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doi:[10.1017/S147940982400020X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982400020X)

First published online 11 December 2024

# Joseph Joachim and Bach's Chaconne

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And they will long to have heard Joachim's violin-playing as we long to have heard Bach at his organ: not from curiosity to verify an old record of technical prowess, but from the desire to recover the unrecorded manifestations of a creative mind.

Donald Francis Tovey<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

At the close of his long and storied career, Joseph Joachim was occasionally criticized for his devotion to a small number of canonized 'masterpieces'. This criticism, which persists, seemingly overlooks Joachim's seminal role in helping define for his era the concept and purpose of musical canonicity, and his criteria for elevating certain new or neglected works to a status that can legitimately be called canonical. This essay will examine some of those criteria and their origins in Joachim's biography and artistic identity, focusing on his involvement with the cultural legacy of Johann Sebastian Bach, and his self-representation through repeated and evolving interpretations of Bach's Chaconne in D minor for violin solo.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Joachim's performance repertoire *became* the core canon for violinists and that, due to his eminence and far-flung influence, his criteria for selecting repertoire came to inform our notions of canonicity today. The Beethoven concerto and the Bach sonatas and partitas (including the Chaconne) were hardly played before Joachim made them a cause. The same is true of Mozart's violin concerti – particularly the fifth in A Major, which Joachim rediscovered in manuscript and was the first to play in modern times. Joachim popularized Bach's Concerto in A minor, and often played the 'Double' with his students, or with colleagues such as Wilma Norman-Neruda.<sup>2</sup> He was the second

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Francis Tovey, 'Joseph Joachim: Maker of Music', *The Monthly Review*, 20 (May 1902): 92.

<sup>2</sup> Bach's violin concerti were seldom played in the nineteenth century. When Leopold Jansa played one in Vienna in 1840 it was reviewed as 'a historical curiosity'; *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 29 January 1840. A reviewer claimed of an 1852 performance of the A minor Concerto in Frankfurt (by Herr M. Wallerstein) that the piece 'had not been heard here'; *Didaskalia. Blätter für Geist, Gemüth und Publizität*, 51 (28 February 1852): 4. The A minor Concerto was a favourite of Joachim, who performed it often in England. Wilma

person to play the Mendelssohn Concerto, which he studied under the composer's guidance. As a violist, he was one of the first interpreters of Berlioz' *Harold in Italy*. Joachim frequently performed Spohr's Concerto no. 8 *in modo di scena cantante*, drawing praise from its creator. The Brahms Violin Concerto and many of Brahms's chamber works were written for him (as was the Dvořák Concerto, which, curiously, he never performed). Robert and Clara Schumann both dedicated works to him. Joachim's own *Concerto in the Hungarian Manner*, op. 11 is an important link between the works of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Spohr and the symphonic concerti of Bruch, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and others. Virtually the entire classical string quartet repertoire as a public concert experience owes its viability to Joachim's advocacy. Even the sonatas of Corelli were made known to Joachim's contemporaries through the Joachim/Chrysander edition.

Joachim's closest rival in this regard was Sarasate; but Sarasate's performances were never geared towards establishing canonicity, as Joachim's clearly were. If one were to take away the (naturally pre-twentieth-century) violin pieces that Joachim introduced or championed, one would be left mostly with virtuoso pieces by Paganini, Ernst, Wieniawski, Vieuxtemps, Sarasate and others – core repertoire, but (Lalo, Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky notwithstanding) not core 'canon'. In the creation of the violinist's canon, Joachim stands preeminent.

To say that Johann Sebastian Bach's Chaconne for solo violin is canonical is to make a statement as unexceptionable as it is unexceptional. More has been written about this 15-minute set of variations than about virtually any other piece of music. The Chaconne is at the centre of every advanced violinist's repertoire, and grappling with its challenges has long been considered an essential station along the player's path to technical and musical maturity.

It was not always so. For some three-quarters of a century after its composition the Chaconne slept in relative obscurity, a piece shared in manuscript amongst a small cohort of virtuosi and performed in private as an exercise or a connoisseur's delight. Bringing it to the public was an act of revival – an act of resuscitation, really – that initially required the artificial life-support of an added piano accompaniment. The first public performance of the Chaconne was by Joachim's mentor Ferdinand David. It is nevertheless the case that it was Joachim's renowned interpretation and sustained advocacy for the Chaconne as an independent masterpiece that established its modern reputation and importance.

Joachim was noted for his varied and nuanced interpretations, achieved through a subtle use of rubato and accentuation.<sup>3</sup> His repeated 'exegetical' performances of a tightly circumscribed repertoire suggest ritual, and contributed to the impression that the works he espoused were timeless, transcendent and inexhaustible – defining characteristics of canonicity.

Works are not created as canonical. While they may initially be compositions of extraordinary attractiveness and coherence, it is the accretion of meaning that accompanies their performance history that determines their importance to the musical public and to history. Here, 'meaning' is used in the etymological sense

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Norman-Neruda also played it in England, and she and Joachim frequently played the 'Double' together. Joachim's students occasionally performed the A minor (often with piano accompaniment). The first 'modern' performances of Bach's E Major Violin Concerto appear to have been given in England by Joachim students: Leonora Jackson in 1898 and Tivadar Nachéz in 1899. Eugene Ysaÿe also played it in England in June 1899.

<sup>3</sup> See Robert W. Eshbach, "Der Geigerkönig: Joseph Joachim as Performer", *Die Tonkunst* 1/3 (2007): 205–17.

of the German *Sinn* – ‘to take a direction; to seek a trail’.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the meanings ascribed to a composition, which accrete to it over time, are factors intimately entangled with its journey through the musical world.

Those meanings begin with the personal significance a work holds for a performer, and that pathway depends upon the performer’s authority. Accordingly, this essay concerns itself first with Joachim’s preoccupation with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach as a historical and cultural phenomenon, and continues with specific reference to the performance history of the Chaconne.

### First Encounters With Bach

In 1843, 12-year-old Joseph Joachim left Vienna to live with his cousin Fanny Wittgenstein, her husband Hermann, and their three children, in a large house on Leipzig’s central marketplace, *Am Markt 14*, just two blocks from the historic *Thomaskirche*.<sup>5</sup> Considered one of the city’s most elegant residences, the century-old building would have been well-known to *Thomaskantor* Bach.<sup>6</sup> There, the young prodigy awoke each morning like a pearl in an oyster, with all of Old Leipzig – its markets, churches, concert halls, restaurants, shops and schools – lying within a 600-yard radius of his front door.

The Wittgenstein residence faced east across the market square toward the sixteenth-century German Renaissance *Rathaus*, within sight of the portal to Auerbach’s Keller, the famous tavern immortalized in Goethe’s *Faust*. It was a 500-yard ramble across the square and through narrow streets to the *Gewandhaus* and the newly founded *Conservatorium* that Joseph hoped to attend. Hermann’s older brother Richard, with whom he was doing business as *M. M. Wittgenstein und Sohn*, resided just around the corner in the *Thomaskirchhof*, hard by the church and the school where J.S. Bach had once lived and worked. A short walk away, along the banks of the Pleisse river, stood Eduard Bendemann’s Bach monument, recently commissioned (1842) ‘for the magnificent old fellow’ by Felix Mendelssohn.<sup>7</sup>

Young as he was, Joseph was already recognized as a virtuoso of uncommon musical and spiritual gifts. Having been invited to perform for an evening musicale at Mendelssohn’s home, young ‘Pepi’ Joachim is said to have played so

<sup>4</sup> Tatjana Schnell, *The Psychology of Meaning in Life* (London: Routledge, 2021): 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Leipziger Adreßbuch auf das Jahr 1842 Mit königl. sächs. allergnädigstem Privilegium und unter der Universität Aufsicht* (Leipzig: Wilh. Staritz, 1842): 160.

<sup>6</sup> The house, built in 1742, was demolished in 1895 to make room for the so-called ‘Bismarckhaus’, which in turn fell victim to the bombs of the Second World War. The site is currently occupied by the Breuninger department store.

<sup>7</sup> ‘für den alten Prachtkerl’. Mendelssohn raised money for the monument by giving an organ recital at the *Thomaskirche* on 6 August 1840. In a hand-written bill of subscription, he wrote, ‘Until now no tangible sign in Leipzig commemorates the living memory of the greatest artist this city has ever possessed .... Since, however, at the present time his spirit and his importance are emerging with renewed strength and his place in the hearts of all true lovers of music will never be extinguished, thus [it] is to be hoped that such an undertaking may find resonance and support among the citizens of Leipzig.’ The monument was dedicated in April 1843. Wm. A. Little, *Mendelssohn and the Organ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 54. For the history of Mendelssohn’s Bach-Denkmal, see, especially, Peter Wollny, ed., *Ein Denkstein für den Alten Prachtkerl: Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy und das alte Bach-Denkmal in Leipzig* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004).

charmingly that Mendelssohn kissed him, saying, 'I was once like this child'.<sup>8</sup> From that point on, Mendelssohn's friendship and support would prove decisive for Joachim's development: he guided the boy's education *in loco parentis*, and their rapport was such that Joachim's later career can at least in part 'be understood in terms of a mission to promote Mendelssohn's work'.<sup>9</sup> Taking on the role of musical mentor, Mendelssohn arranged for Joachim to play regularly for Ferdinand David and to continue his theoretical studies under Moritz Hauptmann.<sup>10</sup>

Hauptmann, in his second year as *Thomaskantor*, had been Mendelssohn's choice to teach music theory at the new *Conservatorium*. An eminent intellectual and contrapuntist, he would become a founding member and editor of the Bach Gesellschaft, whose complete works edition monumentalized Bach's compositions into quasi-sacred texts. As Hauptmann's private student, Joachim most probably had his theory and composition lessons in the cantor's residence in the *Thomasschule* – Bach's erstwhile apartment.<sup>11</sup> Thus, at age 12, Joseph Joachim entered into what remained of Johann Sebastian Bach's physical and cultural milieu, guided by three of the principal figures of the ongoing Bach revival. He would remain in Leipzig for seven crucial, formative years.

### **Bildung: 'An inclination towards the true and serious'**

Though a Hungarian Jew, Joachim was brought up with a strong German cultural identity, which would become more significant to him as his leadership role in the German musical establishment grew.<sup>12</sup> This identity was strongly fostered by Mendelssohn, who nevertheless teased him about being a 'Hungarian boy' (an allusion to Balfe's opera *The Bohemian Girl*).<sup>13</sup> Cultural education (*Bildung*) was of course central to the notion of enlightened *Deutschtum*, and crucial for enabling nineteenth-century Jews to assimilate into German life. As Marjorie Perloff has written, citing Paul Mendes-Flohr:

Before 1870, proponents of a unified German identity were obliged to appeal either to ethnic or to cultural criteria. The former gave us what was called the *Volksnation* –

<sup>8</sup> 'So wie dieses Kind da, bin ich selbst wol [sic] einst gewesen!'; Ignaz Reich, *Beth-El: Ehrentempel verdienter ungarischer Israeliten* (Pest: Druck von A. Bucsánszky, 1856): 63. See R. Larry Todd, "'Of the Highest Good": Joachim's Relationship to Mendelssohn', in *The Creative Worlds of Joseph Joachim*, ed. Valerie W. Goertzen and Robert W. Eshbach (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Beatrix Borchard and Katharina Uhde, 'Joachim, Joseph', in *Grove Music Online*, [www.oxfordmusic.com](http://www.oxfordmusic.com), accessed 9 October 2020.

<sup>10</sup> See *Joseph Joachim – Biography and Research*, 'Two Teachers: Hering and Hauptmann'. <https://josephjoachim.com/2013/07/07/two-teachers-hering-and-hauptmann/>.

<sup>11</sup> Bach's residence, occupying the lower three stories on the southern side of the building, remained the home of the *Thomaskantors* until 1877, when the school moved to the western suburbs. The old building was torn down in 1902. See Stefan Altner, *Das Thomaskantorat im 19. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Passage-Verlag, 2006): 11. See also Bernhard Friedrich Richter, 'Das Innere der alten Thomasschule', in *Schriften des Vereins für die Geschichte Leipzigs*, vol. 7 (Leipzig: Selbstverlag des Vereins, 1904): 29–54.

<sup>12</sup> See Robert W. Eshbach, 'Joachim's Youth – Joachim's Jewishness', *The Musical Quarterly*, 94/4 (2011): 548–92.

