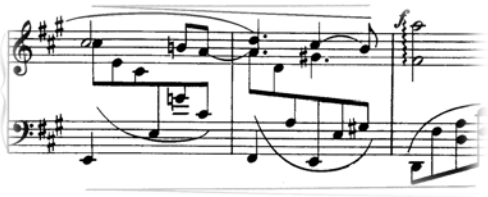
Brahms Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118 No. 2

Brahms is often referred to as a *Classical-Romanticist* because his music exemplifies both period styles. He was a traditionalist and an innovator.

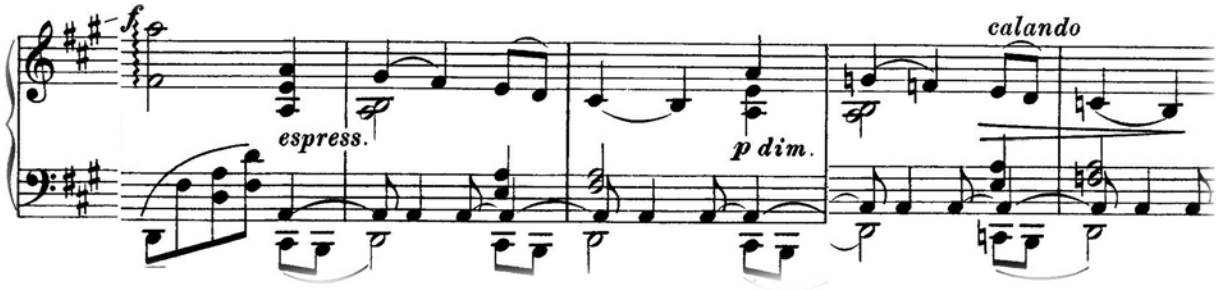
Traditional Compositional features in Op. 118, No.2

Motivic Development:

- Opening motve in hemiola (mm. 28-30

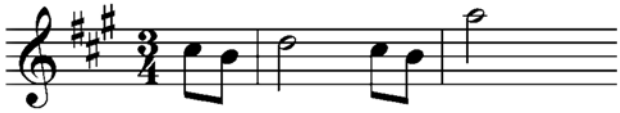


- Opening motive repeated in bass with mode change (mm. 30-34)

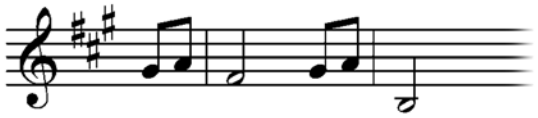


- Opening motive in melodic inversion

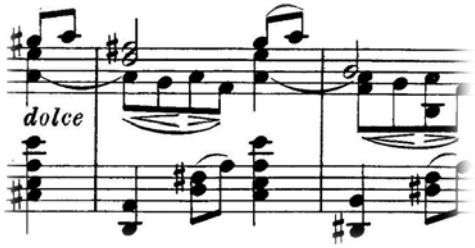
Opening motive:



Melodic inverision of opening motive:

