

Scherzo (F.A.E Sonata)

The Scherzo WoO.2 is the third movement of the joint Sonata written, as a present, for Joseph Joachim by Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms and Albert Hermann Dietrich (a student of Schumann). Dietrich and Brahms wrote each one movement while Schumann wrote the other 2. The piece was written in Dusseldorf in 1853.

From all the movements, the Scherzo of Brahms is the most famous and often performed.

The name of the Sonata is called F-A-E which stands for the German words: 'Frei aber Einsam', which was the motto of Joseph Joachim. The scherzo has a fast rhythmic drive, due to the violin-part and the piano who follows with the same accompaniment as the violin introduces in the first 8 bars. The theme, which is written in minor, gives a very dark mystic character to the piece.

In the trio the 'frei aber einsam' character is more present. The trio has the possibilities for the performers to play it very freely, opposed from the Scherzo before and after.

In the coda he changes again from the minor to the major and writes with big chords and the lowest possible register of the piano. For this coda, Brahms went back to use the thematic material of the trio. But he gives it a very different character by giving it 'sempre ff e grandioso' opposed from 'espressivo'.