<sup>13</sup> Andreas Moser, *Joseph Joachim: A Biography*, trans. Lilla Durham (London: Philip Wellby, 1901): 54–5.

the concept of 'a given people, which, ontologically prior to the state, is bound ... by a common relation of its members to some combination of historical memory, geography, kinship, tradition, mores, religion, and language'. To be *German*, in this scheme of things, was a question of shared myth, ethnicity, and history. The alternative to this construction of nationality was the *Kultur* nation of German Enlightenment culture – the liberal cosmopolitan ethos of *Bildung* that had its roots in the classical Greek notion of *paideia*. *Bildung* was more than 'civilization', since, as Wilhelm von Humboldt pointed out ... it was conceived as having a distinct spiritual dimension. Thus the cult of *Kultur* was gradually transformed into a kind of religion. The German (and Austrian) Jews obviously chose the second alternative. Even if they had wanted to, they could hardly have been assimilated into the *Volksnation*, whose ethnicity, history, and foundational myths they did not share.<sup>14</sup>

The critical importance of music in the creation of the German national identity is well established,<sup>15</sup> and, beginning with the publication of J.N. Forkel's overtly nationalistic Bach biography in 1802,<sup>16</sup> the recovery and re-evaluation of Bach's music was understood to be a project of national significance.<sup>17</sup> The elevation and canonization of Bach's music functioned, to use Eric Hobsbawm's term, as an 'invented tradition'.<sup>18</sup> Like other invented traditions, it arose as a response to an outside threat – in this case, the perceived superficiality, immorality and materialistic character of the French influence during the Napoleonic hegemony and immediately thereafter, exemplified in music by virtuosity and its related opera culture.<sup>19</sup> The canonization of Bach's music gave the 'sanction of precedent' to music of a significant, enduring character, valorizing a distinguished cultural history in the absence of a united political one and imparting a symbolic, ritual function to its performance. As Perloff's observation makes clear, this 'sanction of precedent', at least as regarded Bach's instrumental music, was also of critical value to Jews as a potential point of commonality with German culture and society.

<sup>14</sup> Marjorie Perloff, 'German by the Grace of Goethe', *Common Knowledge* 9/3 (2003): 367–8.

<sup>15</sup> 'As Italy has its Naples, France its Revolution, England its Navy, etc., so the Germans have their Beethoven symphonies', wrote Robert Schumann. 'The German forgets in his Beethoven that he has no school of painting; with Beethoven he imagines that he has reversed the fortunes of the battles that he lost to Napoleon; he even dares to place him on the same level with Shakespeare'. Robert Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, quoted in Celia Applegate, 'What is German Music? Reflections on the Role of Art in the Creation of the Nation', in *German Studies Review* 15 (1992): 21–32. Applegate's essay provides an in-depth discussion of the connection between music and German national identity. See also Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, 'Germans as the "People of Music": Genealogy of an Identity', in *Music and German National Identity*, ed. Applegate and Potter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 1–35. For a criticism of Potter, see Tamara Levitz's review of *Most German of the Arts* in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55/1 (2002): 176–87.

<sup>16</sup> J.N. Forkel, *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke für patriotische Verehrer echter musikalischer Kunst* [On Johann Sebastian Bach's Life, Art and Artworks for Patriotic Admirers of Genuine Musical Art] ((Leipzig: Hoffmeister und Kühnel, 1802; reprinted, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1968).

<sup>17</sup> See Celia Applegate, *Bach in Berlin: Nation and Culture in Mendelssohn's Revival of the St. Matthew Passion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>19</sup> See Leon B. Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

Forkel was explicit in noting the timeless, sublime qualities of Bach's 'fiery genius', as well as his modesty and supposed indifference to public acclaim. Long before Schweitzer, Forkel portrays Bach as a tone-poet, whose 'serious temperament led him admirably to the cultivation of a serious and lofty style in music'.<sup>20</sup> 'This man', he wrote at the conclusion of his study, 'the greatest musical poet and the greatest musical orator who has ever been and that in all likelihood will ever be – was a German. Be proud of him, Fatherland; be proud of him, but also be worthy of him!'<sup>21</sup>

We encounter a similar appeal to gravitas and to Leipzig's Pietistic mores in Felix Mendelssohn's programming as music director of the city's *Grosses Concert* (1835–1847), where Seneca's maxim, *res severa est verum gaudium* ('true joy is a serious thing' – or perhaps 'a serious thing is a true joy'), stood prominently emblazoned on the *Gewandhaus* proscenium.<sup>22</sup> For Mendelssohn, of course, the music of Bach was not an invented tradition, but a living tradition deeply rooted in his family's history.<sup>23</sup> Mendelssohn family traditions – the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment), the Bach legacy, salons and concert life, and the founding of the Leipzig Conservatorium – all stressed *Bildung* (edification) as a medium and model for civic engagement and social integration as well as for personal growth.

Mendelssohn adduced the local *res severa* and spoke of the importance of music in the general notion of *Bildung* in a 9 April 1840 letter to Leipzig *Kreisdirektor* Johann Paul von Falkenstein,<sup>24</sup> inquiring whether a 20,000 Thaler legacy from Dr Heinrich Blümner might be used to create a music school in Leipzig:

For a long time, music has flourished in this country, and precisely that disposition in music which lies closest to every thinking and feeling art lover's heart, an inclination towards the true and serious, has from time immemorial taken firm root here. Such widespread interest has certainly been neither accidental, nor without important consequences for *Bildung* in general, and through it, music has become an important force – not simply for immediate pleasure, but for serving higher spiritual needs. ...

<sup>20</sup> 'sein ernsthaftes Temperament führte ihn vorzüglich zur Bearbeitung des ernsthaften und hohen Stils in der Musik'; Forkel, *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben*, 50.

<sup>21</sup> 'Und dieser Mann – der größte musikalische Dichter und der größte musikalische Declamator, den es je gegeben hat, und den es wahrscheinlich je geben wird – war ein Deutscher. Sey stolz auf ihn, Vaterland; sey auf ihn stolz, aber, sey auch seiner werth!'; Forkel, *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben*, 124.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey Sposato observes that Felix Mendelssohn's hiring, and the firing of his predecessor August Pohlenz, as music director of the *Grosses Concert* (the Gewandhaus concerts), may have taken place out of a desire for more 'serious' programming, featuring less opera-based and virtuoso repertoire. Jeffrey S. Sposato, *Leipzig After Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 237–9.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, R. Larry Todd, *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 3–15; Jürgen Thym, ed., *Mendelssohn, the Organ, and the Music of the Past: Constructing Historical Legacies* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014); Rebecca Cypress and Nancy Sinkoff, eds, *Sara Levy's World: Gender, Judaism, and the Bach Tradition in Enlightenment Berlin* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> The correct date of the letter is 9 April, not 8 April (the date of Mendelssohn's draft), as it appears in most sources. Falkenstein, Leipzig's highest-ranking administrative official had been a member of the Gewandhaus directorate since 1839. Blümner's sister and sole heir, Caroline Gruner, was Falkenstein's mother-in-law; Maren Goltz, 'Ein spektakulärer Fund. Zur Gründungsgeschichte des Leipziger Konservatoriums', *Gewandhausmagazin* 42 (2004): 45.



But with the currently prevailing technical-material trend, the preservation and propagation of genuine artistic sense becomes a doubly important, but also doubly difficult task. ... By means of a good music school which could encompass all the various branches of art and teach them from a single viewpoint as a means to a higher end – which would lead all its students as much as possible to this goal – this practical-material trend, which unfortunately counts many and influential adherents among artists, could be guarded against.<sup>25</sup>

Here, in the years just prior to his mentorship of Joachim, Mendelssohn articulates an ambitious agenda, locating the proposed institution within greater Germany's Humboldtian *Bildungsideal*, and making it a first line of defence against the trivializing trends of mechanical virtuosity – trends in music that he associated with Paris and its *Conservatoire*.

In the work that emerged from this understanding, Mendelssohn had the able assistance of his friend and concertmaster Ferdinand David – the man whom he chose to guide Joachim's violin studies. While David cannot be called Joachim's violin teacher in the customary sense (Joachim continued to be described publicly as 'pupil of Herrn [Joseph] Böhm in Vienna'), his influence on the young violinist, particularly as regards choice of repertoire, was nevertheless strong. Thus, for example, Joachim became the second violinist to perform Mendelssohn's violin concerto, which he learned simultaneously with David, the concerto's dedicatee and first performer.<sup>26</sup> On occasion, Joachim performed some of David's own compositions, and under David's guidance he soon began to study the solo works of Bach, with which David was preoccupied at the time.

Encouraged by Mendelssohn, David had begun performing Bach's *Chaconne* (Bach called it *Ciaccona*) in 1840, his first performance taking place at the *Gewandhaus* on 8 February.<sup>27</sup> Apparently uncomfortable with performing the

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<sup>25</sup> 'Schon lange ist die Musik vorzugsweise einheimisch in diesem Lande, und gerade die Richtung in derselben welche jeden denkenden und fühlenden Kunstfreund zunächst am Herzen liegt, der Sinn für das Wahre und Ernste hat von jeher feste Wurzeln hier zu fassen gewusst. Eine so verbreitete Theilnahme ist auch gewiss weder zufällig, noch ohne bedeutende Folgen für die allgemeine Bildung gewesen und die Musik dadurch ein wichtiges Moment – nicht bloß augenblicklichen Vergnügens, sondern höheren geistigen Bedürfnisses geworden. ... Aber bei der vorherrschend positiven, technisch-materiellen Richtung der jetzigen Zeit wird die Erhaltung echten Kunstsinnes und seine Fortpflanzung zwar eine doppelt wichtige, aber auch doppelt schwere Aufgabe. ... Durch eine gute Musik-schule, die alle verschiedenen Zweige der Kunst umfassen könnte, und sie alle nur aus einem einzigen Gesichtspunkte als Mittel zu einem höheren Zwecke lehrte, auf diesen Zweck alle Schüler möglichst hinführte, wäre jener practisch-materiellen [sic] Tendenz, die ja leider auch unter den Künstlern selbst viele und einflussreiche Anhänger zählt, jetzt noch mit sicherem Erfolg vorzubauen': Emil Kneschke, *Das Königliche Conservatorium der Musik zu Leipzig 1843–1893* (Leipzig: Ernst Hedrich, [1893]): 11. Liszt had just spent two weeks in Leipzig, causing a typical Lisztian stir (in Mendelssohn's words a 'Heiden-Scandal ... im guten und schlechten Sinn'); See the letter of 30 March to his mother, in Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy, ed., *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830 bis 1847 von Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy* (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1889): 148–50.

<sup>26</sup> There is a plausible argument to be made that Mendelssohn wrote the third movement of the concerto with Joachim in mind.

<sup>27</sup> This performance was not part of a 'historical concert', as is claimed by Moser, and later in Jon F. Eiche, *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views* (Bloomington: American String Teachers Association, 1985): 41 and 62, but was featured in a chamber music concert that included a quartet by Beethoven, a quintet by Onslow, and Spohr's

work solo, David was accompanied by Mendelssohn, who improvised a supporting piano part 'with all manner of voices, so that it was a pleasure to hear' (Robert Schumann).<sup>28</sup> The critical reception of this, reputedly first public performance of the *Chaconne*,<sup>29</sup> already makes clear that the work impressed as a virtuoso show-piece with potentially popular appeal – yet one with serious artistic qualities:

A Chaconne in D minor for violin solo by Sebastian Bach, beautifully performed by concertmaster David, aroused the greatest interest of the evening. The piece is interesting in ways that one no longer looks for or finds in such solo things. Certainly only a few listeners may have known or noticed that this chaconne consists of about thirty directly interrelated variations on a short theme, which are so ingenious, showing such a labor of invention and art, and at the same time so tastefully worked, that similar things of more recent times appear as mere trifles in comparison. ... Indeed, we maintain that to give a consummate performance of such pieces as this chaconne requires a far greater mastery of playing, and a far more proficient artistry in general, than are required for the execution of many, indeed the majority of the most celebrated new virtuoso pieces. ... Those pieces for which mere correct and polished playing is not sufficient necessarily require a master who rises above technique and who additionally is able to recognize and bring to life other, deeper art, which he may often encounter. But played by such an artist, they are of indescribable effect not only for connoisseurs of fine art, but also for the larger public, provided, of course, that these do not lack all artistic sense and taste.<sup>30</sup>

*Nonet* in F major, Op. 31. It took place on 8 February 1840, not 14 February as is claimed in Eiche and has been carried over from there into multiple articles and studies.

<sup>28</sup> 'mit allerhand Stimmen ... daß es eine Lust war zu hören'; Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1891): 254.

<sup>29</sup> No prior public performances have been discovered. In the first 80 years of their existence, Bach's solo sonatas and partitas were nevertheless well known, and often used as studies. The first performances of the works occurred in private settings from various manuscript copies. For an early performance history, see Zay David Sevier, 'Bach's Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas: The First Century and a Half, Part 2', *Bach*, 12/3 (1981): 21–9. See also Dorottya Fabian, 'Towards a Performance History of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin: Preliminary Investigations' in *Essays in Honor of László Somfai, Studies in the Sources and the Interpretation of Music*, ed. ed. by László Vikárius (Latham: Scarecrow Press, 2005): 87–108. Amongst the renowned Bach players of Joachim's youth was Karol Lipiński (1790–1861). Andreas Moser writes of their interactions, and of Lipiński's ideas about performance practice in Andreas Moser, 'Zu Joh. Seb. Bachs Sonaten und Partiten für Violine allein', *Bach Jahrbuch* 17 (1920): 42–3.

