Salvaging the Style of Frei Aber Einsam in the music of Brahms: Proposing a Historically Informed Performance Practice for the Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano of Johannes Brahms, Opp. 78, 100, and 108

Phillip Alexander Ducreay

Follow this and additional works at: https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd

Part of the Musicology Commons, and the Music Performance Commons

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by the The Research Repository @ WVU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Thesis in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you must obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This Thesis has been accepted for inclusion in WVU Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports collection by an authorized administrator of The Research Repository @ WVU. For more information, please contact researchrepository@mail.wvu.edu.
Salvaging the Style of *Frei Aber Einsam* in the music of Brahms: Proposing a Historically Informed Performance Practice for the Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano of Johannes Brahms, Opp. 78, 100, and 108

Phillip Alexander Ducreay

Thesis submitted
to the College of Creative Arts at West Virginia University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Musicology

Evan A. MacCarthy, Ph.D., Chair
Travis Stimeling, Ph.D.
Andrew Kohn, Ph.D.

School of Music

Morgantown, West Virginia
2018

Keywords: Brahms, Joachim, Historically Informed Performance, Performance Practice, Early Music, and Violin.
Copyright 2018 Phillip Alexander Ducreay
ABSTRACT

Salvaging the Style of *Frei Aber Einsam* in the music of Brahms: Proposing a Historically Informed Performance Practice for the Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano of Johannes Brahms, Opp. 78, 100, and 108

Phillip Alexander Ducreay

This thesis explores scholarship relevant to assembling a historically informed performance practice of Brahms’s three Violin Sonatas, Opp. 78, 100, and 108 in the nineteenth-century Germanic violin tradition of which, Joseph Joachim was its greatest proponent. This inquiry, which primarily examines surviving evidence of Joachim, his pedagogical ilk, and the circle of Brahms, engages with a variety of 19th and early 20th century Germanic musical and textual evidence, including nineteenth-century musical editions, correspondence and other archival materials, and early recorded performances to propose a historically informed style. In presenting this historiography of materials relevant to forming a historically informed interpretation of these sonatas as well as presenting lacunae in the field, the value of this endeavor becomes evident.
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION........................................................................................................................................1

CHAPTER 1: In search of “Frei aber einsam”: Joseph Joachim as Brahms’s Violinist................26

CHAPTER 2: Historical Editions and Annotations as Performing Evidence...................... 50

CHAPTER 3: Recording as Evidence: Capturing the sound of “Frei Aber Einsam”..............76

CHAPTER 4: Moving Past “Frei Aber Einsam”: New Paths for the Violin Sonatas of Brahms...........................................................................................................................................106

BIBLIOGRAPHY....................................................................................................................................131
Salvaging the Style of *Frei Aber Einsam* in the music of Brahms: Proposing a Historically Informed Performance Practice for the Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano of Johannes Brahms, Opp. 78, 100, and 108

Phillip Alexander Ducreay

This thesis explores available scholarship on forming a historically informed performance practice through the examination of a variety of 19th and early 20th century Germanic musical and textual evidence, including nineteenth-century musical editions, correspondence and other archival materials, and early recorded performances. This inquiry will present both, a historiography of 19th German violin performance practice with an emphasis on the surviving performance evidence of the violinist Joseph Joachim, and several examples of the application of such evidence and scholarship to developing a historically informed performance practice of the Brahms sonatas for Violin and Piano, Opp. 78, 100, and 108. Through a discussion of existing methodologies for developing a historically informed performance derived from such evidence and scholarship, several new directions for its applications will be presented. As the title of this work suggests, *Salvaging the Style of Frei Aber Einsam in the music of Brahms: Proposing a Historically Informed Performance Practice for the Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano of Johannes Brahms, Opp. 78, 100, and 108*, a large part of this paper is dedicated to navigating the evidence and scholarship dedicated to Joseph Joachim. The personal motto of Joseph Joachim *Frei Aber Einsam* or Free but Lonely, served as a nexus between Joachim, Brahms, Robert Schumann, and Albert Dietrich throughout their friendship. While the musical cryptogram F.A.E and its inversions were used as cipher and symbol between the men, especially in the F.A.E. Scherzo composed for Joachim in 1853 by Dietrich, Schumann, and Brahms, the motto is inextricably linked with the aesthetic of Joachim. For the purposes of this historiography, the
motto serves to represent Joachim the artist and his dedication to the ascetic life of a performing musician.¹ The body of scholarship in the field of Romantic-era performance practice by Clive Brown, Robin Stowell, David Milsom, Michael Musgrave, and others will provide foundational material upon which I explore existing methodologies for engaging with primary sources such as letters, essays, performance reviews, and editions.² Each chapter concerns a specific area of scholarship related to the investigating of historically informed interpretation of these sonatas. These chapters will then serve as a venue for comparisons between established theories on interpreting Brahms's music and the suggestion of new directions for the practical application of this scholarship from studies of both primary and secondary sources.

It is only through a combination of these different but related research fields that I will be able to suggest several ways to use such scholarship to develop a more complete picture of the scholarship necessary to achieve a synthesized, informed performance of these violin sonatas. The


objective of this inquiry is to present materials, both historical and modern that inform the interpretation of these sonatas from not only the perspective of a performer but also from those of historians, members of Brahms's circle, and editors. This diversity of literature will assist in supporting several important aspects in the realization of these works while also exposing those which cannot be proven with the available scholarship. Throughout the thesis, I interact with four assertions from which I develop a broader understanding of historical performance practice within the context of these sonatas by Brahms. First, a historically informed interpretation is possible with the materials that we have available today. Second, there is not one correct style in which to perform these works but rather a variety reliant on a performer's idiosyncrasies and preferences. Third, performance practice is as dependent on composers and their works as it is on performers. Last, a historically informed interpretation of Brahms's sonatas is a valuable tool for understanding not only the musical style of the late nineteenth century but also critical aesthetic ideas of late German Romanticism.

**Review of the Scholarly Literature**

This inquiry first examines the existing scholarship relevant to forming historically informed violin-specific interpretations of late nineteenth-century music, especially concerning the music of Brahms. Then, a case study for the synthesis of this evidence will be made by comparing the three violin sonatas of Johannes Brahms and the contexts of their composition and premiere, and relevant historical studies. In reviewing this literature, I have devised two main points which are critical to this project and have provided a departure point for my interactions with this scholarship. First, while much of the scholarship regarding nineteenth-century performance practice is Joachim centered, is this the only source for evidence? By exploring
such a Joachim-centric topic, it will be clear to see what evidence might serve to diversify the narrative of nineteenth-century performance practice. The second preliminary question is, when reading a work of scholarship, what methodologies are recommended, modeled, and developed? This question will serve to find the most common and useful methods for dealing with primary sources which, for this document will be, recordings, letters, performance reviews, biographical information, and editions prepared by nineteenth and early twentieth century violinists. Each of these sources requires a different methodology for dealing with all of the inherent issues one engages with in the pursuit of analysis. The inclusion of these two points will help carve out a space for this research topic amongst the scholarship on larger related fields.

It has been in this study useful to identify which scholars have worked extensively in this field and which studies have had the most significant impact on each field. Those studies which encompass a significant portion of this scholarship are of particular utility to examining what is left to study. Relevant general studies to be considered include Clive Brown's *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* and *The Historical Performance of Music, An Introduction* by Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell. David Milsom’s *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-century Violin Performance: An Examination of Style in Performance* offers more in-depth information on violin-specific performance practice issues of the period, which can be directly applied to Brahms’s violin sonatas. Robin Wilson’s “Style and Interpretation in the Nineteenth-Century German Violin school with particular reference to the three sonatas for pianoforte and violin by Johannes Brahms," deals directly much of the available evidence

---

especially regarding the violin and nineteenth-century chamber music. Wilson’s methodology, which a quantitative approach to analyzing and comparing recorded and written evidence to determine style is perhaps the most exhaustive example in existence. Directly relevant to the study of Brahms and performance practice is the collection of essays *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, edited by Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman. The scholarship regarding Romantic performance practices of the violin and piano by Clive Brown, David Milsom, Neal Peres da Costa, and Robin Stowell presents resources for engaging with editions and music treatises with the aim of establishing approaches toward a historically informed performing style. For examples of early recorded violin, I draw on the discographic materials published in *The Recorded Violin*, a collection of the earliest examples of the recorded violin and other such recordings before 1935 which serves as a boundary for what could be considered early recordings. To show current trends in analyzing relevant recordings for style, studies such as Neal Peres Da Costa’s dissertation and the work of Robert Philip offer methods

---


5 Musgrave, *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*. For relevant essays within this work, see Bernard Sherman, “How different was Brahms’s playing style from our own?”, 1-10; Styra Avins, "Performing Brahms's music: clues from his letters," 11-47; Clive Brown, "Joachim's violin playing and the performance of Brahms's string music," 48-98; Sherman, "Metronome marks, timings, and other period evidence regarding tempo in Brahms," 99-130.


7 For this collection of early twentieth-century recordings, see The Recorded Violin Vol. 1. Pearl Records, 1993. CD.
specific to this form of recording analysis. A review of letters, essays, and other primary sources written by Brahms, his critics, as well as members of Brahms’s circle provides additional valuable evidence to both my conclusions and those of existing scholars. Finally, there is perhaps no resource better for consulting historical string editions than the online archive, The CHASE (Collection of Historical Annotated String Editions) project of Leeds university which is a critical resource for the analysis of these historic editions. These resources represent the most comprehensive examples of scholarship relevant to this inquiry. However, there are many less cited works which help expand this research further.

For nearly four decades, Clive Brown has been perhaps the most widely acknowledged mind working with the performance practices of the late Romantics and the violin. Classical & Romantic Performing Practice, 1750-1900 is one of the most comprehensive and referenced texts within the field. Brown has conceived a handbook on Romantic performance practice that deals deftly in relevant written evidence such as correspondence, biographical materials, and treatises to form his particular conclusions about performance practice and style. Few topics cannot be found in Brown’s text, The exceptions being topics such as recording, emulation, and several essential musicians from within the Germanic tradition of the late nineteenth and early

---


9 For scholarship on the letters of Brahms and his circle see the work of Styra Avins, Artur Holde, and Michael Musgrave, see Styra Avins, Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters. Translated by Joseph Eisinger and Styra Avins. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Musgrave, Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style.

10 Members of the Chase project at the University of Leeds included: Clive Brown, Robin Stowell, David Milsom, Ilias Devetzoglou, George Kennaway and Peter Collyer. The Editorial Board includes Nicholas Cook, William Drabkin, Thomas Drescher, Christopher Hogwood, C.B.E, Peter Hanson, John Holloway, Simon McVeigh, Roger Norrington, Robert Pascall, Martina Sichardt, Peter Walls, and David Watkin.

twentieth centuries such as Maud Powell and Jenő Hubay.\textsuperscript{12} Brown speaks rather scarcely of violinists in Brahms's circle other than Joachim which, perhaps speaks either to the scarcity of evidence on other violinists or a or a bias in the scholarship towards Joachim. Despite this preference for Joachim Brown’s text plays a significant role in developing a view of the German romantic violin tradition. Brown writes on a wide variety of musical topics that often come up in the music of the nineteenth century; however, the scope of his book does not extend itself to aesthetics and style as much as some others in the field.\textsuperscript{13} In developing an idea of the playing style of Joachim, this book is of great use. Not only are there frequent references to Joachim but also recollections from Andreas Moser, who was a pupil and colleague of Joachim's. Moser and Joachim are suggested to have thought deeply of performance practice and performing issues of music from the past, even more so than musicians of the earlier portion of the nineteenth century such as Mendelssohn.\textsuperscript{14} The attitudes of these musicians to historical performance are interesting and of some use in determining how deeply they thought about performance practice. Brown


further asserts that many musicians of this time were highly concerned with correct realizations of performing marks, expression marks and to some degree, period style. Brown even asserts that each expression marking such as *dolce*, *espressivo*, and *agitato* were characterized by different ways of executing the music.\(^\text{15}\) Brown’s methodologies for dealing with correspondence, historical editions, and treatises are also of special consideration. In his examination of such sources, Brown connects and compares evidence of each kind to explore what these practices were and how different musicians used them, often tracing these practices through his chosen time period of 1750-1900:

For as long as musicians have deemed it necessary to perform music of the past, "authenticity" has been both a goal and an innate problematic concept. With every revival of early music performance, however well-intentioned, there has been a figure to point out its fundamental flaws.

For the HIP movement in the last decades of the twentieth century, no one has had such a sobering effect as Richard Taruskin. In his seminal work, *Text & Act*, Taruskin provides a profound inquiry into what it means to be Authentic in performance and the goals of the HIP movement, both negative and positive.\(^\text{16}\) His authoritative and often argumentative voice has done much to highlight the more problematic parts of the HIP movement. The primary goals of this book seem to be to expose the inaccuracies and fallacies inherent in attempting to recreate the music of the past. He disposes of notions of reclaiming the style of a Historical periods music and of the concept of knowing a composer’s true intentions and meaning of music.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{15}\) Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*, 163.


notes that trying to develop an authentic interpretation is ultimately influenced by postmodern attitudes of music and practices therefore it is impossible, to truly develop an interpretation that is characteristic of the time in which it was composed. He gives an example of the impossibility of recreating Joachim’s performance of the Brahms violin concerto, as there is no recording or conclusive evidence other than a subjective account of his materials in performance such as his violin, strings, and bow. Taruskin’s statement thus engages with a major flaw of a conception of authenticity in performance; That while evidence of performing style exists, there is vital information missing which precludes a complete idea of how exactly musicians performed music in their own times. In assembling a historically informed interpretation of the Brahms's sonatas, Taruskin’s text then is particularly useful in developing and setting boundaries for the use of an informed interpretation. These boundaries help to encourage an interpretation where evidence can be used to create an informed style rather than a rendering of Joachim’s style. Taruskin's idea that authentic cannot be achieved is freeing in that it is possible to determine what Historically informed means for the performer more closely. Taruskin gives surprising praise to some HIP performers such as Wanda Landowska and Roger Norrington for their perhaps misguided but impassioned research in the realm of performance which suggests that he sees more value in the endeavor than it appears. The most important use of this book which, can be transferred to the proposal of a historically informed interpretation of Brahms is that authentic is not possible, but evidence can inform our decisions and create a style based on how these violinists might have understood and interpreted notation.

---


19 Taruskin, 65.
Sound recording is the newest iteration of evidence to be accepted into performance practice scholarship and the HIP movement and it has yielded many groundbreaking studies that have altered the field. It is perhaps directly as a result of the Robert Philip’s monograph, *Early Recordings and Musical Style: Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance, 1900-1950*, that recording studies as evidence of nineteenth-century style entered the conversation at all.

Additionally, there has been no study which has influenced the acceptance of recording in the field as highly as Philip’s *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*. Philip presents a methodology in this text for analyzing recordings as well as exploring the way the age of recording has influenced the way musicians of the past and today perform and engage with music. Each chapter deals with a different facet of how recording has changed our approach to style and performance. His first chapter, *Life before recordings*, helps to identify how music might have been performed before the advent of recording and which concepts of performance were different before it was possible for sound to be preserved indefinitely.

Both the ways a listener heard a live performance and what they expected from them are perhaps the most significant elements that changed performance after a recording was possible.

The permanence of recording created a much different standard for the performer to achieve, which would eventually begin to change technique and ways of playing. As Philip

---

[http://davidmilsom.com/PDFs/Performance_Evidence_2.pdf](http://davidmilsom.com/PDFs/Performance_Evidence_2.pdf) (Accessed June 1, 2018)

21 Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*.


23 Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 4-25.
discusses, performance was highly dependent on what the performer heard, which would forever be altered when a performer finally had access to a recording of themselves from the perspective of the listener. The merging of spheres as roles of the listener and performer in recording combined would eventually create a situation where the performer became hyper-aware of the sound they created. In *The Experience of Recording*, we are presented with the methods of creating early recordings and how these recordings sparked a new standard of perfection in performance incited by the newfound permanence of recording. Numerous takes and the ability to edit would create a new expectation for the listener and the performer in live performance. However, the chapter which is most useful to the performance of early music is the seventh chapter, *Question of Authority: The Archaeological Approach*. This chapter provides an essential methodology for engaging with recordings of early music throughout the twentieth century, helping to provide a framework for the investigation of such recorded sources. Throughout this chapter, Philip explores the reception history of these 20th century recordings and examines what how the musicians of this century engage with the concept of authority in their performances. How performance considerations have changed over the course of the twentieth century of performance practice scholarship over the course of the twentieth-century is carefully examined in this chapter serving to further highlight the shifting concept of Authority in these performances. Philip’s methodology is a crucial resource for analysis of twentieth-century recordings of violinists.

There is perhaps no better schematic for the historically informed performance of the Brahms Violin sonatas than Robin Wilson’s 2015 dissertation, “Style and Interpretation in the

---


Nineteenth-Century German Violin School with Particular Reference to the Three Sonatas for Pianoforte and Violin by Johannes Brahms.” This work synthesizes performing scholarship by Wilson’s mentors Clive Brown and Neal Peres da Costa, applying them directly to the three violin sonatas of Brahms. This dissertation is notably similar to the work of Clive Brown in how it is formatted, comparing a variety of written sources to explore style while introducing recorded examples to his analysis. However, it builds on the scholarship significantly by embracing empirical analysis tools such as spectrogram analysis. While this work does explore and expand the work of other scholars, Wilson attempts to apply it to the Brahms sonatas.