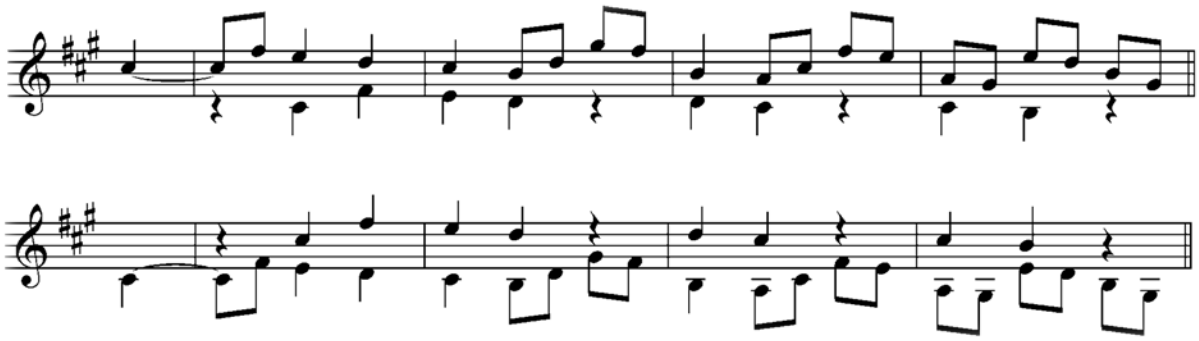


Occurrence at mm. 34-35

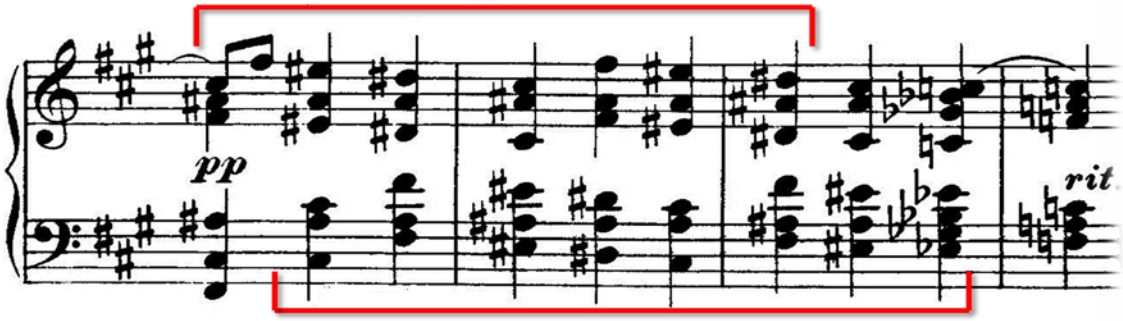


Traditional Compositional Features (cont.)

- Invertible counterpoint (contrapuntal inversion) is when two independent melodies played simultaneously change registral positions later in a passage; that is the higher melody becomes the lower melody and vice versa. The excerpt below demonstrates how it occurs in Op. 118, No. 2: The following two lines of music have the same two melodies playing simultaneously. Notice that on the second line, the melody that was on top is now on the bottom. (Line 1 is mm. 49-56, Line 2 is mm. 65-72):

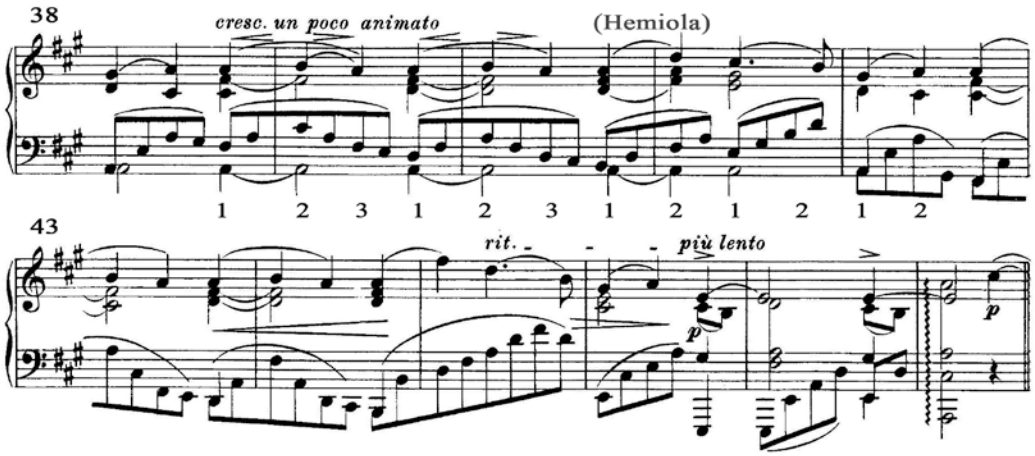


- 4-note canon (mm. 57-64):

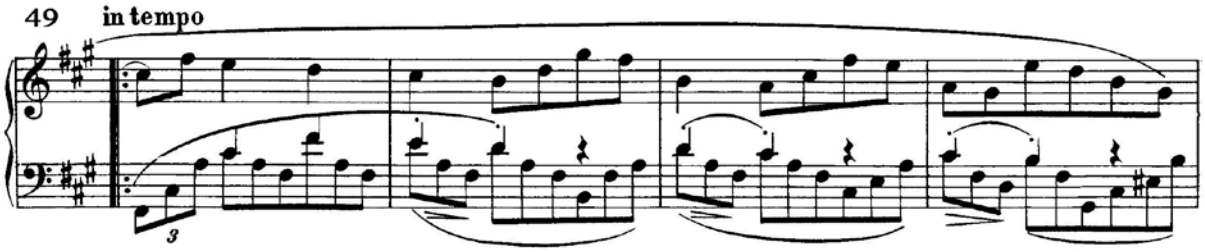


Romantic Compositional Features

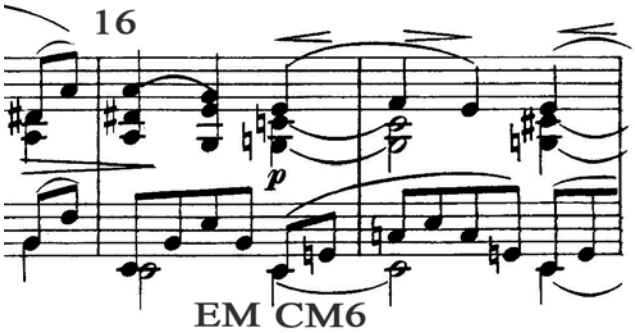
- Metric displacement – downbeat sounds elsewhere than beat one (e.g., mm. 17-23; 38-45)



- Cross rhythms – 3:2 (mm. 49-56; 65-72)



- Chromatic third relationships (m. 16)



- Avoidance of tonic chords in root position, especially on strong beats
    - Observe the absence of A major chords in root position on strong beats from mm. 1-49