<sup>30</sup> 'Am meisten Interesse erregte jedoch an diesem Abend eine Chaconne in D moll für Violino solo von Sebastian Bach, welche Herr Konzertmeister David vollendet schön vortrug. Das Stück gewährt ein Interesse, was man heut zu Tage bei derartigen Solosachen gar nicht mehr sucht und findet. Gewiss nur wenige Zuhörer mögen gewusst oder bemerkt haben, dass diese Chaconne aus ungefähr dreissig unmittelbar mit einander verbundenen Variationen [sic] eines kurzen Themas besteht, die so genial, mit einem solchen Aufwande von Erfindung und Kunst, und dabei so geschmackvoll gearbeitet sind, dass ihnen gegenüber alle ähnlichen Sachen neuerer Zeit als bloßes Spielwerk erscheinen. ... Ja, wir möchten behaupten, es gehöre zur vollendeten Ausführung solcher Stücke, wie diese Chaconne, eine weit grössere Meisterschaft des Spiels und weit tüchtigere Kunstbildung überhaupt, als zur Ausführung vieler, ja der meisten der berühmtesten neuen Virtuosenstücke. ... Jene, bei welchen das bloße Richtig- und Fertigspielen allein nicht ausreicht, verlangen durchaus einen Meister, der über der Technik steht, und ausser ihr noch andere tiefere Kunst, die ihm vielfach geboten wird, zu erkennen und zu beherrschen vermag. Von diesem gespielt sind sie aber auch dann von unbeschreiblicher Wirkung für feinere



Ingenious, tasteful, and deep: Bach's *Chaconne*, clearly, was a doughty German *Schlachtross* to ride to battle against any French virtuoso *cheval de bataille*.

David's second public performance of the *Chaconne* (also with Mendelssohn accompanying), took place in a 'historical concert' at the *Gewandhaus* on 21 January 1841, and was similarly well-received by audience and critic alike.<sup>31</sup> Two years later, on 8 January 1843, David performed the *Chaconne* for a third time, in a Sunday concert in the *Gewandhaus* given by Robert and Clara Schumann. The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*'s review of this concert does not mention a piano accompaniment, and seems to imply that David played solo: 'Concertmaster David performed Bach's *Chaconne*, such a splendid composition despite its limited means, with as beautifully intellectual a conception as consummate technical execution, and received the liveliest applause'.<sup>32</sup> If that is indeed the case, David gave the first known unaccompanied public performance of the work about half a year before he and Joachim first met.

At the time that Joachim arrived in Leipzig, Kistner had just published David's edition of Bach's complete Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin – only the second edition in existence, and the first to be edited for practical use.<sup>33</sup> The first edition of Bach's six sonatas and partitas had been brought out by Simrock in 1802 (the same year as Forkel's Bach biography) as *Studio o sia Tre Sonate per il Violino solo senza Basso del Seb. Bach*.<sup>34</sup> Despite its title, this edition contained all six sonatas and partitas, each sonata and its following partita being paired together under the title 'sonata'.<sup>35</sup> David's 1843 edition was presumably the source text of Joachim's first acquaintance with those works.<sup>36</sup> Neither the 1802 edition nor David's was based upon the currently accepted autograph, which came to light

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Kunstkenner nicht allein, sondern auch für das grössere Publikum, vorausgesetzt freilich, dass diesem nicht aller Kunstsinn und Geschmack abgeht'; review in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 42/8 (19 February 1840): 161–3.

<sup>31</sup> 'in jeder Hinsicht, auch sogar als reine Virtuosenkomposition, ein vollendetes Meisterstück, mit dem sich ein wirklich ausgezeichnete Geiger hervorthun kann' ('in every respect, even as a purely virtuoso composition, a consummate masterpiece, with which a truly excellent violinist can excel'); review in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 43/8 (24 February 1841): 175–6.

<sup>32</sup> 'Die in beschränkten Mitteln so grossartige Composition der Bach'schen Chaconne trug Herr Concertmeister David mit eben so schön geistiger Auffassung als vollkommen technischer Ausführung vor und erhielt den lebhaftesten Beifall'; *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 46/3 (18 January 1843): 47.

<sup>33</sup> The edition was announced in April 1843. Though it was purportedly based on the composer's autograph, its source, according to Peter Wollny, was 'only' an early transcription found in Berlin's *Königliche Bibliothek* in the *Nachlass* of the collector Georg Poelchau; Anselm Hartinger, 'Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy und die Leipziger Bach-Pflege im Spiegel des Denkmalkonzerts vom 23. April 1843' in Wollny, *Denkstein für den Alten Prachtkerl*, 101.

<sup>34</sup> Available online from the Bibliothèque universitaire centrale du Mirail (Toulouse) Res LPM 71 at <https://tolosana.univ-toulouse.fr/fr/notice/188650059>.

<sup>35</sup> See Georg Feder, 'History of the Arrangements of Bach's *Chaconne*', in Eiche, *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin*, 42–43; Zay David Sevier, 'Bach's Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas: The First Century and a Half, Part 1', *Bach*, 12/2 (1981): 16. The title of David's edition partially follows the practice of the 1802 Simrock edition, i.e. *Sechs Sonaten für die Violine allein von Joh. Sebastian Bach*, below which is written *Studio o sia Tre Sonate per il Violino solo senza Basso*.

<sup>36</sup> It was from that edition that Joachim would teach throughout his career. See Vasiliki Papadopoulou, *Zur Editions- und Aufführungsgeschichte von J. S. Bachs Sonaten und Partiten für*

only at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> Joachim's edition, completed by Andreas Moser and published posthumously (1908) by Bote & Bock, was the first to be based upon that manuscript (currently in the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin, Mus. Ms. Bach P 967).

David used the Bach sonatas and partitas in his teaching curriculum, and assigned them to his advanced pupils as etudes.<sup>38</sup> His edition was published the year of the Leipzig Conservatorium's founding, and the title bears the inscription: 'For the use of the Conservatorium of Music in Leipzig, provided with fingerings, bowings and other markings by Ferd. David'.<sup>39</sup> David was, and is, notorious for his idiosyncratic and highly embellished editions.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, his careful inclusion of what then passed for Bach's original text, on a second staff below the edited part, was one measure of his reverence for Bach. This method would later serve as a model for the Joachim–Moser edition.

### '... on the path of the worthy, dignified and poetic in art'

As is customary today, young Joseph appears to have begun his solo Bach studies with the Sonata in G minor, BWV 1001, which is somewhat more technically accessible than the others. On 15 October 1844, the 13-year-old wrote to his teacher in Vienna, Joseph Böhm, 'I am now practicing a Quatuor brillant in B minor (opus 61) of Spohr, which I like a lot. I also play Paganini pretty often, as well as old Bach, whose Adagio and Fugue for violin solo I played publicly in London'.<sup>41</sup> The 1844 London season was Joachim's first – the visit at which he gave his legendary Philharmonic debut, playing Beethoven's Violin Concerto. London's *The Era* lauded his performance of solo Bach at a chamber concert given under the auspices of G.A. Macfarren and J.W. Davison in the Princess' Concert Room on 7 June:

The second *point d'appui* of the instrumental portion, was the solo of the boy Joachim. With a confidence, the bright result of unerring genius, he selected J. Sebastian Bach's

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*Violine solo in der Zeit von 1802 bis 1940* (PhD diss., Vienna, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst, 2015): 50.

<sup>37</sup> In the preface to the Joachim–Moser edition Andreas Moser describes how Joachim came to know the manuscript, first in the possession of *Thomaskantor* Wilhelm Rust's widow, and later owned by Dr Erich Prieger.

<sup>38</sup> The Sonatas and Partitas had been known, practically from the beginning, as 'exemplary teaching pieces for violin technique' ('exemplarische pädagogische Lehrstücke für die Geigentechnik'). John Michael Cooper, 'Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Ferdinand David und Johann Sebastian Bach: Mendelssohn's Bach-Auffassung im Spiegel der Wiederentdeckung der "Chaconne"' in *Mendelssohn-Studien* 10 (1997): 160.

<sup>39</sup> 'Zum Gebrauch bei dem Conservatorium der Musik zu Leipzig, mit Fingersatz, Bogenstrichen und sonstigen Bezeichnungen versehen von Ferd. David'.

<sup>40</sup> According to Carl Reinecke, 'It was a weakness of David that he reworked everything for his perhaps somewhat idiosyncratic technique and allowed himself other interventions in the composition of others' ('Es war eine Schwäche von David, daß er alles für seine, vielleicht etwas eigenseitige Technik umarbeitete und sich auch anderweitige Eingriffe in die Komposition anderer erlaubte'); Carl Reinecke, *Erlebnisse und Bekenntnisse*, ed. Doris Mundus (Leipzig: Lehmsstedt, 2005): 102.

<sup>41</sup> 'Ich übe jetzt ein Quatuor brillant in H moll (Opus 61) von Spohr, welches mir sehr gefällt. Auch Paganini spiele ich ziemlich viel, sowie den alten Bach, von dem ich ein Adagio und Fuge für die Violine allein in London öffentlich spielte'; Johannes Joachim and Andreas Moser, eds. *Briefe von und an Joseph Joachim*, vol. 1 (Berlin: J. Bard, 1911), 3.

'Dagio and Fugue in G Minor',<sup>42</sup> which he performed with passionate beauty. Schools and difficulties are understood and achieved with a largeness of grasp and fulness of feeling as rare as beautiful. Joachim is a musical miracle – long years and everlasting practice were equally vain to attain his knowledge and execution.<sup>43</sup>

For Joachim, the year 1846 began with a concert trip to Vienna and Pest – his first homecoming since his departure three years earlier. On Sunday, 11 January, he gave a well-attended noonday concert in Vienna's 700-seat hall of the Musikverein, Unter den Tuchlauben, performing Beethoven's Concerto and David's Variations on a Russian Theme, and giving, unaccompanied, his first-ever public performance of the *Chaconne*.<sup>44</sup> His reception reflected both the earnestness of his artistic aspirations and the high esteem in which he was still held in Viennese musical circles: 'Approximately three or four years ago', wrote Moritz Saphir's *Der Humorist*,

the chubby-cheeked boy Joachim, a pupil of our excellent Böhm, drew unusual attention to himself with a few public appearances. In the meantime, he has undertaken serious and systematic studies, such as one can make under the auspices of a Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. That boy, now returned, is not yet grown to a youth, but has shot up into an artist.<sup>45</sup>

The substantial nature of the programme, typical for Leipzig, but unusual for a Viennese virtuoso matinée, drew immediate notice from Frankl's *Sonntagsblätter*: 'This Joachim must be a genuine artistic talent – otherwise he would not begin his concertizing here with Beethoven and Bach; other concert-givers do not customarily angle for audiences with such compositions'. Quoting Horace's dictum: 'Vos exemplaria graeca manu versate diurna, versate nocturna!' ('Pore over your Greek models day and night!'), the reviewer praised the programme as an antidote to the insipid nature of the customary virtuoso fare:

With the great levelling of contemporary concert music, it is most advisable to take a step backward in order to move forward. Returning to Bach and those of like mind might somewhat cleanse the tainted blood of our concert-music composers, and improve what has come to be our inane taste.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> 'Dagio' here is a misprint in the programme that was carried over into the review. See <https://josephjoachim.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/scan2.jpg>. The Bach was encored.

<sup>43</sup> *The Era*, 6/298 (9 Jun 1844): 6.

<sup>44</sup> The Imperial and Royal Court Opera Orchestra under Georg Hellmesberger's direction was engaged to accompany. As with Joachim's debut with the Philharmonic Society in London (1844) the concert began with Mendelssohn's overture to *A Midsummer-night's Dream*. Joachim's violin solos were interspersed with a French romance, and songs by F.W. Kücken and Josef Netzer, performed by the popular mezzo-soprano Henriette 'Jetty' Treffz, then the mistress of the wealthy, cultured, Jewish banker Moritz Todesco (for confessional reasons they could not marry), and later the wife of Johann Strauss II.

<sup>45</sup> 'Vor drei oder vier Jahren ungefähr zog schon der kleine, vollwangige Knabe Joachim, ein Zögling unseres ausgezeichneten Böhm, ungewöhnliche Aufmerksamkeit mit einigen öffentlichen Produktionen auf sich; das frische und üppige Talent hatte sich schon damals laut angekündigt. Er hat seitdem in Leipzig weitere, gründliche und gewichtige Studien gemacht, so wie man sie unter eines Mendelssohn-Bartholdys Auspizien machen kann. Jener Knabe, der jetzt wiederkehrt, ist wohl auch jetzt noch nicht zum Jüngling aufgewachsen, aber zum Künstler emporgeschossen'; *Der Humorist*, 10/11 (13 January 1846): 43.

<sup>46</sup> 'Dieser Joachim muß doch ein rechtes und echtes Künstlertalent sein, sonst würde er nicht mit Beethoven und Bach hier sein Konzertspiel anfangen, damit pflegen sonst

Saphir's *Der Humorist*, reacted similarly:

It is so satisfying, in this difficult, needy age of bravoura, to see a talent emerge, that has been led on the path of the worthy, dignified and poetic in art; that feels at home there, and promises to remain. ... We can already see from the programme of the concert he gave in the hall of the Verein on the 11th that Joachim is a violin player who does not pursue the same path as the others. His main offerings consisted of the concerto of Beethoven, the most precious gem that the violin repertoire possesses, and a 'Ciaconna' by Joh. Seb. Bach. – A violin piece by Bach? Has the concert-going public ever heard one here – have they heard one played by a concert giver? Most people must have thought to themselves: 'that looks curious!' Oh, rococo! Classical, but not brilliant; we won't find guitar plucking on the violin, and flute blowing with the bow, in that – no pizzicatos and no harmonics. – Certainly nothing of that, but although Classical, and truly Classical, this 'Ciaconna' is nevertheless as brilliant as any solo piece that has been written for the violin; and not only are there few such magnificent, wonderfully constructed violin pieces as this fugue [sic], but there are also few players who can perform them with such roundedness, such spirit, such power and stamina, in short, in such an excellent manner as our young artist, who, alone through the magnificent performance of this piece stands in the first rank of contemporary violinists.

