **p** (piano) is placed at the end of the staff. The staff contains eighth-note triplets and other rhythmic figures.

A. Sx. Musical staff starting at measure 206. It begins with eighth-note triplets. A dynamic marking of **f** (forte) is placed below the staff, followed by the instruction **vivace**. The staff continues with various rhythmic patterns.

A. Sx. Musical staff starting at measure 212. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a few notes and rests, ending with a double bar line.

II

Adagio affettuoso

Alto Sax *lightly*
p *f*

A. Sax. *expr.* *cresc.*

A. Sax. *dim.* *p*

A. Sax. *dim.* *pp* *dolce*

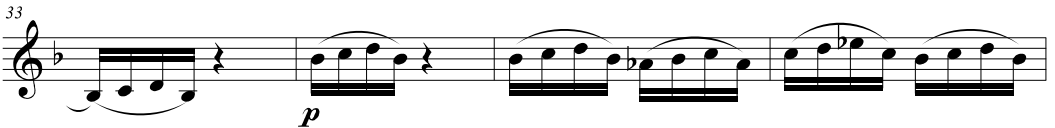
A. Sax. *expr.*

A. Sax. *f*

A. Sax. *f* *p* *cresc.* *sfz* *f*

A. Sax.

II

A. Sx. ³³ 

A. Sx. ³⁷ 

A. Sx. ⁴¹ 

A. Sx. ⁴⁵ 

A. Sx. ⁴⁹ 

A. Sx. ⁵³ 

A. Sx. ⁵⁷ 

A. Sx. ⁶¹ 

A. Sx. ⁶⁵ *f* *p* dim.

A. Sx. ⁶⁹ *pp*

Detailed description: The image shows two staves of musical notation for the Alto Saxophone (A. Sx.). The first staff, labeled 'A. Sx.' and starting at measure 65, contains a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) at the beginning, followed by a hairpin leading to a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The line ends with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking and a fermata. A second hairpin is located below the staff. The second staff, also labeled 'A. Sx.' and starting at measure 69, contains a few notes with a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo). It also features a hairpin and a fermata. Above the first staff, there is a Roman numeral 'II' and a fermata symbol.

III.

Allegro passionato

Alto Sax

7

A. Sax. *cresc.* *f* *sf*

13 *sf* *f* ²

19 ²

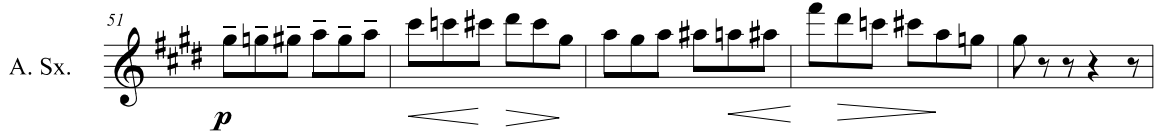
25 *p* *dim.*

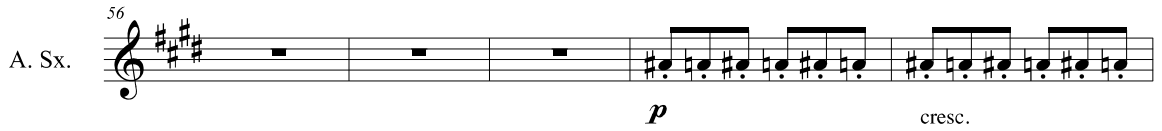
31 *p* *sf*

38 *sf*

44 *sf* *p*

III.

A. Sx. ⁵¹ 

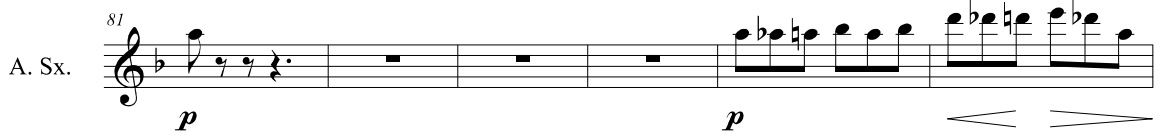
A. Sx. ⁵⁶ 

A. Sx. ⁶¹ 

A. Sx. ⁶⁵ 

A. Sx. ⁶⁹ 

A. Sx. ⁷⁵ 

A. Sx. ⁸¹ 

A. Sx. ⁸⁷ 

III.