Wilson acknowledges the use of specific performance practice ideas such as vibrato, portamento, and bow use, but he seems especially driven to determine quantities of these concepts and how much would have been used by violinists such as Joachim. He focuses specifically on the playing of Joseph Joachim and his students such as Marie Soldat-Roeger. As presented in spectrograph examples, Wilson analyzes the early twentieth recordings of Joachim and Soldat-Roeger to quantify their use of vibrato. The use of the spectrograph in exploring style in early recordings helps to quantify violin-specific performance practices which scholars such as Clive Brown and David Milsom have exposed. Wilson’s citation of communications of quartet musicians from Brahms's time has also served to illustrate the specific practices of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century musicians in the genre of chamber music. While Wilson’s dissertation is quite similar in topic to the one I present here, this thesis aims to present a historiography of the scholarship available while suggesting new paths for the scholarship. Wilson’s document, by

26 Wilson, “Style and Interpretation,” 318.

comparison, presents his own findings and gives a more in-depth analysis of nineteenth-century 
Germanic historically informed style.

A crucial part of understanding the performance of Brahms’s music is in the social fabric of Brahms’s circle, their enemies, and how these concepts shaped his music. Allusion to other musical examples and ideas is a powerful concept in the music of Brahms and an important part of understanding the contexts of his music. Brahms uses this concept of musical borrowing frequently in such cases as, applying melodic material from his own songs in the composition of his opp., 78 and 100 Violin sonatas and, his reference to earlier music, as in his String Sextet in Bb, op. 18 which borrows the harmonic progression of La Folia for its second movement. In

Brahms amongst Friends: Listening, Performance, and the Rhetoric of Allusion, Paul Berry provides a detailed discussion of Brahms's use of allusion in the violin sonatas, such as his Op. 78, which borrows thematic materials from the two songs “Regenlied” and “Nachtklang.” The violin has always had a strong connection to the human voice, which is a compelling parallel to Brahms's use of these songs in his violin sonatas. Berry’s discussion of the importance of allusion to Brahms and members of his circle help to suggest that these allusions would inform, or at the very least represent a musical topic in the performance of, such a work. He provides

---


29 For more scholarship on the allusion in the Violin sonatas refer to: Berry, Brahms Amongst Friends, 240; Dillon Parmer, 'Come, rise to higher spheres!': Tradition transcended in Brahms’s violin sonata no. 1 in G major, op. 78. (Ad Parnassum, April 2009), 129-152.

insightful commentary on each of the three sonatas primarily by exploring allusions to other works and by discussing relevant correspondence. Berry’s discussion of these concepts serves to add context to these sonata’s performance instructions and helps to explore how musicians of Brahms’s time thought about these works. Berry’s presentation of correspondence between Brahms and his circle help to illustrate how these musicians engaged with music as a social medium. This correspondence is incredibly valuable to Historically informed performance as such an interpretation relies on more than just performance instructions. Berry’s discussion of the role of music amongst the circle of Brahms helps to create an awareness of crucial aesthetic information necessary to perform his sonatas. In particular, Berry presents Joseph Joachim as a composer and discusses Brahms's thoughts on the former's work. This discussion of Joachim as a composer helps to develop our understanding of the relationship between the two. Through their communications, an understanding of the immense level of trust between both composers is also illustrated. For example, it is important to note that as exhibited from letters Brahms believed Joachim an excellent composer in his own right, although Joachim later chose the life of a performer instead.31 This respect for Joachim's compositional prowess might suggest why Brahms took much of Joachim’s compositional advice quite seriously. With the author’s presentation of Brahms’s circle through letters and other evidence, the ways they engaged with music both as a social practice and in performance is astounding. Berry’s text provides one of the most thoughtful examples of scholarship which examines the relationship between Brahms’s circle, social practice, and music.32

---


The edited volume *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* presents a unique collection of essays, each discussing a separate topic related to the interpretation of Brahms’s music. While the editor’s essay is not especially relevant to this inquiry, the others in the book present several topics vital to the interpretation of the sonatas of Brahms. This collection of essays presents the work of some of the foremost scholars in the field of performance practice. The first essay by Bernard Sherman is an insightful piece of writing which explores the conditions of Brahms’s world on performance in the late nineteenth century. Sherman asserts that we have a much easier job in resolving specific issues in the music of Brahms than those earlier composers such as “Bach or Dufay”, owing to the amount of surviving evidence available. Sherman further discusses that while many of Brahms's intentions for performance have been lost, he was often known to recommend or demand things that were noted explicitly in his music which seem to have been at odds with certain standard practices of the day. However, Brahms’s admonishments to his student Florence May and the recollections of musicians from within his sphere of influence sometimes place his printed performance directions and his interpretations of his own works in performance in conflict. He proposes that most of the unwritten practices which were typical of the late nineteenth-century have been lost, even if only in the exact quantity of implementation of these practices. Practices such as speeding up at points at a climax in phrases were very typical practice in the music of Brahms, but the challenge remaining is quantifying such practices.

The second essay by Styra Avins entitled, “Performing Brahms’s Music: Clues from His

---

33 Musgrave and Sherman, “How Different Was Brahms’s Playing Style from Our Own?,” 1–10.

34 Musgrave and Sherman, 1.

35 Musgrave and Sherman, 2.
Letters,” reflects and comments on the practice of using the letters of Brahms and his circle to inquire about the performing practices and Brahms’s preferences in his music. The author, known for her translation of the letters of Brahms, is the perfect person to deal with this particular subject matter. Surprisingly, the essay starts with a description of instruments and musical technology which were in use around the time of Brahms. Such topics as Brahms’s opinion on pianos of the time are discussed through Brahms’s surviving correspondence. Avins speaks about other characteristics of performance mentioned in his letters such as tempo, citing Brahms’s lifelong distaste for metronomes and his belief that the performer should feel the music, rather than wait for the composer’s direction. In history and writing, Brahms is seen to have often consulted Joachim to ensure that his music was playable. Brahms was meticulous in ensuring that his works were well suited to the performer and instrument for which he was writing. Not only does the author develop some specific performance practices typical of the music of Brahms but additionally she expresses a methodology for deriving such performance clues from his letters.

In the third chapter, Clive Brown returns to the conversation to discuss the playing style of Joseph Joachim and his own performances of Brahms’s music. Brown first discusses the recordings of Joachim from 1903, when the violinist was in his 70s, and the limitations of analysis of them. Brown notes that Joachim’s playing style was entirely different from other violinists who were recorded around this time. The author further develops a notion shared

37 Avins, Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters.
between Brahms and his friends: that a performer was not always obliged to follow musical notation of a composer to the letter. Citing treatises and letters, Brown attempts to assemble the style of this violinist to illustrate better how Joachim might have interpreted Brahms’s music. In very much the same style as his seminal monograph on Romantic performance practice, Brown describes specific features of the style of Joachim.

The seventh essay relevant to this inquiry, by George Bozarth, entitled, “Fanny Davies and Brahms's Late Chamber Music,” discusses performance practice with a few examples of Brahms’s late chamber music. This chapter chiefly concerns the pianistic interpretations of Brahms and Fanny Davies as interpreters of Brahms’s chamber music. The author asserts that expression marks should always help to highlight the innate musical meaning in the score. This sensitivity to expression markings is reflected in many of the letters between Brahms and members of his circle. However, the topics which are useful to the interpretation of Brahms violin sonatas fall primarily on the author's discussion of annotated editions by Davies. As Davies was quite close to Brahms, the author infers that many of the editorial markings would have been approved by Brahms or at least made in consultation with the composer.

In Robert Philip's chapter, he attempts to mediate the contradiction within the existing evidence regarding the performance style of Brahms's music in the composer’s own time. Citing the recent proliferation in the availability of historical recordings and a new understanding that music of the late nineteenth century was performed in a different style than today, Philip engages with the aesthetic of performance in Brahms’s own time. Philip's essay makes excellent

---

40 Bozarth, Musgrave, and Sherman, “Fanny Davies and Brahms’s Late Chamber Music,” 349-369.

attempts to tie the volume together by proposing ideas which draw on the other essays in the book, such as the divide between the interests of performers and of scholars. Philip brings together converging concepts such as Brahms as a performing pianist and conductor, as well as conditions of both musicians and the audience which, primarily discusses late-nineteenth century engagement with music before recording. As Taruskin presented earlier, there are certain aspects of the music of Brahms which cannot be hoped to be realized authentically. However, with the evidence of late-nineteenth century performance that exists, it is possible to form a historically informed interpretation of this music. It is clear that Philip is undoubtedly against the musical time traveling and the claims of authenticity Taruskin warns against in his book, yet he postulates that the use of historical evidence in service of forming an interpretation that consults such evidence is possible.

David Milsom and Neal Peres da Costa’s essay discusses precisely what expressivity in nineteenth-century German music means. The authors note a distinct connection between performance and speech which is at the very heart of nineteenth-century performance aesthetic. Through a discussion of expressive notation and markings, the authors develop several ways of interpreting music as nineteenth-century musicians might have done. Due to the authors’ instruments, they focus extensively on the performance style of the violin and piano. This emphasis in instrumentation provides a keen insight into topics which can be related to the interpretation of Brahms’s Sonatas for violin and piano. Milsom and da Costa's statement that, "A noteworthy characteristic of nineteenth-century expressivity is the relationship of musical structures to spoken delivery, in terms of both similarities of semantic meaning and of means of

---

expressive execution”, illustrates this central connection⁴³. The authors preserve a focus on verbal communication both, spoken and sung, as the standard of excellence in performance for both the violinist and pianist, a topic frequently cited in period treatises and writings. Through an exploration of the nineteenth-century practice of speeding up at the climax of the phrase and ritardando at its close, the authors present some of the implications of the voice in the realization of violin and piano music. As the essay explains, in piano music, dislocation, the practice of playing accompaniment and melody slightly apart from each other for expressive effect, and arpeggiation, the practice of spreading tones of a chord rather than playing them simultaneously were potent tools which Brahms employed in his own time. These aesthetic practices of interpretation in Romantic music help to develop the necessity for flexibility in performance and the expectations of the performer in the use of interpretational liberty. Milsom, in his section on the connection between vocal music and violin playing, helps to enlighten the reader on the use of selective practices of vibrato and portamenti. Milsom discusses the connection between Joachim’s performance style as seen in his 1903 recordings and acknowledged nineteenth-century practices explicitly citing Joachim’s own performances of his Romanze in C and the Hungarian Dance No.1 of Brahms. The idea of emulation as a pedagogical tool is developed in the writing of da Costa as method that uses early twentieth-century recordings to train performers in historical style. This chapter illustrates the limitations and successes of both authors in engaging with emulation through their discussion of both, the use of Spectrograph analysis in studying early recordings and, their own experiences with emulation of these period recordings. In their lives as performers, Milsom and da Costa seem to have utilized historically informed performance in way that reconciles evidence and scholarship with modern performance

to create a style of interpretation which is quite different from contemporary non-specialist interpretation. It appears that Brown and da Costa do not strive for authenticity but rather an engagement with some of the style characteristics and performance practices that have been described in evidence and scholarship pertaining to the late-nineteenth century.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter examines the surviving evidence of the performing style of Joseph Joachim, the violinist most influential to Brahms. Evidence of Brahms’s preference for the interpretational style of Joachim and his students supports the thesis that the performing style of Joachim was indeed highly prized by Brahms. In order to better understand how Joachim's style fit into his own time, a recent publication of Karen Leistra-Jones will help facilitate an understanding of the concept of Werktreue or faithfulness to the work, and several other aesthetic issues involved in determining how Joachim engaged with the performing aesthetics of Brahms’s circle. At the center of this study is written evidence and scholarship about Joachim as a performer and teacher, with a focus on his connection and relationship to Brahms and his music. My commentary on the value of this scholarship in proposing an informed style for Brahms's violin sonatas will advance the idea of not only a style based on the evidence and scholarship of Joachim, but one that considers the possibility of multiple sources of evidence highly dependent on the idiosyncrasies of violinists within the same Germanic tradition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The second chapter extends the proposal of an informed performing style through an examination of both historical Editions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and twenty-first century examples by scholars such as David Milsom which, are formed by extensive study of the

---

44 Leistra-Jones, “Staging Authenticity.”
scholarship and evidence of late-nineteenth century performance practices. An exploration of David Milsom’s methodology for deriving a modern HIP interpretation from evidence presented in these early annotated sources develops their immense value as evidence.\textsuperscript{45} Editions discussed here will be drawn from selected historical editions of chamber-music such as those by Edmund Singer (1877), Joachim (1874), and Friedrich Hermann (1887) along with contemporary examples edited by Milsom in 2009, and Joachim’s 1879 and 1905 editions of the Brahms’s Violin Concerto. The nineteenth and twentieth century editions to be discussed are those of violinists who were documented as having performed Brahms's Violin works in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries or who otherwise have a strong pedagogical connection to the nineteenth-century German violin tradition of Joseph Joachim. Topics of particular importance generated from Milsom’s project are emulation, the annotational practices of Joachim, and the use of referencing multiple Historical editions in conjunction. The CHASE (Collection of Historical Annotated String Editions) project of Leeds university is, a critical resource for the analysis of these historic editions. Finally, an analysis of Joachim’s role in the genesis of the Brahms Violin Concerto and Brahms’s reception of Joachim’s comments and suggestions to the Concerto explores the amount of influence the violinist had on the work. Both the CHASE project and analysis of Joachim’s influence on Brahms’s Violin Concerto help develop an understanding of how Joachim and other violins of

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries imposed their style on music in an editorial capacity. The approaches of these editors in the Germanic violin tradition of the nineteenth century to editing works with the violin help to examine how such evidence might be used to inform a historically informed interpretation of Brahms’s Violin sonatas. This chapter's examination of these editions builds on existing scholarship, while also adding my own processes for analyzing such sources.

Chapter 3 is both an evaluation of methodology for using early recorded evidence to determine late nineteenth-century style and an analysis of Joachim’s style in reference to his 1903 recordings. Of special importance is the effect of Richard Taruskin’s statements on the value of early twentieth century recordings describing the limitations of evidence in interpreting early music in a historically informed manner and their role in promoting the use of Recording studies to the “HIP” community.46 My own methodology for analyzing early recordings derives from that of David Milsom and Robin Wilson, and is used to come to stylistic conclusions, especially in reference to Joachim’s recordings. The value of analyzing the earliest recordings of late nineteenth-century German violinists until 1935 is presented, with the aim of more clearly laying out stylistic observations to further develop my claim of a more fragmented performing style than has previously been revealed. Drawing on the discographic materials published in Joachim’s 1903 recordings, I will survey the historic recordings of Joachim, which serves as sonic evidence for my claims on historically informed performance of the violin.47 To show current trends in analyzing relevant recordings for style, the studies of David Milsom and the work of Robert Philip offers methods


specific to this form of recording analysis. While much of the research on the interpretation of these sonatas has centered on the violinist Joseph Joachim (1822-1882), other violinists such as Jenô Hubay (1858-1937), Hugo Heerman (1844-1935), Andreas Moser (1859-1925), Marie Soldat-Roeger (1863-1955), Jelly d’Aranyi (1893-1966), and Adolf Busch (1891-1952), all who performed Brahms’s music and most of whom performed these sonatas, will also be discussed here in order to highlight the highly personal interpretations of these sonatas. The recordings I reference will range from the earliest examples of 1903 until about 1935. Additionally, the recordings of David Milsom, Clive Brown, and several others will provide examples of modern performers who have each claimed a historically informed approach to the Brahms sonatas.

The final chapter surveys both the prevailing trends, ensembles, and programs which have been established in dedication to the study of nineteenth century performance practice and explores how a synthesis of recorded and written evidence might be applied to the development of a historically informed approach in the three Violin sonatas of Brahms. A brief discussion of the reception history and genesis of these three Sonatas gives important historical context which might inform such an informed interpretation. By exploring how this evidence might be applied to such issues as edition selection, tempo choice, interpretation of expression markings, and the execution of performance practices, the practical considerations for performing these works in a historically informed manner are developed in detail. Utilizing several pre-1935 recordings performed by relevant violinists, this chapter aims to advocate the use of less-analyzed evidence, such as the recordings of Adolf Busch and Joseph Szigeti, to diversify the formation of informed interpretations.

---

49 For relevant studies by David Milsom and Robert Philip see Philip, Early Recordings and Musical Style; Philip, Performing Music in the Age of Recording; Milsom, “Evidence and Incentive.”; Milsom, “Performance Evidence 2.”

49 Joachim’s 1903 recordings can be found on Joachim, de Sarasate, and Ysaïe, The Complete Recordings.
Conclusions

The idea of developing a historically informed interpretation of the Brahms sonatas for Violin and Piano, opp. 78, 100, and 108 is one that has been inseparable from the violinists in Brahms’s circle such as Joseph Joachim, Jenö Hubay, and their pupils. The great violinist Joachim's playing style has been the focus of much of the research on violin performance practice and the music of Brahms. This focus is due to both the close connection of Brahms and Joachim as friends, composers, and collaborators, and the availability of subject matter. In fact, Brahms’s Violin Concerto and Double Concerto, and the composite F.A.E. Sonata were all dedicated to Joachim which helps to reinforce the connection of Joachim and Brahms’s violin music. The importance of Joachim is also seen in the oft-quoted anecdote, “At a period when the two men had not met for a couple of years an occasion came when Brahms heard Joachim play. ’Now,’ he said afterwards to the lady who related the story to the author,’ now I know what it is that has been wanting in my life during the past two years. I felt something was missing but could not tell what. It was the sound of Joachim’s violin. How he plays!”\(^5\) Sentiments such as this reflect the high regard in which Brahms held Joachim which is further illuminated in Joachim’s council to the composer on many subjects. Many scholars have attempted to compile and present all of the evidence on Joachim's playing characteristics and performance practices as the authentic style of playing Brahms on the violin, however, they often discount the other violinists of Brahms's circle who gave performances of his sonatas, such as Marie Soldat-Roeger, Jenö Hubay, and Hugo Heerman which, is perhaps one of the most unfortunate lacunae in the scholarship dedicated to performance practice in the music of Brahms. It is arguable, despite all

of Brahms's praise and dedications to Joachim, that he would have never labeled Joachim's as the truest or most authentic realizations of his music. Since much of the published scholarship on this performance practice presents this bias, treating Joachim -and by extension, his pupils- as the truest source of style and authenticity in the music of Brahms, it is easy to neglect other violinists who performed these sonatas frequently. This area of neglect presents an opportunity for further exploration, especially with regard to the other equally valid historically informed ways to perform these sonatas. The convenience of information is perhaps what has created this bias towards the style of Joachim. However, much might be learned by accessing editions and historical commentary on performances of Brahms by these other violinists.