The reviewer continued, praising Joseph's 'beautiful, pithy, masculine tone', which demonstrated

not only the singing, but also the strongly intellectual-spiritual element. His left hand easily encompasses the most difficult configurations with power and dexterity, and the fullness and beauty of his trills is remarkable. To this is added ... a noble, adroit and firm bow arm, which demonstrates proficiency and security in all bowing styles.<sup>47</sup>

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Konzertgeber nicht nach Publikum zu angeln. ... Bei der großen Verflachung gegenwärtiger Konzertmusik ist, um wieder vorwärts zu kommen, das Gerathenste, einen Schritt vorwärts zu machen. Auf Bach und die ihm Gleichgesinnten zurück [sic] zu kommen, könnte das verdorbene Blut unserer Konzertmusik-komponisten wieder etwas reinigen, und den fadgewordenen Geschmack [sic] wieder verbessern'; *Sonntagsblätter*, 5/3 (18 January 1846): 59.

<sup>47</sup> 'Es thut so wohl, in dieser Schwerenothzeit der Bravour ein Talent erscheinen zu sehen, das auf die Bahn des Würdigen, Gediegenen und Poesievollen in der Kunst geleitet, auf ihr sich heimisch fühlt und zu bleiben verspricht. ... Es war schon aus dem Programme seines am 11. im Vereinssaale gegebenen Concertes zu sehen, daß Joachim ein Violinspieler ist, welcher nicht den Weg der Anderen einschlägt. Das Concert von Beethoven, das kostbarste Kleinod, welches die Violinmusik besitzt, und eine "Ciaconna" von Joh. Seb. Bach bildeten seine Hauptvorträge. – Eine Viololinpiece [sic] von Bach? Haben die Concertfreunde schon hier eine gehört, von einem Concertspieler sie gehört? Das muß kurios aussehen! werden sich wohl die Meisten gedacht haben. Oh, rococo! klassisch, aber nicht brillant; darin finden wir gewiß nicht auf der Violine Guitarre gezupft, und nicht mit dem Bogen Flöte geblasen, keine Pizzikatos und keine Flageolets. – Gewiß nichts davon, aber obgleich klassisch und recht klassisch, ist diese "Ciaconna" doch so brillant, als nur irgend ein Solostück, das es für die Violine gibt, und es gibt nicht nur wenige so brillante, so prachthvolle, so wundervoll gebaute Stücke für die Violine wie diese Fuge, es gibt auch sehr wenige Spieler, welche sie mit solcher Rundung, solchem Geiste, solcher Kraft und Ausdauer, kurz, in so ausgezeichnete Weise vortragen dürften, wie unser junger Künstler, welchen die herrliche Ausführung dieses Stückes allein den ersten Violinspielern der Gegenwart anreicht. Um von den einzelnen Eigenschaften Joachims zu sprechen: so ist vor Allem sein schöner, markiger, männlicher Ton hervorzuheben, in welchem sich nicht bloß das

Joachim repeated the *Chaconne* in a second Musikverein concert on 28 February and debuted it in Pest's Redoutensaal on 8 March.

### Early Performances of the *Chaconne*

David's 1843 edition of the *Sei Solo* undoubtedly played a critical role in the dissemination of the *Chaconne*; nevertheless, Mendelssohn's subsequent arrangement for violin with piano accompaniment, published in London (Ewer) in the year of his death, in 1848 by Crazz (Hamburg), in 1849 by Breitkopf & Härtel (Leipzig), and after 1850 by Richault (Paris), had an even greater influence on its initial performance history.<sup>48</sup> Other early accompanied editions prepared by F.W. Ressel (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1845) and Robert Schumann (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1854), had little or no public life.

While David was the first to play the *Chaconne* in concert, the impetus for many of its initial presentations can plausibly be traced to the publication of Mendelssohn's edition and to Joachim's exemplary performances of it. Joachim gave the first London hearings in spring or early summer 1847, at a time when he was in frequent contact with Henri Vieuxtemps, Henry Blagrove, and Bernhard Molique, who would become three of the work's earliest advocates. It is possible that Mendelssohn accompanied him on one or more of those occasions, both public and private, using the edition that was just then going to press. It further seems plausible that, while there, they would have auditioned the arrangement for Mendelssohn's English publisher.

In May 1847, Joachim and Henri Vieuxtemps joined in a London performance of Mendelssohn's *Octet* in the composer's presence.<sup>49</sup> Returning to St Petersburg later that year, Vieuxtemps performed the *Chaconne* from Mendelssohn's edition, and during the following summer he gave multiple performances there. The St Petersburg correspondent for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, citing the local lack of 'good' German music while deploring the local preference for 'treacly Italian music' and 'banal little virtuoso pieces', praised Vieuxtemps's chamber concerts as 'the only public undertaking [here] through which serious music is represented in a dignified way'. Vieuxtemps, he wrote, 'played Seb. Bach's wonderful *Ciaccona* (with Mendelssohn's added piano accompaniment) with powerful energy and virtuosity'.<sup>50</sup> Vieuxtemps carried the work back to London in June 1852 and May 1853.

In 1849, Joachim's friend (and fellow-pupil of David and Hauptmann) Otto von Königslöw (1824–1898) gave a performance in Leipzig, accompanied by Mendelssohn-pupil Otto Goldschmidt. Mendelssohn's edition seems to have had its greatest influence in England, however, where Henry Blagrove (London, 1848) and Bernhard Molique (London, 1850, and Leeds, 1852) each gave

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singende, sondern auch das geistigkräftige Element ausklingen kann. Seine linke Hand umfaßt leicht, mit Kraft und Gewandtheit die schwierigsten Griff-Formen, und ist vorzüglich die Fülle und Schönheit seines Trillers zu bemerken. Dem schließt sich noch in technischer Beziehung eine edle, gewandte und feste Bogenführung an, die in allen einzelnen Stricharten Fertigkeit und Sicherheit aufweist'. *Der Humorist*, 10/11 (13 Jan. 1846): 43.

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed discussion of the wider influence of Mendelssohn's arrangement, see Cooper, 'Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Ferdinand David und Johann Sebastian Bach, 157–79.

<sup>49</sup> *Illustrated London News* 10/262 (8 May 1847): 298.

<sup>50</sup> *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 2 (12 January 1848): 22–3.

accompanied performances. Molique, one of the most dedicated early performers of the work, probably gave both accompanied and solo performances, as did Joachim (it is often unclear from reviews and notices how the piece was played).

In arranging the *Chaconne*, Mendelssohn kept the violin part unchanged from David's edited version; however, as John Michael Cooper points out, his setting gives the piece the character of a *Konzertstück* or concerto movement that brings forward and emphasizes the latent virtuosity of the violin part, at times allowing the violin to sound alone, and at times altering the bass line or obscuring the regularity of its variation form to create a more ductile, romantic impression. Cooper speaks of the 'Tonmacht' of the piece that was heightened by Mendelssohn's accompaniment, 'especially in its sonorous and often unexpected extensions of harmony and the structuring of particularly affect-rich passages'.<sup>51</sup> Drawing this musical inference, Molique went so far as to orchestrate Mendelssohn's accompaniment, though it is unclear whether he ever performed it in that way.<sup>52</sup> In July 1854, Karl Wilhelm Uhlrich performed Eduard Stein's orchestration in Sondershausen.<sup>53</sup>

One of the most significant early performers of the *Chaconne* was Joachim's successor as concertmaster in Weimar, Ferdinand Laub. Joachim expressed unqualified admiration for Laub's playing in a letter to his brother Heinrich: 'it is astounding what brilliant technique the man has; there is absolutely no difficulty for him, and for this he will certainly attract attention'.<sup>54</sup> Joachim advocated for Laub and was careful to support him during Laub's Weimar years (1853–55).<sup>55</sup> Laub left his position in Weimar after little more than two years (as Joachim had done), 'because of too-restricted circumstances'.<sup>56</sup> He began touring shortly thereafter, with repertoire clearly influenced Joachim's example: concerti by Beethoven (with Joachim's cadenzas) and Mendelssohn, and Bach's *Chaconne*. For a time, Joachim and Laub pursued parallel paths, as virtuosi and as artists. Laub later became one of the most distinguished performers of Joachim's Concerto No. 2 in D minor, op. 11 'in the Hungarian manner', completed in 1857 and published in 1861.

Taken together, David, Joachim, Molique, Vieuxtemps, and Laub account for 41 of at least 56 presentations of the *Chaconne* during the first 15 years of its public performance history. Joachim accounts for a third of the total (19); Molique, who usually played with Mendelssohn's accompaniment, was the second most frequent performer with about a sixth (9) (see Table 1).

<sup>51</sup> 'Auch die Idee der "Tonmacht" des Bachschen Stücks zeigt sich deutlich in Mendelssohns Begleitung, vor allem in seinen klangvollen und oft unerwarteten Erweiterungen der Harmonik und in dem Satzgefüge an besonders affektreichen Stellen'. Cooper sees in Mendelssohn's accompaniment a willingness to modernize arising out of a Hegelian belief in dialectical progress; Cooper, *Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, 169 ff.

<sup>52</sup> Eiche, *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin*, 43–4.

<sup>53</sup> *Signale für die Musikalische Welt* 12/31 (July 1854): 250.

<sup>54</sup> 'es ist erstaunlich, was der Mensch für brillante Technik hat; es gibt gar keine Schwierigkeit für ihn, und er wird gewiß von dieser Seite Aufsehen machen'; Joseph Joachim to his brother Heinrich, Weimar 9 April 1852. Joachim and Moser, *Briefe*, 1:29.

<sup>55</sup> See Joachim's letter to Bernhard Cossmann, 18 April 1853, Joachim and Moser, *Briefe*, 1:54.

<sup>56</sup> 'Da er seine Stellung als Concertmeister zu Weimar der zu beschränkten Verhältnisse wegen verlassen'; *Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung* 2/47 (25 November 1854): 374.



Table 1 Early Performances (1840–55)<sup>57</sup>

Date	Performer(s)	Place (edition)	Reference
8 Feb. 1840	Ferdinand David (Felix Mendelssohn)	Leipzig, Gewandhaus	<i>AmZ</i> 42/8 (19 Feb. 1840): 162.
21 Jan. 1841	Ferdinand David (Felix Mendelssohn)	Leipzig, Gewandhaus 'Historical Concert'	<i>NZfM</i> 14/22 (15 Mar. 1841): 88–9. <i>AmZ</i> 43/8 (24 Feb. 1841): 175f.
8 Jan. 1843	Ferdinand David	Gewandhaus Morgenunterhaltung Robert Schumann	<i>AmZ</i> 45/3 (1843): 47.
11 Jan. 1846	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Vienna, Musikverein unaccompanied	<i>Sonntagsblätter</i> 5/3 (18 Jan. 1846): 59.
28 Feb. 1846	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Vienna, Musikverein unaccompanied	<i>Wiener Zuschauer</i> 36 (4 Mar. 1846): 285.
8 Mar. 1846	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Pest, Redoutensaal unaccompanied	<i>Wiener allgemeine Musikzeitung</i> 6/32 (14 Mar. 1846): 127.
9 Feb. 1847	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Dresden, special appearance.	<i>Deutsche Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 43 (12 Feb. 1847): 369. <i>Leipziger Zeitung</i> 37 (13 Feb. 1847): 714
18 Feb. 1847	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Leipzig Gewandhaus Historical Concert, also including Bach's Adagio and Fugue in G minor	Dörffel, <i>Geschichte der Gewandhauskonzerte zu Leipzig</i> (Leipzig: 1884), 115.
14 Jul. 1847	<b>Joseph Joachim</b> (Herr Luders)	London, Hanover Square Rooms (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>The Musical Times</i> 48/775 (1907): 582 (Joachim obituary)
Summer 1847	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	London, numerous occasions.	<i>The Atlas</i> , 28 Aug. 1847, 587.
Late 1847	Henri Vieuxtemps	St Petersburg (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>AmZ</i> 50/2 (12 Jan. 1848): 23.
23 Feb. 1848	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Bremen (Mendelssohn ed.)	Joachim and Moser, <i>Briefe</i> , 1.11, fn.
Before Lent (March), 1848	Henri Vieuxtemps	St Petersburg	<i>AmZ</i> 50/27 (5 July 1848): 441.
31 May 1848	Henry Blagrove	London, Ancient Concerts, Hanover Square Rooms (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>The Morning Chronicle</i> , 1 Jun. 1848, 5.

