Discussion questions on Brahms's setting of Die Mainacht

One of the most elegant Lieder in the literature of art song.

1. What places this music in the later 19th century? (Technical/ structural features)

2. Why does it begin with a $\frac{6}{4}$?

3. What is special about the $\frac{6}{4}$ in the first section of the song (mm. 1-14)? It is first introduced as a consonant chord, then resolves as a dissonance in m. 14.

4. Chromatic-harmonic structures

   modulation to III by mixture and return to Ib by 5-6 change of harmony: good example of interpenetration of harmony and counterpoint in later 19th-century music (flexibility, "richness", also ambiguity).

   modulation to natural VI by 5 6: again harmonic and contrapuntal dimensions interact.

5. Melodic details:

   preparation of large-scale neighbor B (=Cb) at m. 15 by C and Cb in melody (as "detached" neighbors).

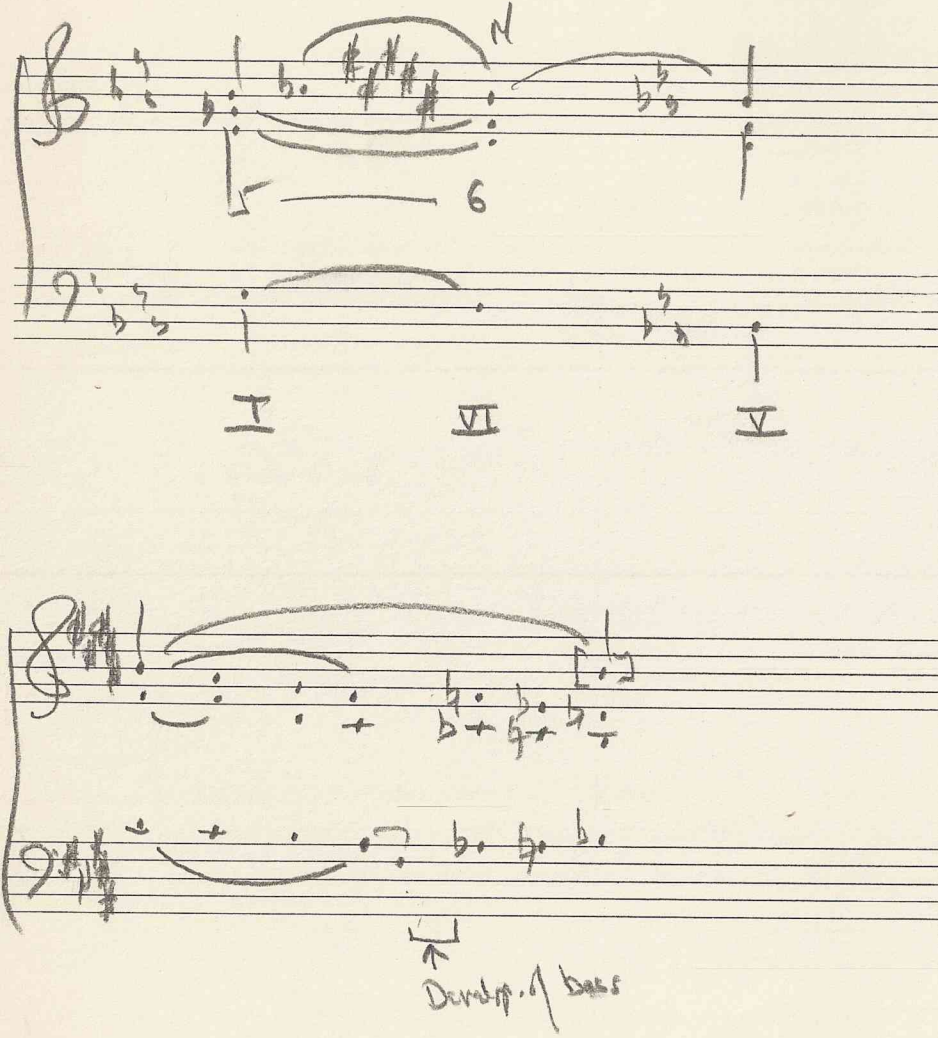
<u>Complexity at the foreground and middleground level--structural basis is "simple"</u>