These significant sources illustrate the significant topics and themes in the field of Performance Practice as applied to Brahms’s Sonatas for Violin and Piano. It is clear that there are concepts which are wholly ignored in this scholarship, perhaps as a result of lack of perceived importance, lack of evidence, and questionable source materials. The themes of the major research being done in this field are those such as authenticity, methodology in dealing with sources, the effects of aesthetics and philosophy on performance practice, and artistic liberties and their implementation. In bringing these significant topics together, it is possible to understand which ways the scholarship must develop and where the next steps are.
Chapter 1

In search of “Frei aber einsam”: Joseph Joachim as Brahms’s Violinist

1. Joseph Joachim as Violinist and Pedagogue

In the present age, the name of Joseph Joachim has become synonymous not only with the nineteenth-century German school of violin playing, which has so influenced its contemporary counterpart worldwide, but also with the violin compositions of the renowned nineteenth-century Germanic composers Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. His position as an interpreter and stimulus of so much music has often been cited, serving to designate him as the one correct interpreter of Romantic violin music. It is this regard for Joachim, both the musician and the man, that has generated a body of scholarship typically reserved only for the great composers. An exploration of Joachim’s performing practices, the style of his students, and the musical aesthetics shared by Joachim and Brahms play an integral part in proving the assertion that Joachim’s style of performing was highly preferred by Brahms. The shared performance aesthetics of Brahms and Joachim and their embrace of Werktreue performance further highlights their compatibility in performance. In determining similar ideas of performance aesthetics and performing practices between the two men, it is possible to conclude that Joachim and Brahms thought of performance in a very similar manner.

In his own time, Joachim was considered not only a violinist of great stature but also a leading composer, editor, and pedagogue. While Joachim's own compositions have mostly fallen into obscurity today, his compositional and editorial prowess throughout his lifetime profoundly enhanced his status among composers, critics, and audiences within the pervasive German Romantic tradition. His highly developed skills fueled his acclaim by composers who often
sought his criticism and annotations for their violin compositions.\(^1\) Examples of works which bear some degree of Joachim’s involvement include Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 80, and numerous works by Johannes Brahms, such as a version of the Hungarian dances, WoO 1, and the Sonatas for Piano and Violin opp. 78, 100, and 108. As an interpreter and editor, Joachim skillfully positioned himself as a masterful interpreter of German music which is perhaps one of the many reasons the late German composers were so drawn to his insights as a violinist and violist. As a composer of no small renown himself, Joachim was immersed in the aesthetics of this German tradition and concerned himself with all manner of stylistic minutiae prized by this community. Such was Joachim’s playing that expression markings like *dolce*, *espressivo*, and *agitato* yielded a different way of realization in performance often through the implementation of highly-nuanced performance practices.\(^2\) In correspondence and composition, Brahms often consulted Joachim to ensure that his music was playable which highlights Brahms’s respect for Joachim as a composer in his own right.\(^3\) Although Brahms frequently solicited the opinion of Joachim, and for music well beyond his works for violin, Joachim was not always the supplicant he fashioned himself to be. In the case of Brahms’s Violin Concerto, Op. 77, Brahms even threatened to show the piece to a violinist of “lesser” ability who would be more forthcoming in suggesting changes, which Might have been Hugo Heerman.\(^4\) In matters of

---


\(^3\) Schwarz, “Genesis of Brahms’s Violin Concerto,” 513.

\(^4\) Schwarz, “Genesis of Brahms’s Violin Concerto.”; Schwarz suggests that Brahms showed the Violin Concerto to Hugo Heerman in March of 1879 and that he was the lesser violinist mentioned by Brahms. According to Schwarz, it is not that Brahms felt his own composition to be lacking, rather that he liked to have multiple options from which to choose.
composition, Brahms almost always took the suggestion of his dear friend Joachim, and yet in matters of violin technique and limitations often proved resistant to the advice of the violinist. Ultimately, while Brahms seems to have frequently sought criticism regarding his works under the guise of a self-effacing composer, it is apparent from his frequent consultation and letters with musicians in his circle that he was rarely so accommodating to the technical limitations of the instruments he composed for. As in the case of Brahms’s solicitation of Joachim’s advice on his op. 77 Violin Concerto, the final result reflects the composer’s preference for Joachim’s compositional suggestions, often disregarding those concerning technical issues of the violin. This would suggest that if Brahms did indeed show Heerman the Concerto, that any resulting suggestions might have been even less accepted than Joachim’s. Brahms held Joachim’s compositions in extremely high esteem even though his friend chose to focus the bulk of his efforts on the violin. This esteem generated a deep level of trust between the two musicians, exhibited in Brahms’s often vehement solicitation of Joachim’s alterations and suggestions.

The concept of developing a historically informed interpretation of the Brahms Sonatas for Violin and Piano, opp. 78, 100, and 108 is one that is quite inseparable from the study of the violinists in Brahms’s circle such as Joseph Joachim, Jenő Hubay, and their pupils. Joachim’s playing style has remained the primary subject of research on nineteenth-century violin performance practice and the music of Brahms often at the expense of new scholarship on other violinists active within Brahms’s circle. This fascination with Joachim is primarily due to the

---


6 Berry, Brahms Amongst Friends, 59-60.

7 For further information on the available scholarship on Joachim’s playing style refer to, Brown, Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900; Milsom, Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance; Milsom, “Evidence and Incentive.”
close connection of Brahms and Joachim as friends, composers, and collaborators. In fact, the Violin Concerto, Double Concerto for Violin and Cello, and the F.A.E. sonata of which Brahms composed the Scherzo movement are all dedicated to Joachim, demonstrating the importance of Joachim as a violinist to not only Brahms but also the composers of his circle such as Dietrich and Schumann. Nineteenth-century performance scholars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have therefore used the majority of their efforts in the last three decades, to compile and present all available evidence on Joachim's musical aesthetics and performance practices as the rulebook for playing Brahms on the violin. However, scholars have often discounted other violinists in Brahms's circle, such as Jenö Hubay and Hugo Heerman, who performed Brahms’s string works, including the violin sonatas. In an attempt to understand an idea as multi-faceted as the performance practice of Brahms’s music, many have perhaps too quickly predisposed themselves to Joachim’s approaches, owing to a relative abundance of documentation. However, the lack of surviving evidence for other violinists should not in itself discount other possibilities of performance style which might be unearthed from study of other violinists of the time.

The surviving evidence of Joachim’s style, for the time being, provides the most complete picture we have of the performance practices typical of Brahms’s own time. However, it is debatable whether, despite all of Brahms’s praise and dedications to Joachim, the composer would have ever labeled Joachim as the most accurate or most authentic interpreter of his music. In the time of Brahms, "room was to be left for multiple interpretations, but not so much room that interpretation would or could not be freed of its obligation to disclose the real meaning of the work."  

While the published scholarship on performance practice in Brahms's time presents

---

a narrative in which Joachim and, by extension, his pupils, are the most valid source of style and authenticity in the music of Brahms, this is born almost exclusively from the convenience of evidence. Even so, it has been a tradition to neglect other violinists, who performed these sonatas and operated in the related circles. Consider Jenö Hubay, who was Joachim’s most famous student and a prolific performer-teacher in his own right, premiered several chamber works with Brahms at the piano. And yet mentions of Hubay are scarce in some of the most specialized books of period performance practice.9 This area of neglect thus presents an opportunity for further exploration, especially in regard to the other equally valid historically informed styles in which one might perform these sonatas. In the case of violinists like Bram Eldering (1865-1943), a student of Hubay and Jenö Hubay himself, we must rely on their students, Adolf Busch and Joseph Szigeti respectively, to uncover what little we can about their performing styles.10 The availability of evidence regarding Joachim’s life and performance practices, along with his intimate connection to Brahms, is the primary obstacle perpetuating a preference towards the scholarship regarding the style of Joachim. While presently historically informed scholarship concerning the interpretation of Brahms’s violin sonatas relies on this existing narrative, there remains much to learn from renewed efforts to retrieve editions and historical commentary on performances of Brahms’s music by other violinists of the period, especially those from within Brahms’s circle.

Recently, historically informed performance and the performance practices of the nineteenth century have become increasingly common topics in the fields of musicology and performance studies. The increase in popularity of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music and

---

9 There is no mention of Hubay’s performances in even the most comprehensive book of 19th-century performance practice to date, Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*.

10 Michael Musgrave, *Performing Brahms*. 
their performing practices has revealed that there is much more left to be discovered about performance from the past through additional scholarship on neglected sources and through new archival findings. Now, in the early twenty-first century, much of nineteenth-century music has been added to a canon of early music following, the death of those born in the nineteenth century and the slow death of many of their practices. Attempts to reclaim these traditions are evident in the increased attention paid to Joseph Joachim in the last decade. As a figure to whom many violinists can trace their pedagogical lineage, Joachim has become the ideal candidate for these performance practice inquiries and new research.

Explorations of Joachim’s students and teachers provide many unique insights not only related to the style of the German violin-playing tradition, but also the style of Brahms and his contemporaries. There is little dispute that in the very center of Germanic and to some extent Russian nineteenth-century violin playing to the present day is the figure of Joachim. While, for a time, Joachim enjoyed the mentorship of Ferdinand David, it was the German pedagogue Joseph Böhm that gave him much of his training. Known for his collegial relationship with Ludwig van Beethoven, Böhm taught some many of the most promising violinists of the late nineteenth century, including Jenö Hubay, Eduard Reményi, and Georg Hellmesberger, Sr. This class of violinists developed into leading interpreters of the music of Brahms, suggesting perhaps that the composer did indeed prefer the style of these Böhm disciples. For these violinists, it stands to reason that some part of their training with Böhm would have been comparable, although it is difficult to determine the influence of Böhm’s adaptation of a Lancastrian teaching method.\textsuperscript{11} That is, Böhm’s students were split into two groups, one for advanced students and one

with an average level of abilities, and the more advanced students then served as mentors to their less experienced colleagues. Böhm's classes produced not only the most notable performers in late nineteenth-century Germany but also the most prolific teachers, of whom Joachim was the most remarkable. Aside from his studies with Böhm in Vienna, Joachim studied with Miska Hauser, Stanislaw Serwaczyński, and Georg Hellmesberger, Sr., although his studies with these violinists seem to have been less influential.

Following in the footsteps of Böhm, Joachim would play mentor to many of the violinists who existed within Brahms’s sphere of influence. Most notably are his students Jenö Hubay, Hugo Heerman, Andreas Moser, Marie Soldat-Roeger, Leopold Auer, Iosif Kotek, Maud Powell, and Franz von Fecsey. Most of the present knowledge concerning the playing style of Joachim comes from these notable students, whether from correspondence, their memoirs, recognizable stylistic traits passed down through teaching, or early recordings featuring these violinists. In a case of Joachim’s unavailability, Brahms would almost always call upon students of Joachim. The magnitude of Joachim’s legacy is illustrated by examining those who endorsed or premiered many of the best-known violin concertos popular today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violinist</th>
<th>Concerto</th>
<th>Relationship to Joachim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Joachim</td>
<td>Brahms Violin and Double Concerto, Bruch, Mendelssohn, Beethoven</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Von Fecsay</td>
<td>Sibelius Violin Concerto</td>
<td>Student of Joachim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iosef Kotek</td>
<td>Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto</td>
<td>Student of Joachim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leopold Auer</td>
<td>Glazunov, Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto (Dedicatee)</td>
<td>Student of Joachim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoltan Szekely</td>
<td>Bartok Violin Concerto</td>
<td>Student of Jenö Hubay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

12 Eschbach, “Reményi Before Brahms.”
Determining the extent of a stylistic lineage apparent in the students of Joachim requires an understanding of how exactly Joachim taught and thereby disseminated a violin tradition shaped by his own ideas. If the tutelage was highly technical in approach, as is the case with some pedagogues such as Jacob Dont, it is much more difficult to make a case for a stylistic lineage. However, from the recollections of one of Joachim’s most successful students, Leopold Auer, we are presented with insights into his teacher’s pedagogy at least, as far as Auer was concerned. Auer maintains in his treatise that Joachim rarely worked on technical issues, arguing instead that technique was something best to be done at home.\footnote{Leopold Auer, \textit{Violin Playing as I Teach It} (New York: Barnes & Noble Publishing, 2003), 22.}

Joachim’s philosophy on the teaching of technique provides a few noteworthy insights. First, it illustrates that he expected his students to have a high level of technical prowess before they were accepted to study with him. Leopold Auer recalled, that during his lessons with Joachim there was almost no discussion of technique and Auer was simply expected to figure it out by himself.\footnote{Auer, \textit{Violin Playing as I Teach It}, 22.} This is perhaps as a result of the Lancastrian model which Joachim’s teacher, Böhm embraced in his own teaching by only giving individual instruction to the most talented students.\footnote{Eschbach, “Reményi Before Brahms,”} If we consider the notion that teachers educate in the manner that they learned, we can infer that either much of Joachim's technique could have been self-taught or he received strong technical training from an early teacher. Secondly, Joachim placed far more emphasis on the stylistic and aesthetic aspects of music in his teaching.\footnote{Auer, \textit{Violin Playing as I Teach It}, 22.} Auer studied many of the major works for violin with the German master which, suggests that Joachim would have played in
lessons quite constantly. Joachim also preferred to teach by example or rote, as Auer recalls, which proposes that Joachim taught by emulation. This type of training which relies on a system of replicating a master’s playing often serves to infuse style from one person to another. It is likely that this was the primary teaching technique of Joachim based on Auer’s recollections however because little evidence survives, the issue remains speculative. This manner of teaching through emulation gave Auer and Joachim’s other students, the opportunity to hear and assimilate the master’s style.\footnote{Auer, \textit{Violin Playing as I Teach It}, 22.}

2. \textbf{Joachim and \textit{Werktreue}: Authenticity and the musical Priesthood}

The nineteenth century heralded a drastic reevaluation of style and aesthetics in musical performance, prompting a significant schism in the German communities of composition and performance. The memoirs of the American pianist Amy Fay afford a first-hand account of this duality in the German musical scene with her observations of Franz Liszt and Joseph Joachim in performance:

Liszt, in addition to his marvelous playing, has his unique and imposing personality, whereas at first Joachim is not especially striking. Liszt’s face is all a play of feature, a glow of fancy, a blaze of imagination, whereas Joachim is absorbed in his violin, and his face has only an expression of fine discrimination and of intense solicitude to produce his artistic effects. Liszt never looks at his instrument; Joachim never looks at anything else. Liszt is a complete actor who intends to carry away the public, who never forgets that he is before it, and who behaves accordingly. Joachim is totally oblivious of it. Liszt subdues the people to him by the very way he walks on the stage... Joachim, on the contrary, is the quiet gentleman-artist. He advances in the most unpretentious way, but as he adjusts his violin he looks his audience over with the calm air of a musical monarch, as much as to say, “I repose wholly on my art, and I’ve no need of any ‘ways or manners.”\footnote{Fay, \textit{Music Study in Germany}, 248-49.}
While Fay’s poignant account of the differences in aesthetic between these two musicians has frequently been used to illustrate the divide between the conservative and radical performers in Germany, it is cited here to explore the concept of Werktreue, which can be translated as “authenticity” in the nineteenth century. The concept of authenticity and its meaning to musicians such as Brahms and Joachim is a dynamic and multi-faceted concept, as Karen Leistra-Jones has proposed.\(^{19}\) It was not only Fay who noticed this difference in performance approaches, but also the composers and critics, such as Eduard Hanslick, who specifically favored Joachim’s approach.\(^{20}\) The concept of Werktreue, "was characterized by the principle of the performer’s fidelity to the composer’s presumed ‘intentions’ in a musical work."\(^{21}\) Defining the more conservative approach of a group of musicians devoted to the Werktreue ideal, Eduard Hanslick dubbed them the “true priests” of art. This group, consisting of Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, Johannes Brahms, and Julius Stockhausen, notably engaged in a rivalry with the more radical and theatrical faction consisting of Franz Liszt, Franz Brendel, and Richard Wagner. Within the former, there existed an intense and well-documented friendship, having belonged to the same social circle, resulting in frequent collaboration with each other. This status as a “priest of art” Joachim strove for in performance and in his social life, spurred on by sympathetic critics as well as members of his circle.

Joseph Joachim’s position as a member of this more conservative collective, so entrenched in the idea of authenticity in performance, is easily illustrated in his 1898 autobiography, which he

\(^{19}\) Leistra-Jones, “Staging Authenticity,” 397-402.