Summer 1848 Multiple perfs. Jan. 1849	Henri Vieuxtemps Otto von Königsłow (Otto Goldschmidt)	St Petersburg (Mendelssohn ed.) Leipzig	<i>Revue et Gazette Musicale</i> 15/31 (30 Jul 1848): 236. <i>AmZ</i> 12/2 (12 Jan. 1848): 23. <i>Signale für die Musikalische Welt</i> 7/6 (Jan. 1849): 46.
6 Mar. 1850 19 Mar. 1850	Bernhard Molique <b>Joseph Joachim</b>	London, Hanover Square Rooms Paris, salon de. M. Erard Recital of Mme. Louise Farrenc	<i>The Atlas</i> , 9 Mar. 1850, 156. <i>Revue et Gazette Musicale</i> 17/13 (21 Mar. 1850): 108–9.
2 Apr. 1850 29 Jul. 1850 <b>Bach 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary</b>	Bernhard Molique Bernhard Molique (Sterndale Bennett)	London, Hanover Square Rooms London, Bach Society (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Illustrated London News</i> , 6 Apr. 1850, 234. <i>The Morning Post</i> , 31 Jul. 1850, 5.
29 [28] Jul. 1850 <b>Bach 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary</b>	Landowsky (Enke)	Leipzig, Tonkünstlerverein (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Illustrierte Zeitung</i> (Leipzig), 10 Aug. 1850, 82. <i>NZfM</i> 33/12 (9 Aug. 1850): 63.
3 Apr. 1851	Ferdinand David (Ignaz Moscheles?)	Leipzig (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Rheinische Musik-Zeitung</i> 1/42 (19 Apr. 1851): 334.
26 Apr. 1851 22 Jan. 1852	Henri Vieuxtemps Bernhard Molique (Charles Hallé)	Paris Manchester, Town Hall (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Revue et Gazette Musicale</i> 18/18 (3 May 1851): 137. <i>Manchester Guardian</i> , 24 Jan. 1852, 8.
26 Feb. 1852	Bernhard Molique	London, Willis's Rooms, Ella's Musical Winter Evenings, third concert	<i>London Daily News</i> , 27 Feb. 1852, 6.
8 Mar. 1852 5 Jun. 1852	Bernhard Molique <b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Leeds, Music Hall London (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Leeds Intelligencer</i> , 6 Mar. 1852, 1. <i>The Atlas</i> , 12 Jun. 1852, 380.
16 Jun. 1852 21 May 1852	Henri Vieuxtemps <i>Kammermusik</i> Seelmann	London, Beethoven Quartett Society Dresden	<i>The Morning Chronicle</i> , 12 Jun. 1852): 1. <i>NZfM</i> 36/21 (21 May 1852): 239.
10 Feb. 1853 26 Feb. 1853	<b>Joseph Joachim</b> <b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Bremen Hanover (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Signale für die Musikalische Welt</i> 9 (Feb. 1853): 69. <i>Signale für die Musikalische Welt</i> 11 (Mar. 1853): 83. Georg Fischer, <i>Musik in Hannover</i> , 2nd ed. (Hannover: Hahn, 1903): 230.

(Continued)

Table 1 Continued

Date	Performer(s)	Place (edition)	Reference
17 May 1853	<b>Joseph Joachim</b> (Clara Schumann)	Düsseldorf, 31 <sup>st</sup> Lower Rhenish Music Festival (unknown ed., prob. Schumann)	<i>Süddeutsche Musik-Zeitung</i> 2/24 (13 Jun. 1853): 95.
18 May 1853	Bernhard Molique	London, Willis's Rooms (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>London Daily News</i> , 19 May 1853, 6.
31 May 1853	Henri Vieuxtemps	London, Willis's Rooms	<i>The Morning Post</i> , 1 Jun. 1853, 5.
22 Jul. 1853	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Göttingen, Wehner's second soirée Hotel Krone (There were probably other private performances around that time)	Emil Michelmann, <i>Agathe von Siebold: Johannes Brahms's Jugendliebe</i> (Göttingen: Häntzchel, 1930): 98.
5 Oct. 1853	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Karlsruhe Festival	<i>Wiener Zeitung</i> , 12 Oct. 1853, 2,402.
Jun. 1854	Ferdinand Laub	Mannheim	<i>Süddeutsche Musik-Zeitung</i> 3/52 (25 Dec. 1854): 206.
Jul. 2 1854	Henri Vieuxtemps (William Sterndale Bennett)	London, Hanover Square Rooms (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Morning Post</i> , 5 July 1854, 457.
15 Jul. 1854	Karl Wilhelm Uhlich	Sondershausen Arranged by Eduard Stein for violin and orchestra	<i>Signale für die Musikalische Welt</i> 12/31 (Jul. 1854): 250.
17 Nov. 1854	Ferdinand Laub	Frankfurt am Main	<i>Neue Berliner Musikzeitung</i> 8/49 (6 Dec. 1854): 389. <i>Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung</i> 2/47 (25 Nov. 1854): 373–5. Anton Schindler review.
30 Nov. 1854	Bernhard Molique (Charles Hallé)	Manchester, UK, Town Hall (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Manchester Courier</i> , 2 Dec. 1854, 8.
5 Dec. 1854	August Fries (C. C. Perkins)	Boston, Mendelssohn Quintette Club (Possibly first American performance)	<i>Boston Daily Evening Transcript</i> , 6 Dec. 1854, 2.
10 Dec. 1854	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Berlin, Singakademie programme with Clara Schumann	<i>Signale für die Musikalische Welt</i> 12/52 (Dec. 1854): 429.
Winter 1854	J[ohann P. C.] Böie from Altona	Copenhagen Accompanied (prob. Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Signale für die Musikalische Welt</i> 12/52 (Dec. 1854): 431.
20 Jan. 1855	Franz Seiss	Barmen, Germany Private performance	<i>Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung</i> 3/5 (3 Feb. 1855): 39.

2 Mar. 1855	<b>Joseph Joachim</b> (Clara Schumann)	Danzig, Private performance? with Clara Schumann. (Schumann ed.)	Nora Bickley, ed., <i>Letters to and From Joseph Joachim</i> (London: Macmillan, 1914), 105.
6 Mar. 1855	<b>Joseph Joachim</b> (Clara Schumann)	Danzig, with Clara Schumann. (Schumann ed. <sup>58</sup> )	Kopitz, ed., <i>Schumann Briefedition</i> 1:188n2.
30 Apr. 1855	Bernhard Molique (J. Robinson)	Dublin, Antient Concerts (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Dublin Daily Express</i> , 1 May 1855, 2.
Jun. 1855	Louis Eller	Paris, Salle Gouffier	<i>Revue et Gazette Musicale</i> 22/24 (17 Jun. 1855): 187.
Jul. 1855	Ferdinand Laub	Mannheim	<i>Neue Berliner Musikzeitung</i> 9/29 (18 Jul. 1855): 230.
28 Sept. 1855	Henry C. Cooper	Halifax, UK, St. George’s Hall	<i>Halifax Courier</i> , 6 Oct. 1855, 5.
1 Oct. 1855	Henry C. Cooper	Wakefield, UK (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Wakefield Journal and Examiner</i> 22 (28 Sept. 1855): 4.
22 Oct. 1855	Henry C. Cooper (Charles Salaman)	Bury St Edmunds, UK, Town Hall (Mendelssohn ed.)	<i>Bury and Norwich Post</i> , 10 Oct. 1855, 2.
Nov. 1855	Ferdinand Laub	Berlin (2 perfs.)	<i>Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung</i> , 3/47 (24 Nov. 1855): 374.
11 Nov. 1855	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Berlin, Singakademie programme with Clara Schumann	Zwickau, <i>Clara Schumann Programmsammlung</i> , no. 337.
14 Nov. 1855	<b>Joseph Joachim</b>	Danzig, Soirée of Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, and Johannes Brahms.	Renate Hofmann and Kurt Hofmann, <i>Johannes Brahms als Pianist und Dirigent: Chronologie seines Wirkens als Interpret</i> (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 2006): 35.

### A Musical Calling Card: Joachim in Paris and Weimar

Joachim was present at Mendelssohn's death, on 4 November 1847. For the 16-year-old, the loss of his mentor and friend was a traumatic event that left him untethered, personally and musically.<sup>59</sup> He briefly considered returning to his family in Pest, but eventually judged Leipzig, even without Mendelssohn, to be the best place to further his education and professional goals. His friends created several positions for him there: vice-concertmaster of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, and teaching assistant to David at the *Conservatorium*, where Clara Schumann's half-brother, Woldemar Bargiel, was among his few students.

From January through April 1850, Joachim made his first concert appearances in Paris, performing with, among others, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, and Gewandhaus principal cellist Bernhard Cossmann, and playing Ernst's Op. 11 'Othello Fantasy' in the premiere concert of Hector Berlioz's Grande Société Philharmonique de Paris (19 February 1850).<sup>60</sup> As with his Viennese visit four years earlier, he took with him solo Bach as a musical calling card. While there, he performed the *Chaconne* 'with infinite skill'<sup>61</sup> in Erard's salon, in a concert given by Louise Farrenc.<sup>62</sup> He also played it on other, perhaps private, occasions, clearly with great acclaim, such that Richault subsequently brought out a French edition of the Bach/Mendelssohn *Chaconne* bearing the annotation: 'exécuted à Paris dans plusieurs concerts, / PAR / JOACHIM / Membre du Conservatoire de Leipsic'.<sup>63</sup> As previously, Joachim's programming of the *Chaconne* enabled him to present himself to a new public as a virtuoso of uncommon musical and personal depth. The Paris reviewer for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* expressed what was in those days a universal opinion of Joachim:

He must be heard, and, where possible, known. Where such integrity and seriousness of disposition are united, in such young years, with such mastery, such unpretentiousness, such talent, so much simplicity and such amiability of mind, one is aware that one is observing something rare; but one does not know what one loves or values the most – the artist or the person. Joachim is among those called, but he is also one of the chosen.<sup>64</sup>

Following his return to Leipzig in late April, Joachim made a short trip to Weimar to visit Franz Liszt, and to report on his Paris trip. During that visit, Liszt convinced

<sup>59</sup> See Robert W. Eshbach, 'Mendelssohn's Death', <https://josephjoachim.com/2013/07/10/mendelssohns-death/>.

<sup>60</sup> See Site Hector Berlioz: Berlioz à Paris, [www.hberlioz.com/Paris/socphilharmon\\_txt.htm](http://www.hberlioz.com/Paris/socphilharmon_txt.htm), Accessed 9 March 2022.

<sup>61</sup> *The Illustrated London News* 16/420 (6 April 1850): 234.

<sup>62</sup> 19 March: the programme included the premiere of Farrenc's *Nonet*. *Revue et Gazette Musicale* 17/13 (21 March 1850): 108–9. On at least one occasion he also performed one of the Bach fugues, probably the Fugue in G minor from the first sonata; *Revue et Gazette Musicale* 17/4 (27 January 1850): 32.

<sup>63</sup> Cooper, *Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, 163, n. 20.

<sup>64</sup> 'Den muß man hören und wo möglich kennen. Wo in so jungen Jahren solche Gediegenheit und solcher Ernst der Gesinnung, mit solcher Meisterschaft, solcher Anspruchslosigkeit, mit solcher Begabung, so viel Einfachheit und solche Lebenswürdigkeit des Gemüths vereinigt sind, da ist man sich bewußt daß man Seltenes vor sich hat; weiß aber nicht was man am Meisten lieb und werth hält, ob den Künstler, ob den Menschen. Joachim ist der Berufenen einer, aber auch ein Auserwählter'. *NZfM*, 32/32 (19 April 1850): 168.

him to take part in an at-home soirée. Joachim played a Bach fugue on that occasion.<sup>65</sup> Those were, he wrote to Cossmann, 'some unforgettable days'. 'I really enjoyed it there', he continued. 'It's a friendly little town, and you can certainly live quite well with the people there'.<sup>66</sup>

Joachim returned in August for Weimar's Goethe and Herder Festival, at which Liszt conducted the premiere of Wagner's *Lohengrin*. He was overwhelmed by the opera and its performance,<sup>67</sup> and for a time he became an enthusiastic *Wagnerianer*. Liszt pressed the 18-year-old virtuoso to accept the position of Concertmaster of the Weimar *Hofkapelle*, and sent Joachim Raff twice to Leipzig to persuade him to accept. After making the journey himself to discuss the matter with Ferdinand David, however, Liszt still had to address the fraught issue of Joachim's Jewishness.<sup>68</sup> In the end, Joachim was hired, becoming the first person to hold the title of *Concertmeister* in Weimar since J. S. Bach.

Joachim's Weimar service began in October 1850. Despite unpropitious circumstances, he held out for a little more than two years.<sup>69</sup> In November 1852, Liszt helped him to obtain a position as *Konzertmeister* to King George V of Hanover – a position he would take up in the new year.<sup>70</sup>

### Frei aber Einsam – Free but Lonely

The year 1853, an eventful year in European music,<sup>71</sup> was a decisive year for Joachim's personal and artistic development. It was the year he left Liszt and Weimar and struck out on his own as *Konzertmeister* in Hanover. It was the year he fell in love with Gisela von Arnim and came under the sway of her mother, Bettina.<sup>72</sup> It was the year he drew close to the Schumanns. It was the year he met Brahms and Wagner. Above all, it was a year of intense loneliness and soul-searching during which he rethought personal loyalties and artistic values. 'He was the concert director', wrote Julius Rodenberg, 'and though favoured by the court and admired by the public, he lived a quiet, solitary life. We regarded him with considerable awe, as one who had a mission. He spoke little in those days;

<sup>65</sup> *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, 19 (May 1850): 183.

