

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Cello Sonata No. 2 in F major, Op. 99

Composed in 1886 during a productive summer in Switzerland, Johannes Brahms' Cello Sonata No. 2 in F major is a powerful and complex work that showcases the composer's mature style. The sonata pushes both cello and piano to their expressive limits, highlighting their interplay in a balanced partnership.

#### I. Allegro vivace

The sonata opens with a passionate Allegro vivace, bursting with intensity and marked by a dramatic contrast between stormy themes and lyrical passages. Brahms uses wide leaps and bold rhythms, giving both the cello and piano equally challenging roles.

#### II. Adagio affettuoso

The second movement, Adagio affettuoso, provides a serene respite with its calm, song-like melody in D major. Here, Brahms' love for tender, songful lines shines through, allowing the cello to explore deep, expressive melodies.

#### III. Allegro passionato

In the third movement, Allegro passionato, Brahms returns to a dark, minor key, filled with restless energy and rhythmic drive. This movement, with its characteristic rhythmic pulse and syncopations, creates a sense of urgency that seems almost orchestral in scope.

#### IV. Allegro molto

Finally, the sonata closes with the Allegro molto, a lively finale that combines energy with lyricism. The movement alternates between bright, folk-like themes and more introspective sections, bringing the sonata to an exuberant, triumphant conclusion.

In this work, Brahms breaks from classical sonata form in subtle ways, favoring complexity and dramatic contrast. The Cello Sonata No. 2 stands as a monumental piece in the cello repertoire and is often celebrated for its virtuosic demands and emotional depth, encapsulating Brahms' profound connection to both the cello and the piano.