Ducreay wrote with his student Andreas Moser. Particularly illuminating is an excerpt in which Moser wrote that his teacher:

...would have probably overlooked Liszt’s musical impotence, his poverty of conception, and the total lack of the creative faculty, for these qualities are innate; but he was repelled by Liszt’s attempt to conceal the absence of these necessary gifts by the cunning expenditure of dazzling orchestral effects and an excessively pretentious "mise-en-scène", likely to lead the hearer to mistake shallowness of idea for purely artistic revelation. This was in every way opposed to musical feeling, and stood in such complete contradiction to all that Joachim held good and beautiful...22

One sees here that Joachim had quite strong negative sentiments regarding the compositions and performance of Liszt. His distaste for Liszt appear to have been focused on a perceived lack of authenticity in favor of virtuosic displays, theatrics, and more specifically a lack of sincere feeling in performance.23 As in Fay's account and those of numerous critics, Joachim was unusually reserved in performance, believing his objective was to interpret the music faithfully, minimizing his ego in service to the music. However, it does not appear that Joachim was incapable of performing in the more flamboyant manner of Liszt, which is evidenced by his wife Amalie's recollection:

I have often had the chance to compare his way of playing particular pieces with Sarasate’s and others’, and have always found that he plays everything more grandly, more boldly, and more fervidly than the others—even “Virtuoso pieces” he plays more boldly and elegantly than the others, even if he achieves this freely only when playing for himself alone in his study—because publicly he wants to show himself only as the priest of the most beautiful and elevated.24

The persona of priest and artist that Joachim so carefully cultivated seems to have been just that, his own theatrical device to exude authenticity. Amalie’s letter suggests that her husband was not


23 See also, Leistra-Jones, “Staging Authenticity.”; Eschbach, “Reményi Before Brahms.”

24 Amalie Joachim, letter to Dr. A. Kohut (?), 13 May 1891; quoted in Borchard, Stimme und Geige, 502.
incapable of the very aesthetic he criticized, yet made a conscious decision of how he would present himself and his interpretation in public, which might have been driven by his stature from within the circle of Brahms.

3. Joachim’s Performance Practices

While Brahms and Joachim shared concepts of authenticity in performance or *Werktreue* as aesthetic principles, this shared sense of aesthetics also serves as evidence to the notion that these musicians would have shared a standard set of performing practices. More specifically, these performing practices, which were developed through the German nineteenth-century tradition of musicians such as Beethoven, Spohr, and David can be argued to have been epitomized by the circle of Johannes Brahms and Joachim. While many of these practices have been preserved through early recordings, treatises, correspondence, and historical editions, it remains somewhat unclear to what extent these practices were employed. Building upon the research of earlier specialists such as Clive Brown and Robin Stowell, more recent scholarship has sought to quantify these practices with spectrogram analysis and other methods of recording analysis. Critical scrutiny of the recordings of Joachim and others, such as his student Marie Soldat-Roeger has provided additional proof for the theories of performance practices which came as a result of written evidence. These practices can be seen not only as embodying the string playing of the day but also of Joseph Joachim himself.

Of these practices, none have been so controversial as the topic of vibrato, due to the obfuscation caused by many critical readings of historical source material and the contemporary

---

25 For more on the Quantification of 19thc German performance practices see; Wilson, “Style and Interpretation.”
state of violin playing. This somewhat bitter debate has often mischaracterized several issues raised by written and recorded evidence presenting the argument as either for or against vibrato or more specifically, continuous vibrato in the violin music of Brahms. However, whether or not vibrato was used should not be considered the focus of the debate but rather what qualities vibrato exhibited, and where and when it was used. The proponents of continuous vibrato in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as an essential component of contemporary violin tone, have often misunderstood the nuanced use of vibrato by musicians of the nineteenth-century German tradition. For many of these twentieth-century musicians, the crux of their argument has been the claim that it is indeed likely that continuous vibrato would have been employed by Joachim simply because vibrato is a core aspect of violin in the present day.  

For many modern violinists, it is impossible to conceive of a sound that does not call continuous vibrato a major component. Given the evidence available today, this position almost completely ignores the idea that nineteenth-century performance could have adhered to a different performing aesthetic and concept of musicianship. Conversely, those who participated in the beginnings of the historically informed performance movement have often been critical, often to a fault, of the use of continuous vibrato based on an entirely literal reading of evidence such as Joachim’s rather scathing admonishment, in his Violinschule, of the use of constant vibrato. In his violin treatise, Joachim asserts, “The pupil cannot be sufficiently warned against the habitual

---


27 For additional scholarship which refers to the changing use of vibrato from the late-19th century until the present see, Mark Katz, “Aesthetics out of Exigency: Violin Vibrato and the Phonograph,” in Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music (Oakland: University of California Press, 2010), 94–108.

28 Which almost certainly was in response to the practices of the Franco-Belgian school and specifically, Eugene Ysaÿe.
use of the tremolo[Vibrato], especially in the wrong place. A violinist whose taste is refined and healthy will always recognize the steady tone as the ruling one, and will use the vibrato only where the expression seems to demand it."²⁹

Scholars like Clive Brown, Robin Stowell, and David Milsom have renounced this notion that vibrato in the nineteenth century was no different than that of the twentieth century. They have asserted that Brahms and Joachim did not live in a time where continuous vibrato in any form would have been employed.³⁰ According to much of the surviving pedagogical literature of the time and other significant written evidence, vibrato was not a part of the standard technique of the violin but rather a method of nuancing the musical line. For Joachim, it seems that the use of vibrato was used primarily in cases where expression marks necessitated it such as in the instance of hairpin crescendi and sforzandi.³¹ This is supported by the descriptions of Joachim's playing by Marion Ranken, a violinist who heard Joachim while she was a student at the Berlin Hochschule in the early twentieth century.³² Her writing on his manner of playing recalls that, “The sudden use of vibrato immediately after the still, intense tone...was an effect often produced with great expressiveness” and “vibrato was made great use of in sforzandi and the fact that it was often

---


switched off entirely in other places made the added weight that it imparted on such occasions all the more effective.”

Joachim’s use of vibrato was also highly dependent on markings such as dolce and espressivo. A marking of piano dolce would often have been accompanied by free use of vibrato whereas piano espressivo, would have required sparse or a more restricted usage of vibrato to highlight the intensity of the sound and was created mainly by bow pressure and speed. Ranken’s written observations on Joachim’s playing have been amongst the most useful to an inquiry of his use of vibrato. However, they still bear the burden of being subjective to some degree. The somewhat recent emphasis on early recording analysis, however, clears up much of this debate. Not only is it perceived in Joachim and his student Marie Soldat-Roeger's recordings that vibrato was typically used only in specific instances but also with the use of spectrogram analysis, it has become possible to quantify its use. Thus, it is entirely possible to determine that Joachim's use of vibrato was used in this sparing manner and by extension that this is a manner of playing that Brahms might have held as appropriate for his music.

A letter written to Brahms by Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, on the topic of the young Adolph Brodsky’s performance of Brahms’s own Violin Concerto, is telling of the potential attitude of Brahms to continuous vibrato and the “changing” sound in the performance of his music:

I am curious to know how you will like B[rodsky]’s playing of the concerto; it seemed to us that his mannerisms, his profligate employment of pathetic expressive devices, vibrato and portamento had rather increased than decreased, so that one did not experience the pleasure one would like to have felt in what is otherwise such fresh talent. In Leipzig,

---

33 Ranken: Some Points of Violin Playing, 13,41.

34 Ranken: Some Points of Violin Playing, 19.

35 For more on Spectrogram analysis see: Wilson, “Style and Interpretation,” 6, 298, 307-314.
however, he has also been idolized, never criticized, except by Bernsdorf, whose criticism is more likely to strengthen a reasonable person in vice. If you could warn him gently, who knows what good fruits that might bear?\textsuperscript{36}

That this correspondence was even penned by Herzogenburg, gives some clues to the stylistic tenets to which Brahms and Joachim might have held. While indeed Brodsky would also be an ideal candidate for additional study to form a historically informed interpretation, Herzogenburg’s sleight illustrates how multiplicitous nineteenth century style was especially between German styles of playing. The sparing use of \textit{vibrato}, however, was only one facet of Joachim’s playing that was typical of the performance practices of this time.

While \textit{vibrato} has been the most controversial topic in the study of Joachim’s performance practices, his manner of bowing is perhaps even more indicative of the violinist’s performance style. Joachim and his string-playing colleagues viewed their manner of bowing as descending from the master violinists Giovanni Battista Viotti and his French counterparts Rode, Baillot, and Kreutzer. Joachim and those string-players within his circle declared themselves as the sole heirs of the tradition, succeeding where they felt the Franco-Belgian violinists of the late 19th-century had failed.\textsuperscript{37} Bowing and articulation for the violinists of Joachim’s time were just as, if not more, complex and multi-faceted as they are in the present day.

The differences between bowing of Joachim’s time and the present seem to have been much affected by the advent of recording technology, increasing size of orchestras, and the increasing size of performance venues. Bowing in Joachim's time seems to have been inextricably


connected to the concept of Bel Canto singing, which was carried out primarily by the implementation of several focuses such as, a perfect legato, long phrasing, and a remarkably nuanced system of intensity and timbre. This is not to say that these values did not transfer to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however it is evident that there was a broader palette of dynamic and tonal colors than are considered usable today. This expanded palette of bowing expression in the style of Joachim is derived from a much more intimate concert setting of the nineteenth century that placed less gravity on the concept of projection. It is suggested through treatises and accounts of playing of the time, that there was a corresponding bow technique for every possible dynamic range which differs significantly from the modern time. Ranken proposes that, "A pianissimo passage following a merely piano one was seldom played simply more piano, with a smaller tone, but it was nearly always given a different character as well" and "As soon as the pp sign occurred, instead of using less bow, one played with about double as much as before, drawing the bow lightly and swiftly across the strings at the top end of the fingerboard.”

For Ranken, this illustrates the facet of Joachim’s playing, which was also observed in the playing of his students. In several sources, written by different observers of his performances, Joachim and his quartet colleagues’ intensity of tone is a frequently mentioned characteristic of their artistry. This intensity of sound is described as coming directly from the bow arm and produced by slow and even bow speed supported, by a firm but gentle grip of the string. It has been cited as having

---

38 Ranken: *Some Points of Violin Playing*, 17.


40 Ranken: *Some Points of Violin Playing*, 17.
been most appropriate in deep or dramatic passages, and is a product of the influence of bel canto singing, which demands a natural strength to the sound in its very definition.

While it seems that Joachim’s playing was deeply rooted in tradition, the violinist also strived for innovation as evidenced by his adoption of off-the-string strokes which was seemingly prompted by Mendelssohn. Many of Joachim’s violinist predecessors such as Spohr along with other such German proponents of violin playing, deemed these bounced strokes inappropriate for “Classical” repertoire.41 While there was a great nuance of variety in how these earlier violinists applied these special bow-strokes, it was Joachim who is first thought to have embraced them in all repertoires. Andreas Moser has suggested that it was Mendelssohn who convinced Joachim to free himself from the prejudices of violinists past which perhaps served as the impetus for his adoption of strokes such as sautille and spiccato, especially when his teacher David used them only sparingly.42 This advancement perhaps highlights a delicate dichotomy between tradition and innovation in the violin playing especially, in the last days of the nineteenth century.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, violin playing in Germany, and its traditions began to become more fragmented than ever before in the tradition’s history. The emergence of this splintering of the tradition is due in significant part to the continued divergence of national styles, the feuding of late nineteenth-century German factions of musicians known as the “War of the Romantics”, diffusion of musical taste from Franco-Belgian musicians, Louis Spohr’s invention and adoption of the chinrest, and later the rise of recording technology.43 Vibrato and


42 Moser: Joseph Joachim, 45.

bowing styles in the late nineteenth century were and would become some of the more obvious reflections of the individual tastes of each tradition. However, the left-hand fingering systems of late nineteenth-century German violinists and related practices such as portamento, shifting, and intonation, bridge many important gaps between the practical considerations of the instrument and expression. The subject of portamento, the audible sliding from one note to another as an expressive vehicle, is the most obvious starting point when looking at Joachim’s style because of the abundance of examples of this technique available in his editions. Portamento as an expressive technique is defined as, an “expressive effect – ‘the emotional connection of two notes’ (Carl Flesch) – produced by members of the violin family and certain wind instruments in emulation of the voice.” Portamento as an expressive string technique, first appears in writing in the latter half of the eighteenth century and it is documented to have been employed in an expressive capacity throughout several violin traditions. Beethoven much admired Rudolf Kreutzer and Domenico Dragonetti’s use of the effect as a practice. Upon hearing Dragonetti perform his Cello Sonata op. 5 no. 2 in 1799, Beethoven reportedly found new importance in the Double Bass and wished for portamento to be applied in his symphonic works. Following Beethoven’s early praise, others in this tradition began to consider and write about portamento as a vital part of the artist's expressive palette.

44 Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser: Violinschule (Berlin, 1905) vol. II, pp. 100


46 C, “Dragonetti,” The Court Magazine and Belle Assemblee, 1832, 74.

47 J.J. Friedrich Dotzauer (c. 1825), Louis Spohr (1833), Pierre Baillot (1835), Bernhard Romberg (1840), Charles de Beriot (1858), and Ferdinand David (1864); in Brown, Da Costa, and Bennett Wadsworth, Brahms: Performing Practices in Johannes Brahms' Chamber, 12.
This endorsement would catalyze the use of the effect by Joseph Joachim, who advocated its use sparingly in his *Violinschule*. Joachim’s 1903 recordings also show his adoption of the technique, which is one of the most recognizable features of his playing which differs from twentieth-century performance aesthetics. While according to Moser and other period sources, Joachim reportedly used this practice in moderation, his early recordings show just how nuanced the use of portamento could be if at times somewhat at odds with his writing.48 His use would then encourage much more common implementation of the technique by other string musicians. It is without a doubt that the use of portamento by string musicians of the late nineteenth-century was an accepted practice. However, the reasons behind its use are often ignored. Another reason for the technique’s growing popularity is that it could be used as a tool to emulate the voice and the bel canto sound that was popular around this time.49 Just as a perfect legato of the bow arm was required to enhance the “vocal” quality of the violin, the portamento was used to bind gaps of silence within and between phrases to create a more successful continuity of line. Joachim seems to prioritize its use in these situations while condemning the use of portamento in a contrived manner. He lists several instances of appropriate use which, lay out the specific conditions in which Joachim suggested its use. According to Joachim, there are two basic forms in which portamento might be appropriately used. The first is, "sliding from one note to another with the same finger "while the second is, “a discontinuous portamento in which the finger that stops the first note slides into the position required for the next note to be taken with another finger, after which the new


49 For additional scholarship on the application of Portamento to imitate the voice see, Robin Wilson, “Style and Interpretation,” 66-68.
finger is put down as quickly as possible.” This second type had the effect of effectively tricking the listener into hearing a continuous portamento matching the effect of the first. This would affirm the notion that these practices were ultimately conceived to hide the limitations of the violin which naturally inhibit it from perfectly imitating the voice and its bel canto style. In the string chamber music of Brahms, this technique seems to have been indispensable to the successful rendering of these works. Frequent changes of position in early twentieth-century annotated editions show portamento’s use rather extensively. Therefore portamento as an expressive practice played a significant role in effecting the fingering choices of violinists such as Joachim.

Although preferences of fingering on the violin are not always the most scrutinized part of this style as a way to differentiate violinistic traditions, understanding why traditions and individual musicians chose to adopt specific patterns and preferences has decided merit. The changing tastes of fingering choices of the German “Classical” tradition of violin playing during the nineteenth-century seem to have been most influenced by two factors, the adoption of the chinrest and the emulation of the voice and its bel canto style. The chinrest, or fiddle holder first described in Louis Spohr’s *Violinschule* (1832), is one of the most important innovations of violin playing in history. Spohr, developed the fiddle holder as early as 1822 and while this device affected many facets of violin playing, “Spohr argued that it enabled the violin to be held securely and unconstrainedly, thus emancipating the left hand and (by avoiding the risk of moving the

---


51 Louis Spohr, *Violinschule* (Wien: Haslinger, 1833), 120.

instrument in shifting) ensuring ‘tranquility of bowing.’”⁵³ This newfound freedom of the left hand provided the violinist with the ability to create a better legato and a greater variety of portamento along with a greater security with which to explore new shifting and fingering options. These new options removed one of the largest obstacles to embracing a technique which emulates the bel canto style. Following the acceptance of the chin-rest, large shifts and jumps of position, which had previously been avoided in favor of security and the duty of holding the violin upright, were more accessible. Fingerings of increased virtuosity and expressive techniques such as portamento became far more possible although this new freedom would eventually lead violinists in new directions in the twentieth century.