A. Sx. ⁹²  *cresc.* *f* *sf* *sf*

A. Sx. ⁹⁸  *f*

A. Sx. ¹⁰⁴  *f* *f*

A. Sx. ¹¹⁰  *f* *f* *f*

A. Sx. ¹¹⁷  *f* *cresc.* *f* *f*

A. Sx. ¹²⁴  *Fine* *p* dolce expr.

A. Sx. ¹³¹  *pp* *p*

A. Sx. ¹³⁹  *sf* *p* *sfp* *p* *cresc.*

III.

A. Sx. ¹⁴⁶ *sf* *sf* dim. *p*

A. Sx. ¹⁵³ *sf* dim.

A. Sx. ¹⁵⁹ *p*

A. Sx. ¹⁶⁷ cresc.

A. Sx. ¹⁷⁵ *f* *p* dim. *p*

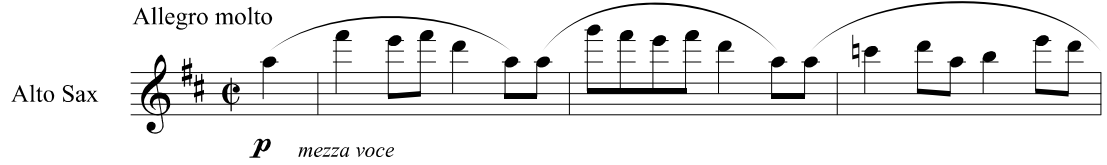
A. Sx. ¹⁸³ *pp* *p* cresc. *sf*

A. Sx. ¹⁹¹ *fp* dim. D.C. al Fine

IV.

Alto Sax

Allegro molto




p mezza voce

A. Sax.



dim.

A. Sax.



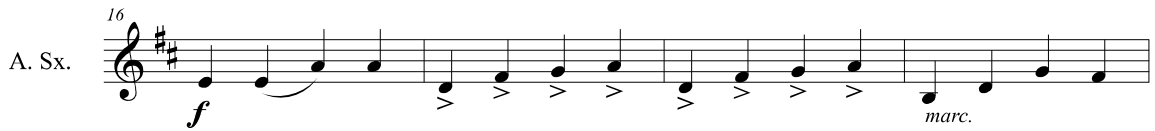
p leggiero

A. Sax.



cresc.

A. Sax.



f marc.

A. Sax.




f

A. Sax.



p

A. Sax.



p

IV.

A. Sx. Musical staff 32-35: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Measures 32-35 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 33 has a dynamic marking of *p*. Measures 33-35 feature triplets of eighth notes.

A. Sx. Musical staff 36-39: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measures 36-39 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 36 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measures 36-39 feature triplets of eighth notes.

A. Sx. Musical staff 40-43: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measures 40-43 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 40 has a dynamic marking of *fp*. The word "lightly" is written above the staff. Measure 40 features a triplet of eighth notes.

A. Sx. Musical staff 44-47: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measures 44-47 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 44 has a dynamic marking of *pp*.

A. Sx. Musical staff 48-51: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measures 48-51 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 51 has a dynamic marking of *dim.*

A. Sx. Musical staff 52-55: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measures 52-55 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 52 has a dynamic marking of *pp*. Measure 55 has a dynamic marking of *dim.*

A. Sx. Musical staff 56-59: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measures 56-59 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 56 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 58 has a dynamic marking of *sf*.

A. Sx. Musical staff 60-63: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measures 60-63 contain eighth notes with slurs and accents. Measure 62 has a dynamic marking of *sf*.

IV.

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

A. Sx. 

IV.