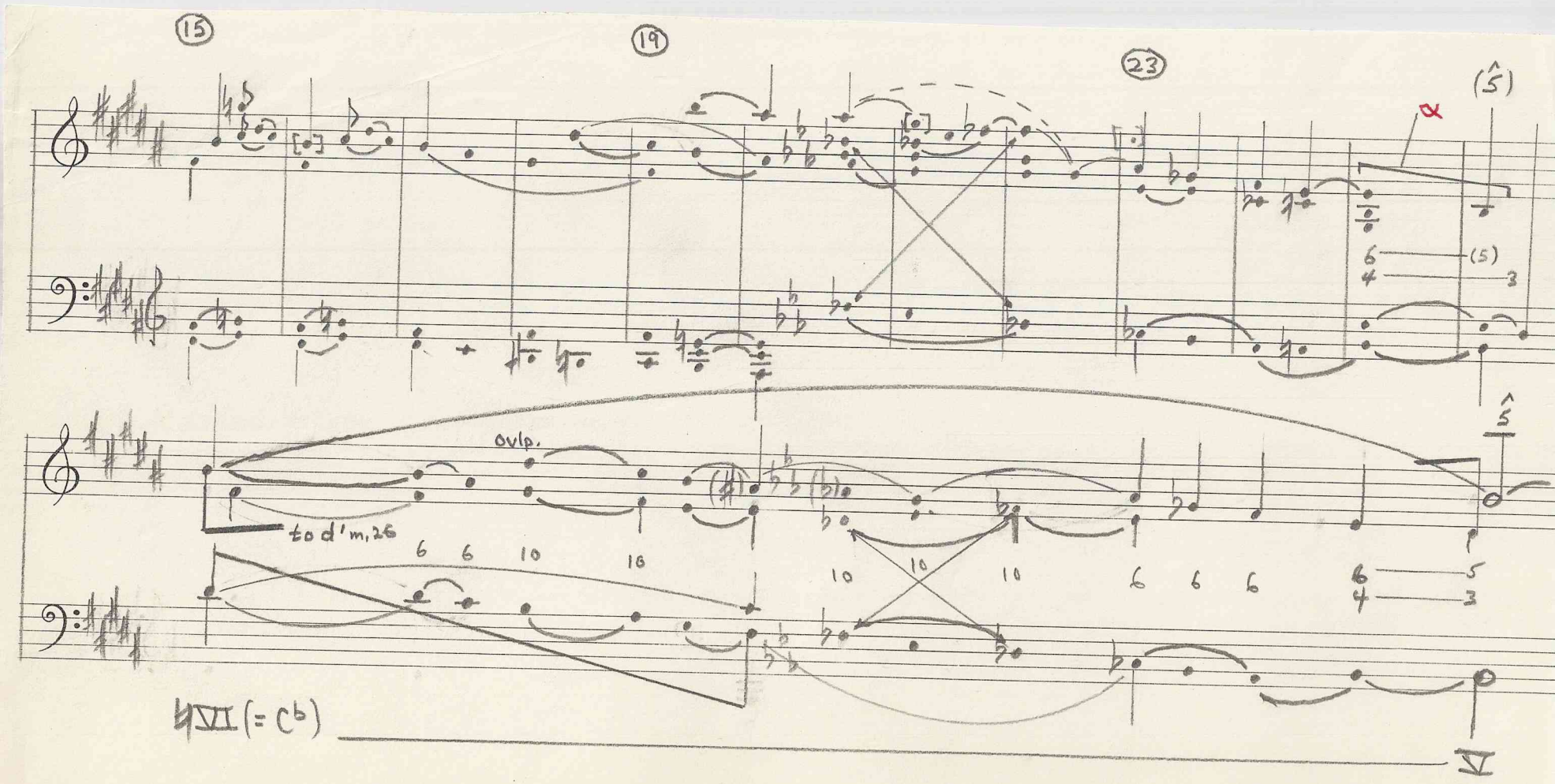
Features: elision
mixture
linear progressions
overlapping