Joachim’s performance practices and interpretational style have been a topic of increased focus for those who study the performance practices in the music of composers such as Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Dietrich. As previously suggested scholarship and evidence seems to suggest that Joachim’s style was preferred above all others. This is further evidenced by numerous occasions of Brahms selecting Joachim’s students to perform his works. Remaining evidence has provided quite a nuanced reading of the style in which Brahms prized so highly, although neglecting several others. While it is through the study of Joachim that these conclusions have been reached, many of the violinists performing in the time of Brahms such as Hugo Heerman, Jenö Hubay, and Marie Soldat-Roeger could be inferred to have embraced

---

54 Boyden and Walls, “Chinrest”.
similar practices given their connections with Brahms and Joachim. While each of these violinists would have exhibited their particular styles complete with their unique idiosyncrasies in technique and performance, it is mainly through the study of earlier pedagogues of the nineteenth century Germanic tradition such as Bohm, Joachim, Spohr, and David that it is possible to see how performance practice changed leading up to this crop of early twentieth-century violinists. Topics such as the vibrato, portamento, bowing, and fingering were passed along through treatises and correspondence, not merely appearing with Joachim. Joachim’s great pedagogical legacy has made it possible to develop some common sense of late romantic style. While such Joachim studies are crucial to understanding what might have been appropriate style to Brahms, exploration of historical editions and other such primary materials illustrate an underlying depth in the historically informed performance of the three violin sonatas.
Chapter 2

Historical Editions and Annotations as Performing Evidence

1. An Overview of Written Evidence

Establishing a musical style of the past is highly dependent on the analysis of surviving musical remains, such as contemporary treatises, recordings (when available), correspondence, and annotated editions or manuscripts. The study of annotated performing editions, especially those annotated by violinists connected to the nineteenth-century German school of violin playing, is a critical component of historically informed performance scholarship. With the aim of understanding late nineteenth-century performance practices, the study of Joachim’s correspondence, editions, and pedagogical materials have been incredibly fruitful for the performance of music of the era. This chapter provides an examination of several methodologies in practice in the twenty-first century, for analyzing annotations in Historical editions. The application of these methods developed by David Milsom and Clive Brown provide viable tools to form an informed interpretation by utilizing written evidence such as, historical editions. An exploration of how multiple editions can be compared to develop a more complex understanding of the performance practices of musicians in a particular tradition, will help advocate for similar comparisons of evidence and conclusions which can be applied to interpreting works such as, the three Violin sonatas of Brahms. While Joachim’s annotated editions of Brahms’s violin sonatas do not survive, other musical examples edited by the violinist have, and those contributed to conclusions about his performing style. Surviving materials bearing the editorial markings of Joachim include significant revisions and editorial markings in Brahms’s Violin Concerto, Op. 77, several cadenzas to other violin concertos, and his Violinschule, which all provide evidence
of his performance aesthetic. This material provides many insights into his performing style and tendencies; however, they do not directly address the application of his performance practices in the three sonatas for violin and piano by Brahms. It is therefore valuable to enlarge the pool of material under consideration by including Joachim’s surviving editions of other works for strings, examples prepared by Joachim’s students, and scores annotated by violinists also connected to the circle of Brahms in order to provide a clearer impression of period practices in these sonatas.

Engagement with written correspondence, the editions of the Brahms Violin sonatas by violinists such as Leopold Auer, Franz Kneisel (1865-1926), a chamber music collaborator of Brahms, and Ossip Schnirlin (1874-1939), a pupil of Joachim,, and other evidence of historical practice, serves to enliven the ways in which we might develop a historically informed interpretation of Brahms’s violin sonatas. While the editions of Joachim’s pupils are indeed valuable to this endeavor, they require as David Milsom has asserted, “a certain degree of circumspection,” to extract evidence of performing practices.\(^1\) In many cases their editions serve as evidence toward projections of Joachim’s style, but in some examples, such as the annotations of Schnirlin, provide scant information of the editor’s style and even less stable evidence of performance practices of the time. In addition to the sources already cited, there are three areas of inquiry that have been underutilized in the study of late nineteenth century performance practices that are critical to the study of performance style in Brahms’s violin sonatas: (1) the editions and treatise of Louis Spohr, who has left a great legacy of performance style through his meticulous annotations; (2) the editions of Andreas Moser, Joachim’s teaching assistant and

\(^1\) Milsom, “Performance Evidence 1,” 3.
biographer, whose output of editions have left a great body of evidence in service to the
performance of chamber music although, he is generally considered the weakest proponent of
Joachim’s pedagogical line in performance; (3) a comparison of Joachim’s editions to those of
his students, rivals, and colleagues, of works such as the Beethoven Violin Concerto and
examples of the string quartet repertoire, these three sources are of the utmost importance.²

2. **Methodology**

Several analytical approaches have proven most successful for determining which
methodologies should be used to study period performances from historical editions. Recent
projects by violinists and period performance specialists David Milsom, Clive Brown, and Robin
Wilson, have assembled extremely holistic approaches to dealing with early editions and the
piano and violin chamber repertoire of Brahms.³ The strengths of their more innovative
approaches are found in the marriage of their research and their own practical performance
experience. In the recent past, historically informed performance projects divorce research from
a performer’s intuition so as to avoid the criticisms heaped on Arnold Dolmetsch for this same
approach during the English Early music revival.⁴ As with the Early Music revival of
Renaissance and Baroque music in England, there was a feeling by Dolmetch, et al that much of

---

² For more on Spohr’s editions and treatise see; Louis Spohr, *Violinschule*; Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical
Biography*; Clive Brown, “Editor: Louis Spohr” (Leeds University), CHASE, accessed March 12, 2018,
http://chase.leeds.ac.uk/view/editor/158/. For additional references of Johannes Moser’s editions of Chamber Music
refer to CHASE, Clive Brown, “Editor: Johannes Moser” (Leeds University), CHASE, accessed May 1, 2018,
http://chase.leeds.ac.uk/view/editor/46/.

³ For further information on these projects refer to Wilson, “Style and Interpretation.”; David Milsom. “String
Chamber Music of the Classical German School, 1840-1900: A Scholarly Investigation through Reconstructive
experimental-response-to-historical-evidence/.

the scholarship on early performance was far too antiquarian and did nothing to encourage informed performances.\textsuperscript{5} This attitude was challenged profoundly by Arnold Dolmetsch and his disciples with their engagement of the repertory through performance. However, in the realm of German romantic music of the nineteenth century, recent studies have united the often-detached sciences of musicology and performance by applying their scholarship to performing projects.

The first and perhaps most important commonality between these recent approaches by such scholars as Neal Peres da Costa, David Milsom, and Clive Brown, in dealing with early editions and editors' annotation schemes is that they apply the early research to practical performance through emulation.\textsuperscript{6} For example, in a three-year project (2006-2009) hosted by Leeds University and funded by the AHRC, David Milsom produced a set of recordings of the Brahms sonatas for piano and violin that were to be informed by available source material such as editions, treatises, and assimilating the style of early sound recordings.\textsuperscript{7} Along with other project personnel, Milsom approaches the project as, “a ‘posthumous disciple’ of the classical German school of violin playing”, and aimed to “emulate likely, observable characteristics of him[Joachim] and his students at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik.”\textsuperscript{8}

The idea of “becoming” a nineteenth-century musician, by way of immersion and emulation of period sources such as recordings, is one of the most innovative ideas to make its way into the study of early music to date. The concept of engaging oneself in the acknowledged

\textsuperscript{5} Haskell, Early Music Revival, 26-27.


\textsuperscript{8} Milsom, “Archive Introduction,” 2-3.
practices of the nineteenth-century, of the Germanic tradition in this instance, as a student and then applying them to works which have less surviving performance evidence, such as sparsely annotated late nineteenth century works and Romantic music for which no historical recording was created, provides a new method of study in these contemporary times. The unique importance of this approach is that this method is not limited by the unknown and unconfirmable as it would have been if the goal was to ‘re-create’ the performance style of Joseph Joachim. The idea of developing an informed interpretation based not only on the study of Joachim’s recognizable and well-evidenced performance idioms, eliminates many of the problematic issues which have limited these performance studies in the past.

The methodology used in Milsom’s project is set in three stages to detail his processes for engaging with editions and theoretical writings toward developing an interpretation:

STAGE 1 Performances based on the most direct evidence, specifically the existence of pedagogical writing, annotated editions, any important early sound recordings by those directly involved with the nineteenth-century German school. Inevitably, this stage focused on nineteenth-century players who lived into the recordings era, including Joachim himself.

STAGE 2 Performances based on the existence of pedagogical writings (and other written documentation) and annotated editions, but without directly connected sound recordings.

STAGE 3 The most speculative part of the process: projecting stages 1 and 2 onto works regularly performed because of their current repertoire significance, but in the absence of the direct evidence found in stages 1 and 2. Crucially, this theoretical approach aimed to embody and assimilate performance characteristics. Practically, it involved inventing fingerings, bowings, and tonal characteristics that credibly allowed for performances to embody the sound of the classical German violin-playing aesthetic.

---

9 For more on Emulation and the nineteenth-century German musical tradition see also: da Costa, Off the record; da Costa, “Performing Practices in Late-Nineteenth-Century Piano Playing.”

This tiered system is a distinct way of engaging with this period’s source material to make judgements on the style and performance tendencies typical of the nineteenth-century German string musician. Specifically, it facilitates an exploration of how annotations in these historical editions might be used to understand the processes involved in performing these practices. The three tiers of this systematic methodology for forming an historically informed interpretation in the present is what has been most lacking in earlier research of this tradition. Milsom’s AHRC project uses progressive methods to form these interpretations and it is a process which requires a strong familiarity with historical editions, performance practices of the time, and years of experience with the contextual scholarship. Until such a time that there are enough musicians who have studied this tradition to pass the style along to other musicians, the requisite knowledge to meaningfully engage with these historic editions on any more than a cursory basis remains elusive to the novice.

While Milsom’s project goal was ultimately to create an interpretation to be recorded and performed, it is ultimately through a project of his collaborator Clive Brown that historical performance was made more accessible to the modern performer. Brown’s research used a combination of written and recorded evidence to create a set of modern editions that would enable contemporary violinists without a background in this nineteenth-century scholarship to perform Brahms in a historically informed manner. Through a joint project of Clive Brown, Neal Peres da Costa, and Kate Bennett Wadsworth, the duo sonatas of Brahms were published in 2015. This edition includes extensive critical commentary with explanations of performance practices of nineteenth-century musicians and discussion of how they might apply to the music

---

11 Milsom, “Performance Evidence 1,” 5.
Questions these three scholars posed during their research prompted them to find creative solutions in this set of editions: “How did Brahms's music sound to contemporaries?”; “What can we reconstruct of Brahms’s performing practices?”; and “How might any evidence influence our approaches to his music?”

These scholarly editions and their critical commentary fuse a variety of sources to define and demonstrate where these performance practices might be used. The meticulous commentary is split into two main sections: the historical commentary and the performing practice commentary. The latter is most useful for understanding the markings and practices of Brahms in his writing for strings; the former provides valuable reception and performance history to give context to the performer. The precision and concision of the text by Brown and da Costa on performing the Violin sonatas of Brahms is truly impressive. For example, their performance commentary on Brahms's Violin Sonata in G minor (Op. 78) outlines which historical editions are of most value and how they might inform a performance, exposes modern day practices which are not based on evidence, and gives a detailed presentation of where in the music each historical practice might be employed. If nothing else, this commentary shows the importance of consulting a variety of sources within the tradition to make statements about performing style. It is through this dissemination of practices and where they might have been appropriate that the

---


authors provide their methodology. The writings of Brown and da Costa serve to provide a case study which can be applied effectively to analysis of other historical editions within this tradition.

Using nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions to serve as evidence for performing style, while useful, ultimately comes with several considerable drawbacks. First, we are often left without any indication of the practices that occur outside of the actual notes and annotations. Annotations found in these late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century editions give clues to phrasing, fingerings, some examples of portamenti, and bowings. However, it is beyond the scope of their system of annotation to denote those practices which musicians of the late nineteenth century were expected to know and employ. Otto Klauwell indicates this reality in his 1890 treatise, *On Musical Execution: An Attempt at a Systematic exposition of the same Primarily with reference to Piano-Playing*:

> Our present system of notation […] can indicate […] only measurable quantities, multiples and fractions of a fundamental unit; and no more can be expected of any system of notation which may be invented hereafter […]. Now, in my opinion, what is usually termed the Art of Execution consists in apprehending and carrying out these necessary deviations, this rubato of manifold variety, which of course is to be read only between the lines.∞

While the issue of the limits of notation and annotation is partially solved through study of early recordings, the absence of these specifics in period editions remains challenging.∞

This dearth of interpretative information in these early editions highlights a second point: there are a variety of levels illustrated in many of these editions, which span from a few sporadic

---


16 For resources on the annotational limitations of Historical editions, see Brown and Druce, "Bowing and Fingering Instructions."; Brown, “Joachim as Editor.”; Milsom, “Evidence and Incentive.”
fingerings and bowings to the notation of specific practices. This variety in detail of annotation is usefully illustrated and organized in David Milsom’s chart:17

Figure 2.1
A. Detailed performance markings and unambiguous editorial relevance to the period studied

• Spohr Op. 13, 67/1 and 45/2 works
• Mendelssohn violin concerto, Op. 64 (ed. F. David)
• Mendelssohn violin concerto, Op. 64 (ed. J. Joachim)
• Beethoven violin sonatas, Opp. 12/2 and 24 (ed. F. David)
• Beethoven violin sonatas, Opp. 12/2 and 24 (ed. J. Joachim)
• Mozart violin concerto in A, K.219 (ed. J. Joachim)
• Beethoven Romance in F, Op. 50 (ed. J. Joachim)
• Joachim Romances in B-flat and C (ed. J. Joachim)

B. Some performance markings with unambiguous editorial relevance to the period studied

• Mendelssohn Op. 12, 13 and 44/3 quartets (with crayon annotations of the 1st violin part by F. David)
• Mendelssohn Op. 49 piano trio (ed. F. Hermann)
• Mendelssohn Op. 49 piano trio (ed. J. Joachim)

C. Performance markings with related but still questionable editorial relevance to the period studied

• Brahms-Joachim Hungarian Dances (ed. O. Schnirlin)
• Brahms violin sonatas, Opp. 78, 100 and 108 (ed. O. Schnirlin)
• Brahms violin sonatas, Opp. 78, 100 and 108 (ed. L. Auer)

D. Editions with little or no performance marking/s requiring new reconstructions of likely performing practices

• Gade piano trio, Op. 42
• Schumann piano trio, Op. 63
• Brahms quartet, Op. 51/2


The disparity in annotations of these historical editions suggests that different editors had different goals in editing works and that one editor might have approached each work with different priorities. There is such a lack of uniformity in the amount and clarity of useful
information provided by these nineteenth-century editors such that, as David Milsom has suggested, “It is not entirely clear for whom they are intended or what they are telling us.”\textsuperscript{18}

Milsom’s statement regarding the intended audience of these editions raises an impressive line of inquiry given the differences in editorial style. The evidence suggests many reasons for the differences in editions such as, editing for pedagogical use, differences in familiarity of the editor with a work or composer, or that perhaps some were too difficult to musically interpret without intensive study. The former would suggest, that it was necessary to transmit as many performance practices and directly specify as much interpretational information to a student as possible. The hierarchy of editorial examples then may speak to the pedagogical and musical importance of the works with extensive annotations. The latter idea, that annotation was necessary for works that were difficult to interpret at sight, suggests some works were too difficult to perform without such annotations, might hold some truth upon consideration of where these works would have been performed and who would have been performing them.

With the increasing popularity in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries of performing music in salons and small gatherings, driven in part by the increased number of pianos available in the homes of the middle-class in these centuries, during which performers were often playing at sight, much chamber music performance would have had little to no rehearsal or preparation. Without extensive editorial markings from seasoned performers who had studied such works for a living, it would have made it much harder for amateurs or even professionals to play such music. Because amateur musicians of the late nineteenth century seem to have been highly-engaged with music-making in informal settings as a leisure activity in nineteenth-century Germany, many editions were for the consumer public. While the concept that these editions

\textsuperscript{18}Milsom, “Performance Evidence 1,” 4.
were prepared by professional musicians for amateurs and students seems to address one aspect of who the intended audience for these editions were, there remains the question of what the annotations tell us about performing aesthetics.

What role the editions of these nineteenth-century German musicians was expected to play in the interpretation of a musical work is a problematic issue which cannot be answered definitively. Yet, it is an issue that must be engaged if an understanding of the interpretational climate is to be developed and if there is a hope for a modern performer to cultivate a historically informed approach. In this effort, it seems perhaps more important to ask the right questions to inform an interpretation than it is to find a conclusion. In a critical reprisal of this, Milsom has asked, "Are the markings a ‘blueprint' for performance, departure from which would be considered sacrilegious, or simply a few suggestions to aid performance?" 19 While certainly this issue is not as clear cut as this statement suggests, Milsom uses this question as a launchpad for pitting Louis Spohr’s and Joachim's performance aesthetics against each other. 20 Spohr’s mention of “inappropriate” performances in his biography suggests that he expected performers to adhere to his interpretational “blueprint” which, suggests that Spohr might have had an intolerance of performing styles which did not agree with his own. Similarly, Joachim’s vehement condescension towards different and new interpretations, especially of German music, which did not agree with his, such as Franco-Belgian-influenced performers and acolytes of the ‘Progressive German school’ of Wagner and Liszt, can easily be characterized as close-minded. 21 This is all the more convoluted when we consider Joachim’s often equivocal attitude to editing


20 Milsom, 4.

21 Milsom, 4.
works in spite of his intolerance of the Franco-Belgian style of violin playing and, by comparison, Spohr’s incredibly detailed examples which perhaps aimed to curb “inappropriate” performances. However, as Milsom suggests, perhaps as an attempt to soften Spohr’s mention of inappropriate performance:

However, much Spohr might have been desirous that his performance style be followed faithfully, he nonetheless espoused (as did almost all nineteenth-century musicians) an aesthetic that not only allowed but celebrated performance individuality and the spontaneous performance characteristics of tempo rubato, agogic accentuation and so forth.\(^\text{22}\)

This statement suggests that deviation from Spohr’s interpretational markings as editor seems to not have had any bearing on the assignment of inappropriate and that it is perhaps that Spohr had something entirely different in mind that led him to pen a mention of inappropriateness in performance. This celebration of interpretational liberty and individuality asserted to have been celebrated by Spohr then begs the question: What constituted inappropriate performance and to whom was Spohr referring? After this opposing evidence, it seems as if Spohr and Joachim’s tolerance of interpretational liberties running in opposition to their own only extended to those trained in the German, more ‘conservative’ tradition. This also suggests that their perception of the playing and interpretation of other traditions was heavily biased against other national styles of playing, and the political and social skirmishes of the times.\(^\text{23}\)

Using period editions to determine style benefits from the opportunity to compare a variety of relevant editions in order to achieve a more nuanced set of conclusions. To study late nineteenth-century violin performance practices with which it might be possible to develop a better understanding of how Joachim may have approached performing Brahms, it is vital to

\(^{22}\)Milsom, “Performance Evidence 1,” 4.