96 A. Sx. 
marc.

100 A. Sx. 

104 A. Sx. 

108 A. Sx. 
f


112 A. Sx. 
p

116 A. Sx. 

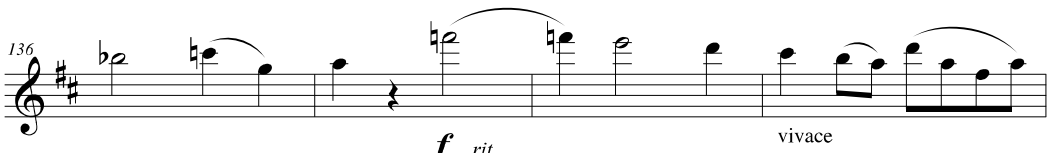
120 A. Sx. 
cresc.
f

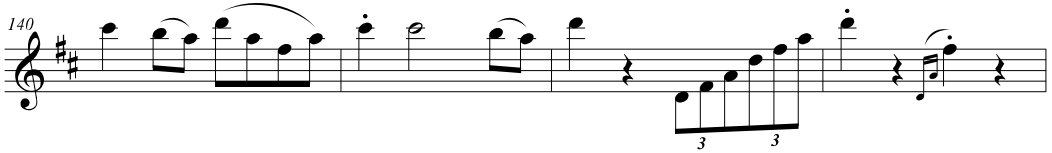
124 A. Sx. 

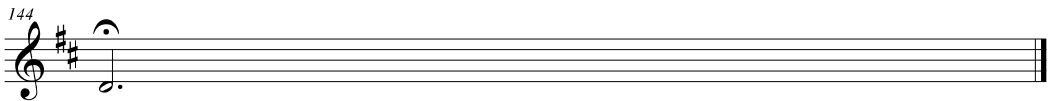
IV.

A. Sx. ¹²⁸ 
marc.

A. Sx. ¹³² 

A. Sx. ¹³⁶ 
f rit. *vivace*

A. Sx. ¹⁴⁰ 

A. Sx. ¹⁴⁴ 

Overview of Brahms's Sonata No. 2 in F Major, Opus 99 for Piano and Cello

Mvt. I Allegro vivace: sonata-allegro form (F major, 3/4, 211 m.)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Exposition (65 measures) | Development (61 measures) | Recapitulation (49 measures) | Coda (33 measures) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|

| Measure | Major Key Areas | |
|---------|------------------|---|
| 1 | Theme 1 | F major |
| 24 | Transition | G minor-C major |
| 34 | Theme 2 | C major-E minor-C major-A minor |
| 60 | Closing material | A minor |
| 66 | Development | F# minor-C# minor-C major |
| 128 | Recapitulation | F major-A minor-F major-D minor-F minor |
| 178 | Coda | F minor-F major |

Mvt. II Adagio affettuoso: ternary form with varied return (F-sharp major, 2/4, 71 m.)

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| A section (19 measures) | B section (20 measures) | A' section (23 measures) | Coda (9 measures) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|

| Measure | Major Key Areas | |
|---------|-----------------|--|
| 1 | A section | F# minor-B major-C#major-B major-F# major-C sharp |
| 20 | B section | F minor-Db major-F minor-Gb major- Db major-Gb major |
| 44 | A' section | F# major-B minor-D major-F# major |
| 63 | Coda | F# major |

Mvt. III Allegro passionato: scherzo (AB, F minor, 6/8, 128 m.) and trio (CD, F major, 6/8, 67 m.)

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| A section (50 measures) | B section (78 measures) | C section (31 measures) | D section (36 measures) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|

| Measure | | Major Key Areas |
|----------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Scherzo A section | F minor-C minor |
| 33 | Transition | F minor-E minor |
| 50 | B section | E minor-F# minor-D minor-Bb minor-F minor-Bb minor-F minor |
| 126 | Transition | F major |
| 129 | Trio C section | F major-C major-F major-Db major-Gb/F# major |
| 160 | D section | F# sharp-G major-C major-F major-F minor |

Mvt. IV Allegro molto: rondo form (F major, 2/2, 144 m.)

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| A (23 measures) | B (22 measures) | A' (12 measures) | C (28 measures) | A'' (17 measures) | B' (27 measures) | A''' (16 measures) |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|

| Measure | | Major Key Areas |
|----------------|--------------|---|
| 1 | A section | F major-D minor-F major-A minor |
| 23 | B section | A minor-E minor-A minor-C major-G minor-C major |
| 45 | A' section | C major-A major-F major-F minor-Bb minor |
| 57 | C section | Bb minor-Ab major-Db major-Bb minor-Gb major |
| 85 | A'' section | Gb major-F# major-G major-G minor-D minor-F major-D minor |
| 102 | B' section | D minor-A minor-F major-C minor-F major |
| 129 | A''' section | F major-Bb major-Ab major-F major |

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