<sup>66</sup> 'einige unvergeßliche Tage'. 'Mir hat es dort sehr gefallen; es ist ein freundlich gelegenes Städtchen, und es läßt sich gewiß mit den Leuten dort recht gut leben' Joachim and Moser, *Briefe*, 1:21.

<sup>67</sup> Joachim did not participate in the premiere, as has sometimes been reported – the 46 rehearsals (!) had taken place over a period of four months.

<sup>68</sup> Toward the end of his life, Liszt told August Göllerich that Mendelssohn might have wanted to go to Weimar as *Hofkapellmeister*, but that the Weimar court 'would not have him because he was a Jew. For the same reason I later had to overcome many difficulties because of Joachim.' 'wollte ihn aber nicht als Israeliten. Aus demselben Grunde mußte ich später auch wegen Joachim manche Schwierigkeiten besiegen'; August Göllerich, *Franz Liszt* (Berlin: Marquardt Verlagsanstalt, 1908): 129.

<sup>69</sup> See Robert W. Eshbach, 'Joachim in Weimar 1850–1851', in *Joseph Joachims Identitäten*, ed. Katharina Uhde and Michael Uhde (Hildesheim: Olms, 2023).

<sup>70</sup> See Robert W. Eshbach, 'The Call to Hanover': <https://josephjoachim.com/2013/07/15/the-call-to-hanover/>.

<sup>71</sup> See Hugh Macdonald, *Music in 1853: The Biography of a Year* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012).

<sup>72</sup> See Robert W. Eshbach, "'For all are born to the ideal": Joseph Joachim and Bettina von Arnim', *Music and Letters*, 101/4 (2020): 713–42.



"Music is his language"<sup>73</sup> After two months in Hanover (8 March), Joachim wrote to Cossmann, referring to his Weimar quartet partners, 'I long indescribably for Wagnerian sounds – for our Quartet!!! O Cossmann, o Stör, o Walbrül! Here I completely lack congenial musical company; I live almost like a hermit!'<sup>74</sup>

In his self-imposed solitude, Joachim turned once again to solo Bach – to the *Chaconne*, which he had performed only once (in London) since his Paris debut three years earlier. The *Chaconne* had been one of the last pieces Joachim played with Mendelssohn, and it was to Mendelssohn's edition that he returned, performing it on 10 February in Bremen, and two weeks later in Hanover.

At the conclusion of his time in Weimar, Joachim had begun work on an overture, in D minor, on the subject of Hamlet, the manuscript of which he sent to Liszt on 21 March 1853 with the message:

I hope that the work will tell you that which I hope you have not doubted: that you, my Master, have been constantly present in my mind. The parting words that you called out to me on one of the last evenings in Weimar remain in my ears. They echo inside me as music that can never die away. I was at leisure here to listen to this 'voix interne': I was very much alone. ... I turned to *Hamlet*.<sup>75</sup>

Katharina Uhde has observed how the subject of Hamlet, considered 'unmusical' at the time, was widely associated with the irresolute condition of Germany in the post-Napoleonic era.<sup>76</sup> As Joachim professed to Liszt, the subject was also a reflection of his own inner disposition in this period of seclusion. The overture begins hesitantly, mysteriously, in a slow triple metre. In contrast, the daily iteration of Bach's majestic variations in the same key and triple metre may have proved a bracing tonic for Joachim's Hamlet meditations.

That year, Joachim introduced himself with the *Chaconne* at two important German music festivals: one in Düsseldorf and the other to the Southwest in Karlsruhe. On 17 May 1853 he played the Beethoven concerto, with the *Chaconne* as an encore, in what would prove to be a defining event in his career. The occasion was the 31st Lower Rhine Music Festival, held in Düsseldorf from May 15–17, under the direction of Robert Schumann. Since their founding in 1818, the Lower Rhine Music Festivals had been a vital feature of German cultural life – an outgrowth of the prodigious passion for music amongst the Rhine Province's socially vibrant and increasingly affluent middle class. What had begun as an amateur festival under municipal sponsorship had gradually taken on a more professional aspect under the direction of such conductors as Felix Mendelssohn (who conducted seven times between 1833 and 1846), Louis Spohr, and Gaspare

<sup>73</sup> 'Er war Concertdirector und lebte, wiewohl vom Hofe bevorzugt und vom Publicum bewundert, ein stilles, zurückgezogenes Leben. Wir betrachteten ihn mit einiger Scheu, wie Einen, der eine Mission hat. Er sprach nicht viel damals; "Musik ist seine Sprache ..."; Julius Rodenberg, 'Erinnerungen aus der Jugendzeit', *Deutsche Rundschau* 85 (1895): 272.

<sup>74</sup> Letter to Bernhard Cossmann, 8 March 1853. Joachim and Moser, *Briefe*, 1:42–3.

<sup>75</sup> 'ich habe dabei den Wunsch, das Werk möge Ihnen auch sagen, woran Sie hoffentlich nicht gezweifelt haben, daß Sie, mein Meister, mir beständig gegenwärtig waren. Die Abschiedsworte, welche Sie mir unter Freunden an einem der letzten Abende in Weimar zugerufen hatten, sind mir noch in den Ohren; sie hallen in meinem Innern als Musik wieder, die nie verklingen kann. Dieser "voix interne" zuzuhorchen, hatte ich alle Muße; ich war sehr allein. ... Ich griff da zum Hamlet'; Joachim and Moser, *Briefe*, 1:44–5. Joachim dedicated the work, not to Liszt and his disciples, but to the members of the Weimar Hofkapelle.

<sup>76</sup> Katharina Uhde, *The Music of Joseph Joachim* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018): 101ff.

Spontini. The 1853 *Musikfest* was, in a way, a rebirth of the festival; due to the mid-century political troubles, it had occurred only once (1851) since 1847. As municipal music director in Düsseldorf, Robert Schumann, was chosen to lead the event.<sup>77</sup>

At 22, Joseph was no longer a child prodigy, and the expectations that he had to satisfy were daunting. Writing in 1897, Wilhelm von Wasielewski recalled:

He already enjoyed a widespread reputation in the musical world commensurate with his high artistic standing. It is therefore understandable that the musicians of the Rhineland, who had not yet had an opportunity to hear him, were extraordinarily curious about his accomplishments, but not in a wholly impartial way. Namely, it was supposed that his reputation was in part artificially created through partisanship, and to some extent exaggerated. His first appearance in the Rhineland was therefore awaited with a certain prejudice, seemingly as an opportunity for sizing him up in the most hypercritical way.<sup>78</sup>

Joachim's performances that day were a triumph. According to Wasielewski,

A storm of applause lasting many minutes with elemental force broke out after the finale. The audience could not be quieted, and let it be known, through sustained applause, that Joachim should give them something more ... and so, despite his overheated and wearied state, Joachim had in the end to comfort them with an encore, which was nothing less than Bach's Ciaccona for violin solo. It was, under the circumstances, an astonishing achievement.<sup>79</sup>

Clara Schumann accompanied the Bach. This may have been the first performance of Robert Schumann's piano accompaniment, which had been completed just months prior to the festival.

The concerts in Karlsruhe likewise provided an opportunity for the young violinist to establish his reputation in new regions of Germany. The *Karlsruher Musikfest* brought together musicians from the theatres of Darmstadt, Mannheim, and Karlsruhe for two days of concerts, with a day in between for

<sup>77</sup> See Robert W. Eshbach, 'The 31st Lower Rhine Music Festival', <https://josephjoachim.com/2019/06/01/the-31st-lower-rhine-music-festival/>.

<sup>78</sup> 'Er genoß bereits einen seinem hohen künstlerischen Range entsprechendem ausgebreiteten Ruf in der musikalischen Welt. Begreiflicher Weise waren daher die rheinischen Musiker, welche noch keine Gelegenheit gehabt hatten, ihn zu hören, auf seine Leistungen außerordentlich gespannt, jedoch in nicht ganz unbefangenen Sinne. Man vermeinte nämlich, Joachims Ruf sei zum Teil ein durch Parteiwesen künstlich gemachter und einigermaßen übertrieben. Mit einem gewissen Vorurteil erwartete man daher sein erstes Auftreten in den Rheinlanden, allem Anschein nach, um ihm möglichst scharf auf die Finger zu sehen'; Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, *Aus siebzig Jahren: Lebenserinnerungen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1897): 80.

<sup>79</sup> 'Nach dem Finale brach, wie mit elementarer Gewalt, ein minutenlang anhaltender Beifallsturm los. Die Zuhörerschaft konnte sich gar nicht beruhigen und ließ durch fortwährende Beifallsbezeugungen erkennen, daß Joachim noch etwas zum besten geben möge, ohne zu bedenken, welche Zumutung hiermit für den der Erschöpfung nahen Künstler verbunden war. In solchen Fällen kennt das Publikum eben vor lauter Enthusiasmus keine Rücksichte, und so mußte sich denn Joachim endlich noch trotz seines erhitzten und ermüdeten Zustandes zu einer Zugabe bequemen, welche in nichts geringerem bestand als in Bachs Ciaccona für Violine Solo. Es war unter den obwaltenden Umständen eine erstaunliche Leistung'. Wasielewski, *Aus siebzig Jahren*, 81–2.

outdoor carnival festivities, all under the direction of Franz Liszt. It was the second major outing of the 'Musicians of the Future' as the members of the Weimar School were then known,<sup>80</sup> and the concerts were conceived in part as a practical demonstration of the principles of the 'newest German art',<sup>81</sup> both compositional and performative, as they were developing under Liszt's guidance. Joachim was prominently featured in this festival, performing the final revision of his Violin Concerto, Op. 3,<sup>82</sup> as well as Bach's *Chaconne*, unaccompanied. Though Joachim was by then living in Hanover, Liszt programmed his violin concerto as a representative product of the Weimar school, and the one-movement concerto was heard as an example of 'modern' traits and tendencies. Innovative in form, it demonstrates the influence of Liszt, as well as Joachim's preoccupation with enlisting extreme virtuosity in the service of greater musical expressivity.<sup>83</sup>

The *Chaconne*, which Joachim performed on the second concert day (5 October), was a programmed item, not an encore as in Düsseldorf. It was an unusual choice, perhaps, since the festival was otherwise mostly dedicated to contemporary compositions and arrangements; the 'Musicians of the Future' had come to view much of the traditional repertory as representing an 'überwundenen Standpunkt' – a 'superseded standpoint'. In programming the *Chaconne*, however, Joachim seems to imply that the piece was Janus-faced: in uniting extreme technical demands with dignified musical content, this revived 'historical work' by Germany's 'greatest musical poet' became a model for the future – not merely a relic of the past. *Vos exemplaria graeca manu versate diurna, versate nocturna!* For Joachim, Mendelssohn's pupil, raised in the Leipzigerian *res severa*, the music of Bach was also beginning to take on a greater personal significance. As in Vienna, Pest, London, Paris, and Düsseldorf, he here used the *Chaconne* to introduce himself to new audiences as an important artist, and to demonstrate his connection to, and mastery of, German musical traditions.

### Virtuosity and *Werktreue*

Bach's *Chaconne* was perceived by nineteenth-century critics as an antidote to the ubiquitous 'empty' virtuosity that they viewed as a contemporary malady.<sup>84</sup> By

<sup>80</sup> The first had taken place in Ballenstedt, eighty miles due north of Weimar, on 22 and 23 June 1852, anchored by compositions of Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, and Raff. Works by Gluck, Beethoven, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and Parish Alvars were also performed. Though musicians of the Weimar Hofkapelle participated in that festival, Joachim was in England at the time.

<sup>81</sup> Ferdinand Pohl (Hoplit, pseud.), *Das Karlsruher Musikfest im October 1853* (Leipzig: Bruno Hinze, 1853): 16. Pohl's extensive report is a masterpiece of propaganda. For Ferdinand Hiller's dissenting view, see 'Das karlsruher Musikfest am 3. bis 5. October', in *Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung* 1/18 (1853): 139–42, reprinted in full in Dominik von Roth and Ulrike Roesler, eds, *Die Neudeutsche Schule: Phänomen und Geschichte* (Berlin: Metzler-Bärenreiter, 2020): 533–40.

<sup>82</sup> Not the Op. 11 'Hungarian' Concerto, as Alan Walker states; Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years 1848–1861* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1989): 233.

<sup>83</sup> See Uhde, *The Music of Joseph Joachim*, 73 ff.