\(^{23}\) For additional scholarship which refers to Joachim’s stylistic biases see Milsom, “Performance Evidence 1,” 4; Wilson, “Style and Interpretation,” 1-2, esp. 74.
utilize editions from earlier parts of the century (e.g., Spohr) as a point of departure to observe longer trends within the tradition, such as its development, stylistic shifts, similarities, and outliers, and thereby to build a diverse test group. The most utilized criteria for looking at these features is through the study of editions by editors from within the German tradition of Joachim’s time.

Comparing the editions of teachers and students helps to not only diversify the sample but also it serves to fill in gaps of editorial preference. For example, Joachim was a notoriously ambivalent to the task of editing music, perhaps suggesting that he was skeptical of the value of such work, evidenced by the scarcity of his markings compared to others within his pedagogical line such as Moser and Schnirlin. It is this attitude to editorial tasks which has served as an obstacle which prevents researchers from gaining much information about style from the majority of his editions.\(^\text{24}\) It is this very ambivalence that Moser noted in 1899, asserting that, "…he [Joachim] has refused all publishers, saying that the artistic side of a work cannot be imparted by written signs; and that those who wish to play the works of the great masters must have sufficient taste and knowledge of violin technique to find their own bowings and fingerings."\(^\text{25}\) When matched with the editions of his less irresolute students and colleagues, however, comparisons can be made which help suggest interpretational choices with which Joachim might have plausibly applied to the music of Brahms.


3. **Analysis of Mendelssohn’s Piano Trio in D minor, op. 49**

An excellent case study for this type of comparison of sources is made in David Milsom’s 2009 study which included recordings and performances of the Piano Trio of Felix Mendelssohn op. 49, in which, he uses both Joachim’s 1874 edition, and a later and more detailed example by a student of Ferdinand David and Mendelssohn, Friedrich Hermann (1828-1907), published in 1887, to form his interpretation.26 This study is especially compelling, because it shows how two editions, Joachim’s sparsely annotated and Hermann’s less so, might be used to synthesize a historically informed performance of the work. It is particularly worth noting that both editors studied with or were mentored by Mendelssohn at some point and would have been exceedingly familiar with the performance practices of his time and possibly the work itself. Hermann, who did quite a lot of editorial work for the publishing firm of Peters, provides through his annotations "well-known traits in performance style at this time (including a propensity to remain on the same string for cantabile passages in order to create timbral connection, often giving rise of course to position changes and opportunities for portamenti and so forth)."27 This edition seems to be a rather fundamental guide for violinists, both student and amateur, to perform the work in the style of the late nineteenth century. It does not deal in specifics and personalized interpretation as much as it does stylistic “tenets” that would have been appropriate for violinists to observe. As with the Joachim edition, the annotations are

---


applied within the violin part, leaving the cello and to some extent the keyboard line to adapt to the practices suggested.

In Milsom’s project, his synthesis of the two performing editions of Mendelssohn’s Piano trio is expressed in the creation of his own. Milsom’s edition is generated from the markings of the Hermann and Joachim examples, adding in speculative markings in an attempt to notate practices which are not marked in the historic editions. Although his efforts are by no means definitive, similarly to the editions of the Brahms’s Violin Sonatas of Clive Brown, Milsom’s illustrate another example of the practical uses of this vein of interpretive performance scholarship. The resulting audio recording made from a performance using this edition then demonstrates the application of the synthesis of these historic editions and Milsom’s own.28

Although Milsom’s project utilizes only the editions of Hermann and Joachim as evidence, the addition of another nineteenth-century edition such as the 1877 example edited by Edmund Singer adds another layer of depth to an analysis. Edmund Singer, was similar to Joachim in that he also studied with Böhm, which suggests he would have been familiar with many of the same practices.29 The Singer edition in particular supports many of the markings that Milsom speculated upon in his edition, making this additional comparison all the more illuminating.

Singer provides far more information than the two examples Milsom drew from in his project. Many of the markings in this copy are so similar to those in the Milsom edition such that it is hard to believe that he would have had no previous knowledge of the example. The first

entrance of violin in m.16 of the first movement is the first indication of the similarities in approach between Milsom and Singer.


The Singer edition suggests that a harmonic be used in m. 19 and that the chromatic neighbor tone in m.22 be enacted with the same finger. Except for the fourth finger in substitution for the second, a somewhat negligible difference, the fingerings suggested by Milsom are the same and carry the same stylistic implications of the Singer. Both of these annotations, the harmonic fingering and chromatic neighbor tone, suggest a practice which was typical of the violinists of the time: portamento. First, is the implied portamento (mm. 18-20) both to and from the harmonic which might seem to represent a degree of poor taste from the editors in questions if we are to take Joachim's warnings of the judicious use of portamento explicitly. Alternately, the

---

30 Milsom’s annotations are marked in this edition in orange pen.
use of the fingering 1-1-1 in m. 22, which proposes a lesser degree of portamento, suggests a practice within the guidelines of good taste suggested by Joachim in his treatise.\textsuperscript{31} In the case of m. 22, the use of this same finger shift serves as an expressive practice and not one necessitated by the notation itself. This fingering in conjunction with the crescendo seems to intimate the use of portamento to heighten the intensity of the dynamic marking. This annotation would have also served to distinguish the phrase mark from the shorter slur as is present in mms. 17-18 and 21-22, a practice often performed in legato sections with a same finger slur. There are no fingering markings in either the Joachim or the Hermann edition to compare the figures suggested by Milsom and Singer, giving little assistance in establishing a stylistic consensus across all of the sources.

Judging by the similarities of the Singer and Milsom editions, it might be somewhat suggestive that the portamento was implied but not expressly suggested by the Joachim and Hermann editions. Despite the fact that neither the Joachim or the Hermann editions suggest these fingerings or the resultant portamento, the consensus of Milsom and Singer suggests: that Milsom’s knowledge of period practice and his attempts to become a posthumous disciple of the nineteenth century German violin school as espoused by Joachim has proved to be a valuable endeavor. While there may never be evidence that Joachim would have employed such frequent portamento within a phrase, it is clear that the 1877 Singer did which suggests it was a practice used in this period and tradition. Belonging to the same school of violin playing as Joachim, Singer’s choices insinuate that, whether or not Joachim would have agreed with his style, it is a style generated by the same tradition Joachim was a proponent of. The overwhelming focus on Joachim’s practices in late nineteenth-century scholarship can often fuel the assignment of such

seemingly contradictory practices as not having a sufficient grounding in historically informed style. However, it seems likely that there are a great number of practices that Joachim simply would not have notated given his ambivalence as an editor.

When analyzing Joachim’s editions, it is interesting to take into account his sensitivity to performing works of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and even the first part of the nineteenth-centuries as one of the first historically informed performers. This interest in performing works of different eras suggests that Joachim might have been especially sensitive to differences between music of the time of Bach and that of Brahms. While Joachim might not have used the same set of practices in two such generations, it seems likely that he would have performed the music of Mendelssohn in somewhat of a different manner than for example, the music of Brahms having been mentored for a time by both Mendelssohn himself and Ferdinand David.\(^{32}\) While portamento was a known technique in both styles, there is evidence to suggest that either Ferdinand David was a more detailed editor than Joachim or that portamento was used in higher quantity by David as evidenced by his edition of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, op. 64.

When considering a comparison of sources such as the Milsom and Singer against that of Joachim and Herrmann, what is clear is that practices such as portamento play an extensive role in the performance of this time. As seen in the editions of David and Singer, the use of portamento especially, in highlighting key melodic moments seems to suggest that even in the absence of editorial corroborations from Herrmann and Joachim, that it would have been a key practice in these moments. While the implications of these editors’ annotations are not always so clear, their annotations would have greatly affected the way the work would have been

---

performed. In the case of Brahms’s violin concerto and Joachim’s input and two editions of it, it is possible to quantify the influence of Joachim, the editor.

4. Evidence in the Violin Concerto, Op. 77

A discussion of historical editions and surviving written evidence of Joachim’s style would be incomplete without some remarks on Joachim’s role as editor and dedicatee of the Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77.33 This concerto was composed during the summers of 1878 and 1879, the same time period as the first of Brahms’s violin sonatas, suggesting a similar thread of musical style. The majority of the concerto was composed in the summer of 1878 in Portschach am Wörthersee, while the composer vacationed, first reaching Joachim's hands on August 21.34 In its original form, the concerto was sketched to include four movements, although it would be shortened to its present three-movement form on December 10 of 1879. As was typical of his character, Brahms withheld his approval for Joachim to premiere the work for many months, finally granting permission in the middle of December 1878 for the first performance on January 1, 1879. However, it was perhaps Joachim’s involvement after the work’s premiere that was most influential in the concerto reaching its final form through his infusion of his own playing style, revisions, and conversations with Brahms.35

Following the Violin Concerto’s premiere, Brahms called for revisions and comments from Joachim. This has often been perceived as the composer requesting the work’s dedicatee to

33 For additional scholarship on Joachim as editor, see Brown, “Joachim as Editor”; Milsom, “Evidence and Incentive”; Brown, “The Evolution of Annotated String Editions.”

34 Struck, “Preface.”

35 Struck, “Preface,” IV–VI.
impress upon the concerto his violinistic spirit. In actuality, there is very little evidence that suggests this level of deference to Joachim on matters of the Violin Concerto. Moser's comment, "It is strange how receptive Brahms was toward Joachim's advice in matters of composition and how negative his attitude was toward suggestions concerning violin technique," suggests it is much more likely that Brahms was looking for the advice of Joachim the composer rather than Joachim the violinist. This is also indicated by Brahms’s acceptance of Joachim’s suggestions on orchestration and several compositional issues while generally disregarding the suggestions which concerned violin technique and other such attempts to make the work more violinistic other than a few ossias for violinists with smaller hands. This perhaps hearkens to the early friendship of the two men who would often trade counterpoint exercises in their youth for critique. Following the Vienna premiere on January 14, 1879, revisions were proposed by Joachim through several sets of meetings and many letters and postcards between the two men. While there are thirty-three letters and postcards between the two men, numbered 366-399, which refer to the concerto, it is numbers 378-399 that refer to the revising of the work.

36 For additional evidence of Brahms’s requests for Joachim’s input on the concerto see, Struck, “Preface,” IV, V, VI; Schwarz, “Genesis of Brahms’s Violin Concerto,” 509-511.


38 MacDonald, Brahms, 48.


40 For additional references on Brahms and Joachim letters 378-399 refer to Schwarz, “Genesis of Brahms’s Violin Concerto,” 509-511; Moser, “Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel,” 140-176.
Letter  Date
No.    1879

378  Jan. 21  B. to J.:  "Please have the solo part of the Concerto copied for me before you leave for England. I want to go through it with a less good violinist than you are because I fear that you are not bold and severe enough." B. requests ossia versions for difficult spots.

379  Jan. 24  B. to J.:  The full score of the Concerto will be mailed soon. Requests to transfer all changes marked in red to the orchestral parts. Again B. urges J. to make corrections and changes in the solo part and the score.

380  ca. Feb. 8  J. to B.:  J. returns the solo part of the Concerto and takes a copy to London where a performance is set for Feb. 22 at Crystal Palace.

381  Feb. 22  J. to B.:  Success at Crystal Palace. "It went quite well though not always delicate enough in the accompaniment." J. plans to enter some variants in the solo part. On March 5 he will play the Concerto at the Philharmonic.

382  March 8  J. to B.:  Success at the Philharmonic. J. played the Concerto from memory. A repeat performance is planned.

383  March  B. to J.:  "I’m eager to know how often and how energetically your handwriting will appear in score and solo part; whether I’ll be ‘convinced’ or whether I’ll have to ask someone else which I don’t like to do. Briefly, is the piece really good and practical enough to be published?" B. requests return of score and parts in separate packages for safety.

384  end of March  J. to B.:  J. returns the parts but not the score, hoping to meet Brahms to discuss a few trouble spots. He recommends thinning out the accompaniment in several places. "Otherwise I like the work more and more, especially the first movement. . . . To have a solo concerto repeated at the Philharmonic on two successive programs has not happened before except in the case of Mendelssohn and his G-minor Piano Concerto." A suggestion by J. to make a harmonic change in the Finale is ignored by B.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Correspondence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. suggests a meeting in Berlin on April 14, which took place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>J. to B.:</td>
<td>On B.’s instructions, J. gave the solo violin part to publisher Simrock. J. suggests a minor change at the end of the second solo (ultimately accepted). J. wants to play the Concerto in Amsterdam on May 25 and requests B.’s approval. J. suggests that his fingerings be printed discreetly in the solo part: “I don’t consider them superfluous.” (They were printed.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-May</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. sends the score and parts to Amsterdam where the performance will be conducted by Verhulst. No further changes are entered in the score in order not to confuse the conductor. B. argues about the violin bowings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 20</td>
<td>J. to B.:</td>
<td>J. answers B.’s argument about bowings and agrees to mark the second theme of Finale with wedges (scharfe Strichpunkte).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>J. to B.:</td>
<td>J. reports that the Concerto went better than ever and that the violin was audible everywhere in the immense hall. J. suggests two retouchings in the orchestration of the first tutti to reinforce a melodic line. (B. partly accepts the first suggestion but ignores the second.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. requests that the Concerto score be sent to Pörtschach, but only after J. has “scribbled” everything on his mind in terms of revisions and corrections. B. continues the argument about bowing principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. asks J. to scrutinize two spots which “never satisfied me completely in performance”: the orchestral introduction of the Adagio and the beginning of the Presto section (in 6/8) of the Finale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. wants to receive the Concerto score as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. hopes to read the Concerto proofs with J. in Salzburg. “You will refrain from asking again for a concerto? Mitigating is the fact that the Concerto bears your name, hence you are a bit responsible for the solo setting.” (The letter contains three musical examples from the solo part.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>J. to B.:</td>
<td>J. tries to incorporate B.’s suggestions in some passages, gives musical examples (see Exx. 5a and b). J. thanks B. for the dedication of the Concerto (which gives him “a very great joy”) and looks forward to the new Violin Sonata (G major, published as Op. 78).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 28</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. plans to come to Salzburg as soon as the Concerto proofs arrive so that they can proofread them together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 10</td>
<td>B. to J.:</td>
<td>B. plans to join J. in Aigen (near Salzburg) “on Thursday.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These correspondences highlight several essential points important to an accurate understanding of the relationship of Brahms and Joachim. First, is that Brahms needed little real assistance in the composition of this concerto, other than a few orchestration insights derived from Joachim’s performances. Second, that while the composer prodded Joachim for revisions constantly, threatening to show the part to a harsher critic such as Hugo Heerman, his request seems somewhat ingenuine. Looking at the number of suggestions he ignored from Joachim, it seems that he wanted only to have alternatives with which to determine that his writing was superior. While many of Joachim's suggestions were refused, he did provide several vital revisions which make the work more idiomatic. These changes, such as several ossias for players with smaller hands and other such minor suggestions, give little of Joachim’s playing style or interpretive dispositions. While many suggest that Joachim’s accepted revisions tell something of Joachim the violinist, it is more likely that they express more about Joachim as a composer.

The compositional revisions suggested by Joachim did however have an effect on the final copy, necessitating the third movement to be re-engraved by publisher Simrock. This illustrates that Joachim did not merely have influence over shallow annotations of the score but the larger compositional issues of the work itself. The work was finally sent into print in October of 1879; the cadenza of the work, which Joachim composed, would continue to be revised for many years before he finally submitted it for publication by Simrock in 1902, half a decade after Brahms's death. Through whatever level of influence Joachim exerted on this concerto, it is

41 MacDonald, Brahms, 48, 9, 12, 14.
42 Struck, “Preface,” V.
hard to escape a feeling of organicism between the work itself and the cadenza, which is not found in most concerti where the author of the cadenza did not come from the same tradition as the composer of the work itself.

Having endured many substantial revisions during its genesis, the Brahms Violin Concerto exists in several editions. First are the official copies of the full score which exist today, the first of which being Brahms's own copy now housed in the archival holdings of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Vienna) along with several others held in Berlin and Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{44} However, it is the two extant historical editions by Joachim that provide some evidence for our insights specific to the performing style of Joachim in Brahms’s Violin Concerto.

There exist two editions of the Brahms concerto edited by Joachim, the 1879 version and a later 1905 example. The 1879 version, published by Simrock, seems yet another example of Joachim’s notorious ambivalence to the task of editing music. Joachim’s annotations in this first edition are indeed sparse and seem that he only included fingering suggestions in instances of exceeding difficulty. These “important” printed fingerings are therefore not so much fueled by interpretation as they are necessary and serve as quite practical tools for surmounting the challenges of this work. Joachim’s letter to Brahms on May 13, 1879 requesting his fingerings to be published by Simrock further asserts that his annotations were not redundant.\textsuperscript{45} For a violinist who found no great value in the annotation of music for the public, this further highlights the gravity of his request.

\textsuperscript{44} Struck, “Preface,” VI.

\textsuperscript{45} Avins, \textit{Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters}, 548-549.
In Joachim’s 1905 edition, published in the third volume of his *Violinschule* and co-produced with Andreas Moser, contains many more annotations than are found in his earlier edition of the Violin concerto. There is not only a significant increase in expressive fingerings but also differences from the 1879 edition which were perhaps fueled by his growing familiarity with the work as its dedicatee and champion. However, the reason behind this sudden interest in more specific annotation is one worth exploring, as this new contradictory approach to editing is puzzling.

