



Tragedy marked his early years and left their impression. Within months of his meeting with Schumann, the older composer was declared insane and Brahms found himself torn between his loyalty to him and his love for his wife, Clara. By the 1870s Brahms was recognised as the most outstanding musician of his generation: a reputation clinched by the appearance of his First Symphony in 1876, dubbed by von Bülow as "Beethoven's Tenth." By now Brahms had long settled in Vienna and had begun to sow the seeds of the transformation of the romantic young genius into the well-known bearded crusty bachelor.

His persona became the stuff of legend: the simple apartment he

inhabited, his grey beard, old clothes and his habit of rising at 5am every morning and brewing his villainously strong black coffee. His meals were taken at humble cafés, his favourite being *Zum roten Igel* (the Red Hedgehog) and he developed a brusque exterior. At the age of sixty-three, old before his time, Brahms was shattered by the death of Clara Schumann. Almost as if he anticipated his end, his last work was a series of Chorale Preludes for organ meditating on the mystery of death.

FURTHER READING: Malcolm MacDonald: Brahms. The Master Musicians. Oxford University Press
WEBSITE: www.johannesbrahms.org

© Peter Reynolds

NODIADAU RHAGLEN

Wagner	
Prelwd, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg	8'
Rachmaninov	
Concerto Piano Rhif 1	27'
Egwyl	
Brahms	
Symffoni Rhif 4	42'

Richard Wagner

(1813-83)

PRELIWD, DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG

Yn *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Y Meistersingers), mae Wagner yn

rhoi duwiau, arwyr, brenhinoedd a marchogion ei waith arall o'r neilltu ac yn rhoi'r ffocws ar grydd. Mae'r stori'n dilyn trywydd cariad ifanc yn Nuremberg yr unfed ganrif ar bymtheg. Yng nghynhesrwydd ysblennydd a naturioldeb ei gerddoriaeth, creodd Wagner ei ddrama gerddorol fwyaf poblogaidd a chafodd ei chydnabod ar unwaith fel campwaith yn y perfformiad cyntaf ym Munich ym 1868.

Gan ysgrifennu at ei gyhoeddwr amyneddgar, Schott, ym 1861, addawodd Wagner y byddai *Die Meistersinger* yn "opera comig poblogaidd... ysgafn ei arddull a hawdd ei lwyfannu" ac y byddai wedi'i gwblhau o fewn blwyddyn. Pasiodd chwe blynedd arall cyn i hynny ddigwydd. Yn para pedair awr a hanner, mae'n un o