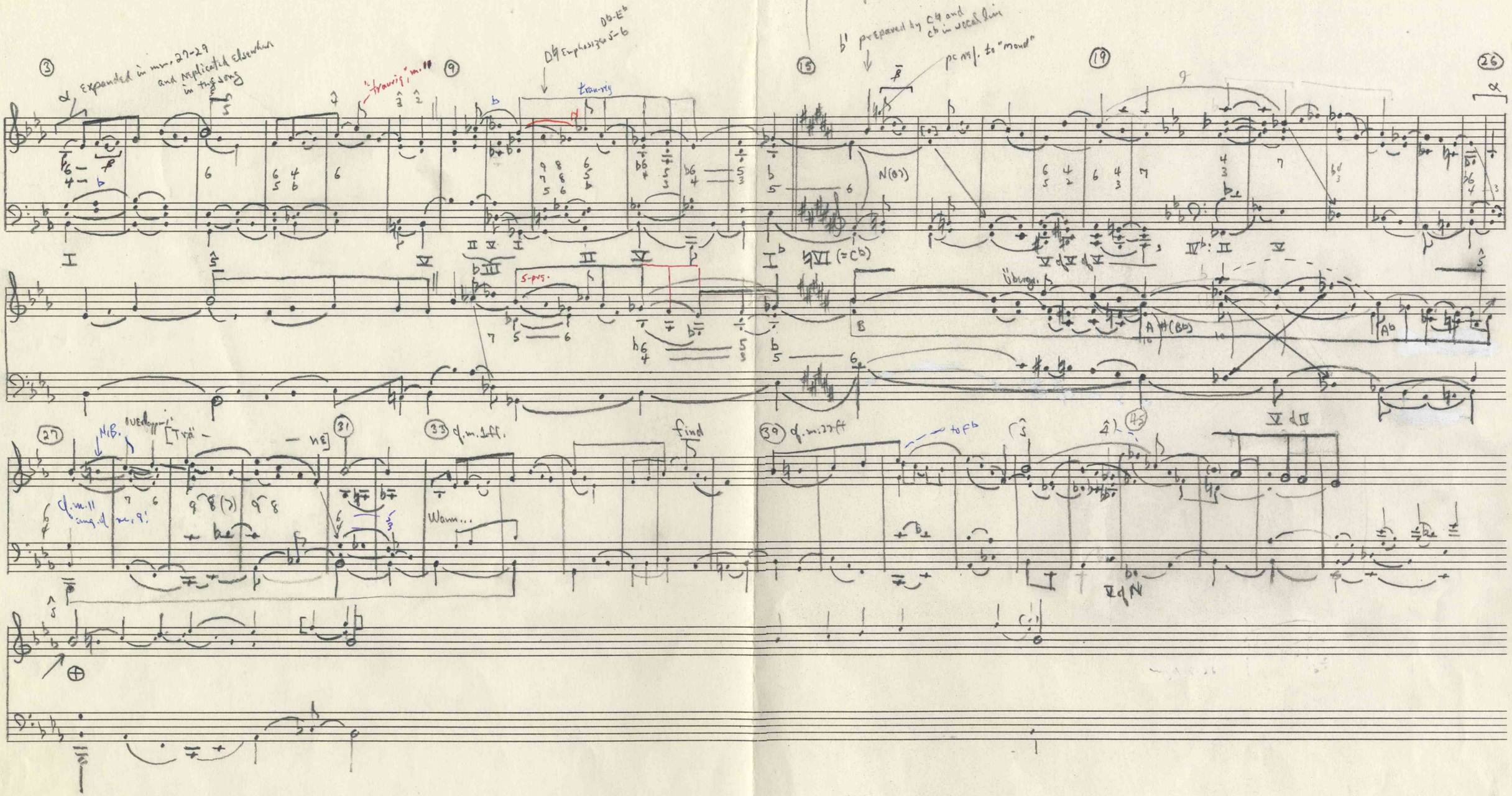
6. Performance aspects:

   What is the meaning of the notation in mm. 33-34? Is this idiomatic 19th-century practice?

mm. 15–26: basic progression




15
19
23
(5̂)
α
6 (5)
4 3
ovlp.
to d'm.26
5̂
6 6 10 10
10 10 10
6 6 6
6 5
4 3
♭VII (= C♭)
V

Brahms, Die Mainacht (publ. 1868)

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Feb., 1979