I would like to posit a few hypotheses to make sense of this new editorial style. First, there is the influence of his pupil and assistant, Andreas Moser. It appears that Moser pushed the aging violinist to set more of his annotations to paper at the end of his life. It is also likely that as Joachim aged and found his great German tradition falling prey to obscurity, he wished to leave an indelible legacy. This desire to leave a legacy is increasingly seen in Joachim's use of detailed annotations in his editions and the creation of the 1905 *Violinschule*, in which he lays down many of the principles of his great tradition. Finally, it is likely that, with the tremendous stylistic shifts in violin playing at the turn of the century, he sought to place his claim to preeminence in the performing interpretation of music which came from the German tradition. In the early twentieth century especially, players from the Franco-Belgian school such as Ysaÿe began performing the German repertoire of Brahms, Beethoven, and Spohr, like never before. The influence of Ysaÿe and his Franco-Belgian school can be seen even in young German artists

---


47 For further scholarship on Moser’s influence on Joachim’s editing see, Milsom, “Evidence and Incentive,” 1–7; Flesch, *The Memoirs of Carl Flesch*, 36.

such as Adolf Brodsky, who drew disparaging comments from Elizabeth Herzogenberg on his frequent use of vibrato and portamento in a performance of the Brahms concerto. It is under these circumstances that Joachim most likely felt pressure to attend with greater detail to his legacy and that of the German tradition of which he was master.

As this chapter has discussed, there is a great deal of value in using a several types of written evidence with which to reassemble the style of Joachim. Exploring how and for what purposes Joachim and his contemporaries edited these works illustrates how much of their respective styles they imparted upon the music. The exploration of genetic criticism to analyze Joachim’s influence on the Brahms Violin Concerto, op. 77, determines how much influence Joachim had over Brahms’s music. The examination of these studies, as well as those of Milsom and Brown, help to show some of the boundaries in working this type of written evidence and suggests how evidence of the recorded kind might strengthen some conclusions and weaken others.

49 Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms im Breifwechsel*, 94.
Chapter 3
Recording as Evidence: Capturing the sound of “Frei Aber Einsam”

1. An Overview of Recorded Evidence

The advent of recording in the late nineteenth century played a crucial role in changing performance aesthetics of early twentieth century style through the new and exciting possibility of capturing sound and style in a tangible format. This new technology started a revolution in all of the various ways it is possible to perform and consume music. While the primary function is the medium's ability to immortalize sound it also had the benefit of allowing performers for the first time, to hear the music they have created themselves. In performing a study of historical sources to better understand evidence of performing style, recording stands as perhaps the most valuable tool available to develop conclusions based on empirical results. Recording as a means to study nineteenth-century practices is an approach which was primarily neglected up until the last few decades. This neglect, especially among the community of historically informed performance practitioners, was somewhat brutally conveyed by Richard Taruskin’s 1982 remark:


They [the earliest sound recordings] are instantly recognizable as premodern [...] To hear them is to realize how far we’ve traveled from that phase of history. They show how fundamentally akin to modern performance practices are those that claim to be historical. The old recordings utterly debunk that pharisaical claim; for recordings are the hardest evidence of performance practice imaginable. If we truly wanted to perform historically, we would begin by imitating early-twentieth century recordings of late-nineteenth-century music and extrapolate back from there.3

Taruskin’s tongue-in-cheek comment on the proposed “authenticity” with which late twentieth-century “HIP” performers claimed to engage points out a significant obstacle to an engagement with historical evidence. Primarily, relying on books and written evidence could never hope to give as specific evidence to style in music the way recording study would. Since the adoption of the study of recorded sound evidence, there have been more significant developments in the world of nineteenth-century performance practice than ever before.

The rise of the importance placed on sound recording as historical evidence provides essential answers to questions of nineteenth-century performance practice generated by the written evidence. First, it addresses the question of why these early twentieth-century recordings of artists such as Joseph Joachim, Marie Soldat-Roeger, Hugo Heerman, Maud Powell, and Leopold Auer are so important.4 These musicians were trained in the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, and the practices and style demonstrated on such early recordings are not an


example of a new tradition of playing, but one of a continuation of a customary German violin style of the late nineteenth century. As Robert Philip has expressed, “Stated at its simplest, it is that none of the aspects of early twentieth-century style…could have arisen overnight.” There is a much closer similarity than often acknowledged between the styles of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century musicians.⁵

The early training of violinists who produced recordings in the early twentieth century speaks not only to the practices they would have adopted as students, but also the musicians whom they might have heard and with whom they might have worked. The importance of this training and its reflection in these early recordings is connected with statements like “Ysaÿe studied under Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski, and…Joachim played under Mendelssohn and was associated with Brahms.”⁶ Similarly, Joachim’s early training would have exposed him to the style of Beethoven by way of the teachings of Böhm, who worked with and premiered works of Beethoven.

From this pedagogical legacy, one might imagine that Joachim would have indeed been acquainted with many stylistic practices embraced by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms, thereby making him an ideal advocate of their works. Joachim’s training and engagement with such composers spanning his lifetime meant that his students could inevitably have received a similar set of stylistic awarenesses. Joachim’s intimate knowledge of the music of these composers helped to inform his performing style, emphasizing that his practices represent those of the climax of the German “Romantic” tradition in the late nineteenth century. In the case of other later violinists such as Soldat-Roeger and Auer, they represent the synthesis of Joachim’s

⁵ Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 207.

teaching and experience albeit in an era where the recording and the influences of the Franco-Belgian school were inciting changes in performance style. With comparisons of recorded evidence to surviving written evidence, it is possible to understand how the practices of performing changed in Joachim’s lifetime and how this tradition lingered in the recordings of his pupils.

While written evidence specifies many of the techniques that musicians of Joachim’s generation would have employed, until recently scholars lacked highly effective tools for analyzing recordings in as meaningful a way is possible with Spectrogram analysis and other such software. A great deal of progress has been made through the study of recorded sound to establish more conclusive quantities of these “romantic” performance practices using tools such as spectrogram analysis and other computer analysis methods. These tools allow such practices to be labeled and quantified, helping to establish trends within performance, especially when comparing the examples of violinists before 1940 and those early examples of Joachim in 1903. Highlighting the stylistic shifts of violinists who lived during Joachim’s life (1831-1907) and the generation directly after enables us to see which aspects of the late nineteenth German style disappeared quickly, and which were slower adapt to the changing preferences of the twentieth-century. Through analysis of early twentieth-century sound, it is possible to illustrate that the

---


performing style of violinists like Auer, Busch, and Soldat-Roeger captured just as many of the practices of the late nineteenth century as Joachim.

While the determination of which practices belong to the nineteenth century and which belong to the twentieth century is not an exact science, it is clear that frequency of vibrato was one of the largest stylistic changes to occur along with diminished quantities of rubato and portamento. Bruce Haynes summarizes these differences quite clearly:

If romantic protocol was heavy, personal, organic, free, spontaneous, impulsive, irregular, disorganized and inexact, Modern style is the reverse: light, impersonal, mechanical, literal, correct, deliberate, consistent, metronomic, and regular. Modernists look for discipline and line, while they disparage Romantic performance for excessive rubato, its bluster, its self-indulgent posturing, and its sentimentality.

While Haynes’s remarks are somewhat reductionist, it seems that there is in fact a difference between these two style periods, significantly connected to an idea of spontaneity in performance and aesthetic. In principle, this spontaneity is the most significant shift in style between the centuries and it is almost certainly a result of the age of recording and the permanence of interpretation.

The study of recording from the early twentieth-century, while controversial, is a field incited by studies such as Robert Philip’s. This study and its contemporaries have had a lasting

---

9 Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 207.

10 Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer’s History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 49; For additional Scholarship which delimits practices from the nineteenth-century into the twentieth see, Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, 207.


12 Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*. 
effect on those who study historically informed performance by advocating for the use of recorded sound evidence and providing a methodology for the use of this evidence.\textsuperscript{13}

There are generally two groups of scholars who use these early recorded sound resources today: recording and sound studies analysts and nineteenth-century performance scholars and performers.\textsuperscript{14} Both nineteenth-century specialists and recording analysts, with their markedly different emphases, often have come to equivalent results. These two factions have developed a closer affiliation through an increasing number of conferences such as CHARM/RMA at Royal Holloway which began in 2003 and Stanford University’s \textit{Reactions to the Record}.\textsuperscript{15} Through these meetings and events, new programs and methods of analysis have been developed for use in recording studies. The spectrogram analysis software Capo and the Sonic Visualizer program, which appeared with CHARM’s endeavors, are just two examples which have come to fruition through these research collaborations.\textsuperscript{16} With these new technologies and the applications of recording to nineteenth-century performance practice studies, other research teams such as those led by Neal Peres da Costa have incorporated recording technology in a pedagogical way, namely through the emulation studies.

The Sydney Conservatorium under the leadership of Dr. Neal Peres da Costa has initiated ground-breaking work in the application of early 20\textsuperscript{th} century recordings to training musicians in

\textsuperscript{13} da Costa, \textit{Off the Record}; Wilson, \“Style and Interpretation”; Milsom, \“Performance Evidence 2.”

\textsuperscript{14} Milsom. \“Performance Evidence 2,” 1.

\textsuperscript{15} For additional reference to Charm see, CHARM. \“The AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music.” AHRC. www.charm.rhul.ac.uk (Accessed June 1, 2018); For additional reference to Reactions to the Record see, \“Reactions to the Record Symposium.” Stanford University. https://web.stanford.edu/dept/music/Events/StanfordMusicSymposium/ (Accessed June 1, 2018)

the style of the late nineteenth-century through emulation.\textsuperscript{17} Emulation as a process by which a musician may use written and recorded evidence to develop an intuition for performing nineteenth-century practices has become one of the hallmarks of practice-led research at the Sydney Conservatorium. Emulation is most certainly a response to Taruskin's early 1980s critique of the HIP movement, which da Costa and his colleagues in Sydney have taken as a call to arms.\textsuperscript{18} These developments in the sphere of recording study have, in the last few decades, devised critical new methods and have answered essential questions which have illustrated the importance of such early twentieth-century recording studies.

There are many views on the validity of the medium of sound recording as evidence of performing styles in nineteenth-century music. These arguments, both the affirmative and negative, have often played quite a polarizing role.\textsuperscript{19} It is through examination of the statements of the detractors that the most progressive methodologies have been developed. The methodologies of those who advocate the use of recorded sound evidence are perhaps best spelled out in Taruskin's reproach to early music scholars, calling for them to use early recorded evidence of musicians like Brahms and Joachim and then extrapolate backward. Those who answered this call have refocused their attention to the early twentieth-century recordings of musicians, such as Soldat-Roeger, Auer, and Joachim himself.\textsuperscript{20} Those who advocate the use of

\textsuperscript{17} For further scholarship on the practice of emulation refer to Neal Peres da Costa. “Performing practices in late-nineteenth-century piano playing”; da Costa. \textit{Off The Record}; da Costa, \textit{About Music Lecture-Neal Peres Da Costa}.

\textsuperscript{18} da Costa, \textit{About Music Lecture-Neal Peres Da Costa}.


\textsuperscript{20} da Costa, \textit{About Music Lecture-Neal Peres Da Costa}. Da Costa mentions in this interview that his focus on recording and emulation is derived from Taruskin’s statement.
recorded evidence generally rely on the idea that most of these musicians who recorded prior to 1940 were trained in the style popular in mid- to late nineteenth-century Germany, and then work to navigate the changing style and to situate practices into period categories through recording study. This approach, however, assumes that there is a distinct link between pedagogy and the style passed between teacher and student. The assumption that style was passed through pedagogy remains grounded in speculation. An exemplary case in point is the 1926 performance of Beethoven’s Symphony #1 conducted by Sir George Henschel.\(^{21}\)

Henschel’s study with Ignaz Moscheles, an assistant to Ludwig van Beethoven, might suggest that Henschel had a direct connection to the style in which Beethoven's music would have been performed.\(^{22}\) However, while some reviewers of the period praised the recording, to modern ears it may represent a marked disappointment. Peter Gutmann, a writer for the website Classical Notes, remarked in 1998, "How can Henschel's placid walk-through possibly represent the aesthetic of Beethoven, the rebel who wrenched music from its complacent classical moorings into a new emotive era and who destroyed pianos trying to wrest more powerful sounds out of them?"\(^{23}\) While it is quite impossible to know how Beethoven sounded in his own time or whether Henschel’s recording represented any accurate insight into the performance practices of Beethoven’s own time, Gutmann’s statement is suggestive of the chasm between many modern expectations of Romantic performing style such as Gutmann’s and what it might have actually been.

\(^{21}\) The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra performed the recording in question with Sir George Henschel conducting; it was last available on Past Masters LP PM-17.


\(^{23}\) Gutmann. “The Most Important Record.”
The musical scene in nineteenth-century Germany was tumultuous to say the least, as evidenced by constant feuding within the communities of late nineteenth-century music critics and composers. The *Neue Zeitschrift fur Musik* and the polemic of those such as Eduard Hanslick in *Vom musicalische Schönen* against the “radicals”, Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt, are proof enough of such stylistic schisms.\(^{24}\) Even within the tradition of the violin, musical tastes and priorities differed wildly from each other. For example, the styles of Joseph Joachim and Eduard Reményi, both students of the Böhm, were certainly not very compatible, at least not in aesthetic.\(^{25}\) Reményi, described as a fiery virtuoso and colleague of Franz Liszt, represented somewhat of the antithesis to Joachim and his *Werktreue* ideals. Even with Böhm as a teacher, these two men, both of Hungarian nationality, represented remarkably different musical ideals. Extrapolating backward based on the notion of style passing through pedagogy has perhaps been one of the most criticized points in such recording study.

The arguments against the use of recorded evidence had, from the first, slowed the progress of its acceptance. However, those arguments played an important role in the development of this relatively young body of study by necessity a reevaluation of the limits of this research and a careful critique of methodology. While so many of these critical arguments have been expressed incessantly, they continue to help delimit the boundaries of the use of recording studies. The assertion that these first recordings are of low quality, hindering the ability of the listener to hear the performance accurately and judge style, is the most frequent claim. Indeed, this low quality of early recordings is quite common, due to three factors: the

---

\(^{24}\) Bonds, “Polemics.”

limitations of the technology itself, degradation caused by time, and poor storage conditions.\textsuperscript{26} These obstacles are further compounded by the radically different approaches taken by the three popular English labels, Pearl, Nimbus, and Biddulph, to the historical reissue of early recordings. The purist approach taken by the Pearl Label and its sublabel, Opal, reproduces these recordings in a way that they believe captures as much of the original material as possible. They therefore forgo any editing, especially scratch removal or filtering of the original recording medium.\textsuperscript{27} These methods are a striking contrast to the methods of the Nimbus label, which plays these old recordings through modern phonographs and records the sound that results, often in a room with a good deal of reverberation.\textsuperscript{28} This mode of recording results in a much smoother sound than is possible from any original early recording because of the quality of these phonographs and the presence of reverberation which is often absent from the original recordings. Finally, Biddulph, a violin maker whose recording interest is somewhat secondary, reproduces these recordings with every bit of modern recording technology available.\textsuperscript{29} Embracing such technology produces a result that while, perhaps most similar to modern expectations of audio quality, distorts the source material and gets rid of many of the example's original characteristics. This method dilutes much of the evidence of these early recordings, which minimizes certain information present in the original recording.

Another issue of these early recordings is that they also create “unquantifiable interference” compared to the original performance, specifically in the case of early pre-electric

\textsuperscript{26} For additional scholarship on the obstacles of using early recordings refer to David Milsom. “Performance Evidence 2,” 2.

\textsuperscript{27} Gutmann, “The Most Important Record.”

\textsuperscript{28} Gutmann, “The Most Important Record.”

\textsuperscript{29} Gutmann, “The Most Important Record.”
This interference was caused by factors such as variable proximity of artists to recording horns, tempo modifications due to the time limits of the recording medium, and the lack of editing technology available. The process of recording would have been an incredibly awkward one for the first wave of recorded artists. With no audience to engage, a less than ideal acoustic space to perform, and other strict performance constraints, including a lack of movement and a much narrower dynamic range, it would have been a somewhat strange dynamic of performance. Ferrucio Busoni, for example, remarked on his experience with the recording horn:

Yesterday I suffered the gramophone drudge through to the end! I feel pretty shattered … as if I were awaiting surgery. … They wanted the Gounod-Liszt Faust-waltz (which lasts a good 10 minutes) – but only four minutes' worth! – so I quickly had to make cuts, patch and improvise, so that it still retained its sense; give due regard to the pedal (because it sounds bad), had to remember that particular notes must be struck louder or softer – to please the infernal machine; not to let myself go – for the sake of accuracy – and remain conscious throughout that every note was being preserved for eternity. How can inspiration, freedom, elan or poetry arise?

One of the last remaining issues is one which concerns decline of musical facility. At the beginning of the recording era, most musicians who had been prominent at the end of the nineteenth century would have been experiencing the ravages of old age and the drastic decline of their musical powers. Joseph Joachim, born 1831 and recorded in 1903, was 72 when he was first recorded. The effect of age is likewise reflected in a recollection of Joachim’s playing in 1905 by J.A. Fuller-Maitland, who remarked that in his advanced age the Joachim’s fingers had

---

30 Milsom, “Performance Evidence 2,” 2
31 Milsom, 2.
32 Gutmann, “The Most Important Record.”
33 Philip, Performing Music in the Age of Recording, 235-239.
gotten gouty and stiff, hindering his previous standard of playing.34 While much of his style remains, it is unclear to what extent some performance practices were intended and which were merely a result of the violinist’s increasing infirmity. While issues such as these have indeed been a focal point in the argument minimizing the importance of recorded evidence, these obstacles have spurred the development of a method by which it is possible to formulate better, more reliable ways to study these early recordings. With the increased collaboration between recording analysts and 19th century specialists through new conferences and analysis tools, a new frontier for recording studies has ensued.