<sup>84</sup> For a valuable framing discussion of the issues and controversies surrounding *Virtuosität/Virtuosentum*, see Karen Leistra-Jones, 'Virtue and Virtuosity: Brahms, the Concerto, and the Politics of Performance in Late Nineteenth-Century Austro-German Culture (PhD Diss., Yale University, 2011): *passim*; see also Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the*

combining dramatic technical demands with powerful musical substance, Bach seemed to exemplify a new and better way of writing for the violin. For Joachim, a Hungarian Jew of serious artistic aspirations in the world of German music, this notion may well have held a more personal significance. In his article 'Juden als Virtuosen', Daniel Jütte asserts that nineteenth-century Germans frequently associated virtuosity with Jewish musicians.<sup>85</sup> Jütte claims that in the first half of the nineteenth century 'the virtuoso profession had a specific attractiveness for Jews'<sup>86</sup> – indeed, that 'there had been, for the early German-Jewish bourgeoisie, a *genuine ideal of virtuosity*'<sup>87</sup> not simply as a means of earning a living, but arising out of an older cultural tradition that intimately entangled the practices of *Bildung* with the notion of 'virtuosity as a symbol of selfless perfection'.<sup>88</sup> We find echoes of this view in a passage that Joachim wrote in Brahms's commonplace book, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, sometime in 1853 or 1854: 'There is a degree of technique that becomes spirit, because it results in perfection'.<sup>89</sup>

Jütte maintains, however, that as the century wore on and virtuosity came to be associated with the impersonality of industrial mass production and commerce, the notion of virtuosity became identified with Jews in a negative way, as mere mechanism: a bag of tricks flogged by *Musikunternehmer* – 'music-entrepreneurs' – for vanity and monetary gain. Thus, virtuosity reinforced anti-Judaic tropes in two ways: by portraying Jews as clever imitators of a culture that they did not truly comprehend or share, and at the same time holding them responsible for the increasing debasement and commodification of a 'pure', 'spiritual' (read: German) art. It only made matters worse that, in post-Napoleonic Germany, the imbricated notions of virtuosity and Jewish empowerment were both associated with the French.

Joachim once wrote to his wife Amalie, 'I feel myself to be German. Righteousness and belief in the German mission to disseminate its culture sustain me'.<sup>90</sup> Though he was by birth a Hungarian Jew, his connection to canonic German music – particularly that of Beethoven and Bach – was deeper and more authentic than that of virtually any other nineteenth-century musician, having been passed on to him by eminent mentors from living traditions. For Joachim in particular, the

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*Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Further, many revealing essays are to be found in *Exploring Virtuosities: Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, Nineteenth-Century Musical Practices and Beyond*, ed. Christine Hoppe, Melanie von Goldbeck, and Maiko Kawabata (Hildesheim: Olms, 2018).

<sup>85</sup> Daniel Jütte, 'Juden als Virtuosen: Eine Studie zur Sozialgeschichte der Musik sowie zur Wirkmächtigkeit einer Denkfigur des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 66/2 (2009): 127–54.

<sup>86</sup> 'dass der Virtuosenberuf in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts eine besondere Attraktivität für Juden hatte'; Jütte, 'Juden als Virtuosen', 128.

<sup>87</sup> 'dass es in der frühen deutsch-jüdischen Bürgertum ein *genuines Ideal der Virtuosität* gegeben hat' [*Italics original*]; Jütte, 'Juden als Virtuosen', 128.

<sup>88</sup> Jütte, 'Juden als Virtuosen', 135.

<sup>89</sup> 'Es gibt einen Grad der Technik, der zu Geist, weil zur Vollkommenheit wird'. Aphorism No. 226 in Johannes Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein: Aussprüche von Dichtern, Philosophen und Künstlern*, ed. Carl Krebs (Berlin: Verlag des Deutschen Brahmsgesellschaft, 1909). 113.

<sup>90</sup> 'Ich fühle mich als Deutscher ... das Recht und der Glaube an der Deutschen Mission, ihre Kultur zu verbreiten, halten mich aufrecht'; Letter to Amalie Joachim, c. 15 July 1870. Cited in Beatrix Borchard, *Stimme und Geige: Amalie und Joseph Joachim* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005): 346.

nexus of anti-Judaic perceptions attached to virtuosity was therefore not merely offensive but personally and professionally problematic, casting him in the role of an outsider in a culture and society that he fully embraced, and to which he by rights belonged.

Musically, Joachim was to the manor born, and the greatest musicians of his time, including Bülow and Brahms, considered him a paragon and role-model. Despite his heritage, he found no inconsistency in his sense of *Deutschtum*, writing to his nephew of the 'german gift to assimilate'.<sup>91</sup> That 'gift' was conditional, however, and could not be taken for granted. Acceptance was, for Jewish virtuosi, dependent upon a demonstration of deep connection to the 'spiritual' values, however defined, of a nation that perceived itself as a land of '*Dichter und Denker*', poets and thinkers, whose signal contribution to intellectual life was a sense of history, ritually enacted through invented traditions.<sup>92</sup>

In this context, we may judge the critical importance of the *Chaconne* to Joachim's self-representation, as well as to that of other Jews. As Daniel Jütte claims:

To the extent that they were known at all, Bach's sonatas and partitas were understood by contemporaries to be difficult to perform and difficult to convey to a broad audience. But it is precisely this allegedly anachronistic character of the works, which does not aim at [superficial] effect, that may also have contributed to their popularity amongst those leading Jewish interpreters who wanted to anticipate or escape a one-sided categorization as virtuosi.<sup>93</sup>

'Fame', Susan Bernstein has pointed out, 'is constitutive of the virtuoso', and Joachim certainly had great success with his performance of virtuoso show-pieces.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, at the time when he was establishing his adult career, he seemed less concerned with fame than with striking roots deep in the soil of German culture. His letters to family and friends during this time bear eloquent testimony to his desire to 'place artistic before commercial considerations'.<sup>95</sup> The *Chaconne*, a historically and culturally significant *German* work, recognized to be both virtuosic and profound, ideally enabled Joachim to place his sovereign skills at the service of his musical, spiritual, and *social* aspirations.

Discussion of virtuosity inevitably raises the issue of the relationship of performance to the musical text. In Carl Dahlhaus's famous formulation, the nineteenth century experienced a schism between 'work-based' and 'performance-based' approaches. Dahlhaus associates these approaches with Beethoven and Rossini,

<sup>91</sup> Joachim and Moser, *Briefe*, 3:482. The English and capitalization are Joachim's own.

<sup>92</sup> See, for example, the story of Arminius in Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996): chap. 2, 75–134.

<sup>93</sup> 'Sofern sie überhaupt bekannt waren, galten Bachs Sonaten und Partiten den Zeitgenossen bekanntlich als kaum aufführbar und als einem breiten Publikum schwer vermittelbar. Aber eben dieser angeblich anachronistische, da nicht auf den Effekt schielende Charakter der Werke dürfte auch zu ihrer Popularität unter jenen führenden jüdischen Interpreten beigetragen haben, die damit einer einseitigen Kategorisierung als Virtuosen zuvor- oder entkommen wollten'; Jütte, 'Juden als Virtuosen', 144.

<sup>94</sup> Susan Bernstein, *Virtuosity of the Nineteenth Century: Performing Music and the Language in Heine, Liszt, and Baudelaire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998): 79.

<sup>95</sup> W.W. Cobbett, programme, *Joachim Centenary Concert 1831–1907, Queen's Hall, London* (London: Ibbs & Tillet, 14 July 1931): 6.

respectively.<sup>96</sup> The extent to which these intertwined notions can be distinguished from one another has been a matter of considerable discussion in recent decades.<sup>97</sup> Suffice it to say, as virtuosity gradually yielded to the ideal of work-based interpretation in Joachim's aesthetic, musical texts gradually took on greater significance for him, to the point of reverence. Comparison with the exegesis of religious scripture would not be inconsistent with his well-known desire to present himself as a 'priest of the public'.<sup>98</sup>

Joachim was always careful to consult the most authoritative texts for his performances, and he was known for his 'wide and deep musical scholarship in its highest form'.<sup>99</sup> On 28 November 1869, for example, he wrote to an unnamed recipient, requesting that a copy be made

of the Ciacona of Vitali [in G minor], that David has published in the 'High School', after the existing copy in the King's library.<sup>100</sup> The piece is truly magnificent, and I should like very much to play it publicly next week in Frau Schumann's concert;<sup>101</sup> unfortunately, my conscience does not permit me (this most kindly between us, no?!) to use David's arrangement, in which many things will have to be needlessly altered. One can't fully enjoy the many treasures in the 'High School' because of the exaggerated, arbitrary markings, about which we will later speak verbally, I hope. Meanwhile, you can in any case be sure that I don't contemplate a rival edition.<sup>102</sup>

In 1900, *The Musical Gazette* published a series of articles relating to Joachim by Donald Francis Tovey, entitled 'Performance and Personality', and signed with

<sup>96</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989): 9–10.

<sup>97</sup> See, particularly, Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), and Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, *passim*.

<sup>98</sup> 'Künstler sollen nicht Diener, sondern Priester des Publikums sein', he wrote in Brahms's commonplace book when he was 22 years old – 'Artists should not be servants, but priests of the public'. Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, 58. His wife, Amalia, later claimed that Joachim played *Virtuosentückchen* bolder and with more fire than others, but only for himself in his studio 'because he only wishes to present himself in public as the priest of the highest and most beautiful' (weil er öffentlich sich nur als Priester des Allerschönsten und Höchsten zeigen will). Quoted in Borchard, *Stimme und Geige*, 502.

<sup>99</sup> Tamino [Donald Francis Tovey], 'Performance and Personality, II', *The Musical Gazette*, March, 1900, 19.

<sup>100</sup> Ferdinand David, *Die hohe Schule des Violinspiels*, No. 13 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1867): plate 11361.

<sup>101</sup> Joachim also gave multiple performances of the Vitali *Ciaccona* in London the following February. *Signale für die Musikalische Welt*, 16 February 1870, 168.

<sup>102</sup> 'mir eine Abschrift der Ciacona von Vitali [hierzu eine Anmerkung am Rande: "in G moll"], die David in der "hohen Schule" herausgegeben hat, nach dem in des Königs Bibliothek vorhandenen Exemplar anfertigen zu lassen. Das Stück ist wirklich herrlich, und ich spielte es sehr gerne nächste Woche in einem Concerte der Frau Schumann hier öffentlich; leider aber läßt es mein Gewissen nicht zu (dies freundschaftlichst unter uns, nicht wahr?!)) die David'sche Bearbeitung, in der vieles unnöthig geändert sein muß, zu benützen. Man kommt bei all den Sachen der "hohen Schule" über die outrirte, willkürliche Bezeichnung nicht zu vollem Genuß der mancherlei Schätze, worüber wir mündlich hoffentlich weiter sprechen. Indes kannst Du jedenfalls sicher sein, daß ich nicht etwa eine Concurrenz-Ausgabe im Sinn habe'; Letter for sale in 2008 from Kotte Autographs via ABE Books, 4 pages, octavo, dated by a later hand (autograph dealer's transcription).



Tovey's *nom de plume* 'Tamino'. In a subsequent edition, the *Gazette* printed a mischievous letter to the editor overtly signed with Tovey's name:

Dear Sir, – Much as I agree with your contributor, 'Tamino', I cannot say that he has been very lucky in his anecdotes of Dr. Joachim's 'musical scholarship'. I venture to send you the subjoined specimen as an addition to 'Tamino's' article, as I believe it may convey to some musical students that definite impression that 'Tamino's' anecdotes seem to me to lack.

In Bach's A minor sonata for unaccompanied violin there is a difference of reading as to the second note (Fig. 1).

Some authorities read G-sharp,<sup>103</sup> which at first sight seems obviously right. But G-natural really makes a much better sense as a step in a downward scale (A–G–F–E–D), the descend being disturbed into the upper octave by the limited downward compass of the violin.

I happened a few years ago to mention to Dr. Joachim that I had been looking at an arrangement by Bach himself of this sonata for Clavier, transposed to D minor, a little-known though interesting piece of work, then recently published or reprinted, and only known to me by the merest accident.<sup>104</sup> I hardly had time to mention it before Dr. Joachim said, 'And was the second note in the bass natural?' and then explained to me why he asked the question.

It may be said that this was a violin composition constantly on his repertoire; but how many actors are there, or how many have there ever been, who could show such an absolutely ready familiarity with varied readings in, say, 'Hamlet'? It is the scholarly attitude of mind that is so significant in this case; and it would seem still more significant to one who could have observed the startling promptness of Dr. Joachim's question. –

Yours truly, D.F. Tovey.<sup>105</sup>

In 1879, the pianist, editor, and critic Alfred Dörffel (1821–1905) wrote to Joachim for his assistance with the preparation of an envisioned performing edition of the *Chaconne* (Dörffel's edition for the *Bach Gesellschaft* of the Sonatas and Partitas appeared in December of the same year).<sup>106</sup> Joachim's response, reproduced here in full, provides an invaluable insight into the freedom, as well as the fidelity, with which he performed Bach's text:

3. Beethovenstrasse, N. W. Thiergarten  
[Berlin, 6 May 1879.]<sup>107</sup>

<sup>103</sup> This was the universal reading before Joachim, and appears in the 1802 edition, David's edition (even on the lower 'Urtext' staff), and also the complete works edition of the *Bach Gesellschaft*.

<sup>104</sup> The work in question is the Sonata in D minor, BWV 964. In that instance, the bass continues its descent, not being restricted by the compass of the instrument, with a C-natural, not a C-sharp.

<sup>105</sup> *The Musical Gazette*, March, 1900, 19.

<sup>106</sup> *Johann Sebastian Bach's Werke*, 27.1, *Kammermusik. Sechster Band. Solowerke für Violine; Solowerke für Violoncello* (BWV 1001–12) (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879).

<sup>107</sup> The original German of the letter, as transcribed by Arnold Schering, *Bach Jahrbuch*, 18 (Leipzig: Breitkopf Härtel, 1921): 98–100, together with facsimiles of the holograph are available online at <https://josephjoachim.com/2013/12/16/a-letter-of-joseph-joachim-on-editing-the-chaconne-of-bach/>. The holograph is held by The Royal Academy of Music, London, Foyle Menuhin Archive Accession No. 2005.2446.



Fig. 1

Dear Mr. Dörffel!

Your son has sent me your request concerning the Chaconne. Above all, I must express my warm thanks to you for the cordially complimentary way in which you tell me that you enjoyed my rendition of Bach's things.

If only to return your kindness, I should like to fulfil your request to 'mark' the Chaconne in my way and, in particular, to write out the arpeggios.

But when I think about it, I have to conclude that precisely this has something unworkable about it: for what you may have liked about my rendition is probably that it sounded free and did not carry the stamp of the reflective, such that I did not play with exactly the same nuances from one time to another.

For me, for example, the effect of the arpeggios comes from producing a broadly conceived crescendo in such a way that, with the increase in tone strength, 5 and then 6 notes develop from the four demisemiquavers, until the six notes gain the upper hand, and the bass then also emerges more markedly.

I really don't know myself when I start with the 5 or 6 notes: it will vary, depending on whether I crescendo sooner or later – which again depends on momentary matters, such as less or more aroused mood, better or worse bow hair which speaks more easily in the piano or in the forte, thinner or thicker strings, oh, I don't know what unforeseen eventualities! But, in my opinion, it cannot be written down. If one were to do it in one or the other manner, Bach's text would be too subjectively coloured. – And here, unfortunately, we have reached a sore point which concerns most of the editors of our time (I may frankly admit to you at this point), for example, even David's works, which are in many respects highly commendable, but that annoy me to a degree that I always try to play from copies other than his.

Nowadays, people mark, people arrange really far too much on other people's things – (on one's own things, one's markings should be as meticulously detailed as possible!).

He who does not have a sufficiently general musical education as a player, a sufficiently warm feeling for the composer, such that the technical as well as the spiritual emerges from his own understanding, should refrain from playing for others.

For a schoolmaster, which I am now, that is hardly pedagogical?!<sup>108</sup> Perhaps –

<sup>108</sup> Letters of Joachim's pupil Ettore Pinelli from 1864 indicate the role that Bach's solo sonatas, and particularly the Chaconne, played in Joachim's own teaching. Joachim's method seems to have been to perform for and with his students as an example of correct practice and a way of instilling discriminating musical taste: 'we went to his house and he played me two sonatas by Bach and the Chaconne, we talked a lot about the state of music in Italy, and he was amazed how I, brought up in the midst of bad music, can have taste and understand what is really good and not fall into false judgments or rather prejudices against German music. ... After tea he put Bach's music under my arm and invited me to come to his house tomorrow morning' (siamo andati in sua casa mi ha suonato due sonate di Bach e la Chaconne, abbiamo parlato molto dello stato della musica in Italia, ed

in the same way, the teacher's task does not seem to me to be to train, but to add to the above-desired degree of understanding, whereby certainly some of the editions by David, who was a fine head and a skilled artist, can still have their stimulating benefit.

But, all in all, our modern practice of arranging 'for practical use' for conservatories leads to mannerism.

For the same reason that some often-justified quietly spoken aside in a lecture can be well-nigh ruined by writing it down – one may regard an engraved *cresc.* *mf*, *f*, *ff* crudely, and it sounds even harder and more intrusive translated into tone! – But now I have not only not fulfilled your flattering wish, but also given a kind of boring lecture, and I have nothing more to say in my defence than that at least you would be unjust toward my disposition if you were to say: *qui s'excuse s'accuse*.

I would gladly have consented!

Respectfully yours,

Joseph Joachim

Joachim did, eventually, reconsider the idea of making an edition of the Bach Sonatas and Partitas. The well-known Joachim–Moser edition (1908) was published after his death by Bote & Bock, and served generations of violinists as authoritative.<sup>109</sup> The Joachim–Moser edition was the first to make use of the now-accepted autograph, which it retains for comparison on a lower staff, in the manner of the earlier David edition.<sup>110</sup> The circumstances under which it was made, explained in Andreas Moser's preface, have raised objections as to whether it can be considered a 'valid legacy'.<sup>111</sup> Trusting Moser's comments, and mindful of Joachim's remarks to Dörrfel, the posthumous edition can at best be considered a genuine, if provisional, 'recorded manifestation' of Joachim's creative mind. As his letter to Dörrfel indicates, Joachim played the solos variously, seldom twice the same, and may never have played them exactly as indicated in the Joachim–Moser text. He would not have wished, or expected, for the edition to be used in too literal or prescriptive a manner, nor to be considered the last word on his interpretive ideas.<sup>112</sup> In any case, his inclusion of the Urtext below

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è rimasto meravigliato come io allevato e cresciuto in mezzo alla cattiva musica possa gustare e bene comprendere quello che veramente è buono e non cadere in falsi giudizi o piuttosto pregiudizi contro la musica Tedesca. ... Dopo il thé mi ha messo sotto il braccio le suonate di Bach e mi ha invitato per domani mattina col violino in sua casa); quoted from Michael Uhde, 'Ettore Pinelli – Ein Geiger aus Rom und sein Maestro Joseph Joachim', in *Joseph Joachims Identitäten*, ed. Katharina Uhde and Michael Uhde (Hildesheim: Olms, 2023): 115–48.

<sup>109</sup> As late as 1972, Eduard Melkus still considered the Joachim–Moser version 'the most natural and best' of the published editions he surveyed. Melkus, however, mistakenly believed the Joachim–Moser edition to be the first to give the Urtext on a separate system. Eduard Melkus, 'Editionsprobleme bei den Soloviolinsonaten von J. S. Bach' in: *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 27/6 (1972): 324–5.

<sup>110</sup> In a similar fashion, the Joachim–Chrysander edition of Corelli's works (London: Augener, 1888–91) retains 'Corelli's graces' on an upper staff. In this case, the working-out of the ornamentation is by the composer.

<sup>111</sup> Joseph Szigeti believed it could not. See Eiche, *The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin*, 27–8. Perhaps a more significant Joachim legacy is that nine out of the first 34 published editions of the Bach Sonatas and Partitas were prepared by Joachim pupils: Pinelli, E. Herrmann, Schulz, Auer, Hubay, Nachèz, Polo and Havemann. Papadopolou, *Zur Editions- und Aufführungsgeschichte*, 49.

<sup>112</sup> As he wrote in the Preface to the Joachim–Moser *Violinschule*, 'even the most conscientious adherence to my instructions would not guarantee that the whole thing will sound like

the edited part carries its own implications. *Sola scriptura* does not rule out a multitude of exegeses.

### Envoi

In 1829, Franz Schubert's friend Eduard von Bauernfeld wrote, 'Truly the best impression a work of art can engender is – another work of art!'.<sup>113</sup> Johannes Brahms heard Joachim play the *Chaconne* often, and on at least one occasion played it with him.<sup>114</sup> His response to the experience was to create his own left-hand piano arrangement of the *Chaconne* for which he insisted the title should read 'von Bach' (by Bach), and not 'nach Bach' (after Bach).<sup>115</sup> In a letter to Clara Schumann, Brahms writes:

the piece entices me to engage with it in every way. One does not always want to hear music merely in the air, and Joachim is not often here, so one tries it this way and that. However I do it – with orchestra or piano – the pleasure is always lost. I find only one way to create for myself a very diminished, yet approximate and completely pure enjoyment of the work: if I play it with my left hand alone! It makes me think of the story of Columbus and the egg!<sup>116</sup> The similar level of difficulty, the kinds of techniques, the arpeggiations, everything comes together to make me – feel like a violinist!<sup>117</sup>

Brahms speaks here of 'the work', and writes that it cannot be fully apprehended without physical engagement – without acknowledging and reproducing its difficulty. That is to say, for Brahms, the 'work' was not fully present in the score, and it was not sufficient to simply 'let the music sound in one's mind' – 'in the air'. There is no satisfaction in a frictionless rendition. He had to play it, so to speak with one hand tied behind his back, to capture the tactile experience of Joachim's performance – to feel like a violinist.

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I intended. The true individuality of the conception cannot be captured in technical prescriptions' (selbst die gewissenhafteste Befolgung meiner Vorschriften würde keine Gewähr bieten, dass das Ganze nach meinem Sinn klingt. Das Individuelle der Auffassung lässt sich eben nicht in technische Vorschriften bannen); Joseph Joachim 'Vorwort', in Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser, *Violinschule*, vol. 1 (Berlin: N. Simrock, 1905): 4.

<sup>113</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader*, trans. Eric Blom (New York: W.W. Norton, 1947): 886.

<sup>114</sup> Joachim and Brahms performed Schumann's edition of the *Chaconne* at a Schumann memorial concert in Hamburg in November 1856. See Valerie Woodring Goertzen, 'Preface', *Chaconne from Partita no. 2 in d minor, Arrangement for Piano, left hand* (Munich: Henle, 2018).

<sup>115</sup> Goertzen, 'Preface'.

<sup>116</sup> The comment refers to Columbus's (apocryphal) trick of standing an egg on end by breaking its tip – an example of 'thinking outside the box'.

<sup>117</sup> 'Aber das Stück reizt, auf alle Weise sich damit zu beschäftigen. Mann will Musik auch nicht immer blos in der Luft klingen hören, Joachim ist nicht oft da, man versuchts so u. so. Was ich aber nehme, Orchester oder Clavier – mir wird der Genuß immer verdorben. Nur auf eine Weise finde ich, schaffe ich mir einen, sehr verkleinerten, aber annähernden u. ganz reinen Genuß des Werkes – wenn ich es mit der linken Hand allein spiele! Mir fällt sogar dabei bisweilen die Geschichte vom Ei des Columbus ein! Die ähnliche Schwierigkeit, die Art der Technik, das Arpeggieren, alles kommt zusammen mich – wie einen Geiger zu fühlen!'; translation in Goertzen, 'Preface'.

Joachim established Bach's *Chaconne* at the centre of the canon and of the violinist's repertoire. Though written 300 years ago, the *Chaconne* is not merely an artefact. For the violinist, it is a sublime challenge, spiritual, mental, and physical, which stands like Everest, to which one brings all of one's powers – one's whole self – in performance. It belongs, not to the 'Imaginary Museum', but to the *Wunderkammer* of Musical Works – the cabinet of musical wonders in which, as in the *Wunderkammern* of old, it is expected that one should 'pick up and handle the objects ... feel their textures, their weights, their particular strangeness'.<sup>118</sup> It is a work to be used – a work in which difficulty challenges virtuosity as an essential element of expression – a work, the performance of which can serve as a tool of personal growth or a display of identity. As a series of developing variations, it is also, in a sense, a *Wunderkammer in nuce*: an object which replicates in form its own use and purpose.

From early youth, Joachim returned time and again to the *Sei solo* of Bach to convey his deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings, to refresh and challenge his technique, to ground himself in what he considered the profundity of German culture, and to establish his place in the history of the musical art. At the fiftieth anniversary jubilee of his performing debut, held at the Berlin Hochschule on 1 March 1889, Joachim's *Hamlet* and *Henry IV* overtures and 'Hungarian' concerto were performed – the latter by three of his former pupils, Hugo Olk, Johann Kruse, and Henri Petri each taking a movement. Andreas Moser relates, 'When the ovations would not cease, Joachim took Olk's violin out of his hand as a sign that he wanted to perform something himself to express his thanks. With the words: 'Let us return to Bach!' he put the violin to his chin and played the Bach *Chaconne* with such perfection as had hardly ever been heard from him in earlier years'.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Helen Macdonald writes of the historical *Wunderkammern*: 'Nothing was kept behind glass, as in a modern museum or gallery. More importantly, perhaps, neither were these collections organized according to the museological classifications of today. *Wunderkammern* held natural and artificial things together on shelves in close conjunction: pieces of coral; fossils; ethnographic artefacts; cloaks; miniature paintings; musical instruments; mirrors; preserved specimens of birds and fish; insects; rocks; feathers. The wonder these collections kindled came in part from the ways in which their disparate contents spoke to one another of their similarities and differences in form, their beauties and manifest obscurities'; Helen Macdonald, *Vesper Flights* (New York: Grove Press, 2020): vii.

<sup>119</sup> 'Als die Ovationen kein Ende nehmen wollten, nahm Joachim Olk die Geige aus der Hand, zum Zeichen, dass er selber etwas vortragen wolle, um seinem Dank Ausdruck zu geben. Mit den Worten: "Kehren wir zu Bach zurück!" setzte er die Geige ans Kinn und spielte die Bachsche *Chaconne* in solcher Vollendung, wie man sie von ihm kaum jemals in früheren Jahren vernommen hatte'; Andreas Moser, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild* (Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1904): 254.