2. A Derivative Methodology from the work of David Milsom

The issues involved in using recorded evidence to develop a concept of nineteenth-century style of the German violin tradition such as, degradation of original recording mediums, age of the performer, and other such hinderances certainly affect our ability to take at face value performance characteristics suggested by historical editions, treatises, and the recollections of 19th century musicians and audiences on such matters as, rhythm, tempo, and timbre. Other observable practices such as vibrato, rubato, phrasing, and the use of portamento provide much more achievable evidence because of the tools that exist to study them such as, Spectrograph analysis and CHARM. For this study, this latter group of practices is the primary criteria by which many have engaged with recorded evidence. This recorded evidence, compared with surviving written evidence, has been a crucial part of the methodology for engaging with

Joachim’s style. A suggested process which is derived from that of Milsom, Wilson, Brown, and da Costa for engaging with these recorded sources is as follows:

1. Identify known performance practices following a study of annotated editions, treatises, and correspondence.
2. Determine the viability of the recorded evidence based on the following criteria.
   1. What is the condition of the recording?
   2. From what time period was the performer active?
   3. Is the sound source original or a historical re-issue?
   4. If a re-issue, what approach did the label take in the production of this recording and what effects or technologies did they use?
3. Identify which, if any, practices are immediately apparent.
4. Determine what constraints recording placed upon the musician that would affect these practices, such as time limits, instrument, distance from the horn, other interference.
5. If available, find relevant annotated editions by the performer and/or their teachers and students. It is then useful to compare the immediately acknowledgeable practices derived from the recording with relevant annotated editions.
6. The recordings may then be analyzed with programs to examine each of the practices.
   Examples of some of these analytical programs and their use in the study of specific performance practices are as follows:
   1. For Vibrato: Spectrogram analysis and Capo
   2. For Portamento and Rubato: Capo

---

35 CAPO. “Super Mega Ultra Groovy.”
3. **Looking at Style through Recorded Evidence**

In 1903, Joseph Joachim was the first violinist in history to commit his playing to the future through recording. The violinist, then 72, recorded five sides, including his own Romance in C op. 20, the Adagio of Bach's first sonata for violin alone BWV 1001, the Bourrée of Bach's Partita no. 1 BWV 1002, and the violinist's arrangement of the first two of Brahms’s Hungarian Dances. While there is some speculation that these are not the first recordings of Joachim, they are considered the first examples of the recorded violin. While Joachim was undoubtedly the first, it would not be long before his students, and members of his circle would follow suit and embrace the recording process. While the Joachim recordings (and to some extent those of his most similarly playing student, Marie Soldat-Roeger) have been analyzed extensively, there are many recordings by his students, colleagues, and other violinists within the German tradition that have gone somewhat untouched. The recordings of such artists as Maud Powell, Leopold Auer, Hugo Heerman, Adolf Busch, and Arnold Rosé have suffered some degree of neglect by the scholars of Historically informed practice. These violinists are all only one or two pedagogical degrees of separation from Joachim and represent the final exponents of the nineteenth-century German tradition. These pre-1940 recordings represent a large body of untiled evidence. Due to the contention of the merit of recording studies to performance practice scholars, the scholarship on these other early recorded violinists has been slow to appear.

The first recordings of the violin and generally considered to be the most important examples to the study of nineteenth-century violin playing are, of course, those of Joseph Joachim. While there has been an immense amount of scholarship published on these recordings,

---

36 Joachim, de Sarasate, and Ysaÿe, *The Complete Recordings*.

they are the departure point for any study of subsequent violin recordings. While they are the clear starting point for this type of research, it is also worth noting that these early recordings are for many, disturbing to hear. To the modern listener, Joachim's playing is out of tune, inconsistent, strident in tone, and takes many seemingly contrary liberties not expressly written in the written scores.\textsuperscript{38} While this is almost immediately considered a result of the violinist’s advanced age, the decline of Joachim’s technique, and the uncomfortable and unfamiliar process of standing still and playing into a horn, this may not be the case. When attempting to reassert the value of these recordings, many have expressed that Joachim’s playing is not so significantly marred by time, but instead is representative of a time and aesthetic that is markedly different from the present.\textsuperscript{39} Whether or not the ravages of age are evident in Joachim’s technique is highly debatable. However, it is clear that Joachim’s recorded style and musical ideas are much different from those of the modern violinist or even the Franco-Belgian masters of the late nineteenth century such as Pablo de Sarasate and Eugene Ysaÿe.

Of the practices linked to both the specific tradition of Joachim and the generalized style of violinists of the late nineteenth century, vibrato and portamento are generally the most polarizing. These two practices, as evidenced by Joachim’s recordings and historical editions, are considered the most foreign to the modern way of playing primarily, because of the quantities in which Joachim employs them. Portamento, while not so well documented in Joachim’s editions is both indicated in the editions of other violinists and in Joachim’s recordings. It is through his recordings, however, that specific quantities of these practices can be compared to those previously generated by written evidence. Joachim’s vibrato in these recordings is much

\textsuperscript{38} Milsom, “Evidence and Incentive,” 3-4; Philip, Early Recordings and Musical Style, 6.

\textsuperscript{39} Milsom, “Evidence and Incentive,” 3-4.
narrower and used much more selectively than the modern listener is accustomed to hearing.\textsuperscript{40} Joachim states in his 1905 treatise, “recognize the steady tone as the ruling one”, warning the reader to use caution in the indulgence of a high quantities of vibrato.\textsuperscript{41} While his careful use of the practice is well documented in his treatise, it is nevertheless striking to hear the manner of Joachim’s vibrato. In the present day, vibrato is a crucial component of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century violinist's sound and is used quite constantly in one form or another. The impression of these 1903 recordings, is that Joachim’s tone is amateurish and somewhat lacking to today’s ears. We can conclude from Joachim’s writings on the subject that he and the late nineteenth-century German school of violin playing embraced a style of playing that did not prize vibrato as highly as would become fashionable in the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{42} Joachim’s use of vibrato in the recordings of Brahms's Hungarian Dances shows that he indeed seems to follow his own rules for vibrato laid out in his *Violin Schule*. This faithfulness to his own sentiments regarding the addition of vibrato serves to corroborate the idea that it was not just age that makes his playing seem so foreign to us. Instead, it was with a markedly different aesthetic that Joachim engaged with “Romantic” music.

In the historically informed community, these five examples of Joachim’s playing have served as a codex for nineteenth-century violin style, and yet they hold a somewhat precarious role in HIP scholarship. They do not hold much weight as written evidence, due to the limitations of the original technology with which they were recorded and the degradation of the original medium. Even if we were to conclude that age had not affected Joachim’s ability to perform,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{40} Refer to Yfrah Neaman’s impression of Joachim’s vibrato in Philip, *Performing Music*, 236-237.

\textsuperscript{41} Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*, 2:96a

\textsuperscript{42} Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*, 6-7.
\end{flushleft}
these limitations would still render these recordings challenging to work with, were this attempted in the absence of such contextual written examples. Joachim’s recordings are most popularly heard via a historical reproduction album also comprising the first recordings of Eugene Ysaÿe and Pablo de Sarasate.43 This album, recorded on the Opal label, provides an absolute faithfulness to the recording because of their hands-off approach to editing and a commitment to representing the source as accurately as possible.44 While this makes the recording transfer somewhat less pleasing to the modern ear, mainly due to a quite audible and ubiquitous hiss on each track, there is minimal if any loss of original material which typically occurs with the utilization of the modern editing methods.

The practices perceived in Joachim’s recordings, while similar across pieces are highly dependent on the composition period and composer of the work in question. Joachim shows a particular level of sensitivity depending on his perception of a work’s original style. The Adagio of Bach is therefore rendered in a different character than his recording of Hungarian Dance 1, the former exhibiting a less frequent use of vibrato and portamento. On Joachim’s recording of the Adagio from Bach’s Sonata in G minor, Mark Katz assessed, “he [Joachim] vibrates slightly on some of the sustained tones and applies a few quick shakes to a few of the highest notes in each phrase, but most of even the longer notes are played straight.”45 This sensitivity to different works is one of the factors that makes this set of recordings such a precarious set of evidence. Joachim’s stylistic sensitivity makes it necessary to analyze his performance style in more than just one general way, which has been one of the problematic parts of studying Joachim’s

44 Joseph Joachim, Pablo de Sarasate, Eugène Ysaÿe Opal 9851
recording. It is necessary to compare each of the four styles exhibited in Joachim's recorded evidence, to clarify which style characteristics are unique to each of the four styles, and to find commonalities between them. This method provides a much more specific study of Joachim’s style and how he played different types of music, rather than trying to compile all of the practices used in one generalized style. Being of Hungarian heritage, Joachim had a particular affinity with the *Hongrois Stil* and it is likely that he had sharp insights into the performance of the first of Brahms's Hungarian Dances.\(^6\) In fact, it was Hungarian violinists including Joachim who first married the manner of the Classical style of Violin playing at the end of the nineteenth century with that Hungarian style to create the aesthetic exemplified in Joachim’s recording of the Hungarian dance no. 1.

Joachim’s Romanze is a work of his own composition without any connotations with the *Hongrois Stil* or any such vernacular music. The work instead provides an opportunity to infer how Joachim and his circle of musicians might have interpreted new absolute music composed at the end of the nineteenth century. The differences in stylistic interpretation illustrated by Joachim helps to delineate two essential concepts: what late nineteenth-century musicians did to interpret music in their own versions of historically informed performance including styles influenced by vernacular music and what they considered appropriate for absolute music of their own time. If Joachim's Romanze exemplifies the Romantic aesthetic for performance in his own time, the Hungarian Dances of Brahms illustrate how these musicians might have performed examples of vernacular music. While Hungarian music would have been by no means rustic to Joachim, there is still an element of otherness or unfamiliarity in the composition of the work by Brahms. The

set of 21 dances is after all not a collection of Hungarian folk themes themselves, but a set of works inspired by the *Hongrois stil*.

When considering how Joachim uses the vibrato within each of these styles, there is a distinct variety within the gesture that becomes apparent especially, when comparing his Romance and the first Hungarian Dance. Joachim’s recording of the Hungarian dances utilizes far more vibrato than most of his other recorded examples such as the Bourrée and his Romance in C, suggesting that this concept of a “Hungarian” style demanded more of a vibrational sound. The thick and frequent vibrato he uses for the Hungarian works is absent in his other recordings. It is Joachim’s vibrato in the first Hungarian Dance that is most similar to the manner in which his student, Leopold Auer would use this thick and frequent vibrato in his 1920 recording. While Auer’s vibrato is still quite a bit wider than Joachim’s, it is useful to compare Joachim’s vibrato at its widest to that of his student Auer using the Spectrogram. The spectrogram analysis of both examples shows an oscillation of the waveform, which represents the vibrato as an oscillation of pitch on the horizontal axis. It is clear that Auer’s vibrato is much wider than that of Joachim’s, but the presence of vibrato is observed in both examples. As J.A. Fuller-Maitland asserted in his advanced age Joachim’s hands were increasingly “stiff and gouty” perhaps accounting for the difference in width of vibrato from Auer’s example. A striking feature of the spectrogram of Joachim’s recording of the first Hungarian dance is that it appears that he vibrates on a near frequent basis which is less observable through the use of aural analysis alone. This feature would support the concept that performance of a style influenced by vernacular music might have called for a higher quantity of vibrato in performance.
Joachim’s recording of Bach’s Adagio and Bourrée are almost entirely without vibrato while in the Romanze, vibrato is used somewhat selectively. The manner of Joachim’s vibrato, in
Ducreay

96
general, shows a high level of flexibility, often starting quite narrow and gradually becoming broader into the middle of the note before tapering off. While still used sparingly compared to modern approaches to vibrato, there is an apparent scheme to Joachim’s use of vibrato.47 This scheme is directly linked to the bel canto tradition of singing which was so popular at the time. Often highlighting the heights both of phrases and of Messa di Voces, the vibrato seems to have been similarly in both vocal and violin traditions. From its earliest history, the expressive properties of the violin have always been aimed at approaching those of the spoken and singing voice.48 Over time the style of the violin has always adapted and held a distinct correlation with the innovations and trends of the voice which Joachim’s vibrato illustrates in works of his own time. This changing width of vibrato is perhaps one of most signature stylistic traits of Joachim in comparison with Franco-Belgian violinists such as Ysaÿe, whose vibrato is generally quite a bit more constant whenever used.49

Varying degrees of portamento are also quite evident in Joachim’s recordings of these five works. Just as is the case with vibrato, the amount of portamento that the violinist used varies, based on the composer and period the music originates from, having an effect on the quantity of the effect as well as the duration. In the recordings that exhibit portamento, the technique is often accompanied by a dynamic inflection, often a swelling. This inflection, which accompanies the portamento in many cases, causes the slide itself to sound more prominently than the note to which the performer arrives. While there no specific mention of this swelling in

47 Wilson, “Style and Interpretation.”, 318.


the *Violinschule*, Joachim and Moser suggest that a “full clear tone” accompany the slide.\(^{50}\)

While disparaging of this dynamic nuance, dismissing it as an unfortunate by-product of the nineteenth-century German school, Flesch remarks that some, such as Klinger, maintained such practices in the tradition of Joachim.\(^ {51}\) This practice is well documented in several recorded examples of artists trained in or around the nineteenth-century German tradition, such as the Klinger Quartet, Arnold Rosé, and Leopold Auer.\(^ {52}\)

In Joachim’s recordings of the works of J.S. Bach, there are few if any examples of portamento. Stepping away from the study of Joachim’s recordings, this lack might suggest this is a stylistic choice by Joachim for the music of a much earlier time. This lack of portamenti in the 1903 recordings of Bach might be a result of Joachim’s study of baroque considerations such as a shorter fingerboard, the lack of a chinrest, and other such facets of performance for seventeenth-century violinists.\(^ {53}\) However, neither of the two recorded Bach examples necessitates such frequent shifting as seen in musical violin examples of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries which is typical of many works for violin by Bach. Therefore, without other examples of Joachim’s performances of Baroque music which require shifting, it is not clear whether Joachim would have embraced the technique in this music.

While his Bach recordings do not provide the most concrete evidence quantifying portamento, there are indeed insightful examples of Joachim’s recorded use of portamento in the

\(^{50}\) Joachim and Moser, *Violin School*, 77.


\(^{52}\) Wilson, “Style and Interpretation,” 235.

Romanze in C and the Hungarian Dances of Brahms. Indeed, one of the most striking features of Joachim’s recording of the Romanze is his full use of portamento which is illustrated in Robin Wilson’s vibrato diagram of the Romanze. He uses it quite often in this work, occurring no less than twenty-four times, suggesting that this was an accepted practice in new music of the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{54} This recording includes almost all of the specific types of portamenti that are mentioned in the Joachim-Moser treatise including the expressly cautioned, slide from a higher to lower note. Joachim's use of this retrogressive portamento is another indication of the value of using written evidence in combination with recorded evidence. His warning against this retrogressive portamento in the \textit{Violinschule} alongside his blatant use of this effect in the Romanze suggests that there is some level of deviation from his own written evidence that existed in performance. This deviation from Joachim’s writing may suggest either, that there were instances in which Joachim felt this type of portamento was appropriate although he did not prescribe it directly or that perhaps that it was a generalization which warned students reading the \textit{Violinschule}, against its use.

In very much the same manner, there are extensive examples of expressive portamento in the recording of the Hungarian dance no.1. The different characters of the Romanze and the Hungarian dance highlights how portamento might be used differently in both lyrical and virtuosic contexts. The most apparent and expressive examples of portamento in the dance are exhibited in both Joachim’s crafting of different qualities of portamento across registers and in double-stop passages. In comparison to the Romanze, the Hungarian dance no. 1 starts off in a much lower register, which Joachim highlights by combining in the opening sequence both portamento and constant vibrato. When the register becomes higher, however, the portamento

\textsuperscript{54} Wilson. “Style and Interpretation,” 236.
and vibrato decrease in quantity as if to create different voices segregated by the lower and higher registers. This interpretational consideration, which is most likely a result of Joachim’s expression of the *Hongrois Stil*, then adds a level of expression not found in the Romanze. Although portamento between double-stops is frequently used in the recordings of both works, Joachim's combination of portamento with vibrato in the Hungarian dance suggests that the combination of these two techniques represents the Hungarian style. This is supported by the observation that the Romanze does not exhibit the same combination, suggesting that the combination was not a part of the performance features of non-Hungarian influenced music within the tradition, such as those of Schumann and Brahms.

With such frequent use of portamento in several of these recordings, there remains the question of whether this portamento was strictly an expressive vehicle, or if convenience in some occasions also drove its use. While many of the treatises provide evidence of the portamento as an intention, it remains to be seen how convenience shaped this tradition for those violinists of Joachim's day.
Wilson’s vibrato diagram of Joachim’s Romanze in C mm. 1-84 from Robin Wilson, “Style and Interpretation in the Nineteenth-Century German Violin School with Particular Reference to the Three Sonatas for Pianoforte and Violin by Johannes Brahms” (Ph.D. diss, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 2014), 237.

Before it was an accepted practice to use recorded evidence in Joachim studies, written evidence left many holes to be filled in when exploring Joachim and other late nineteenth-
century German violinists style. Much of that written evidence had to be taken at face value
because of the absence of any corroborating evidence to suggest otherwise. Knowing that often
what one puts to paper is different from what one practices out in the world, recordings then
highlight the fact that any practices suggested by written evidence have some element of
flexibility as well as that written texts and their interpretations have ways of misleading. Early
recordings being what they are, however, these artifacts could not play as definitive a role in
producing conclusions of style. However, with the advances in recording study’s methodology
and tools for analysis, many of these questions became more answerable. The very subjective
analyses that previously resulted from the process of listening to an early recording early in this
young discipline’s study were then informed and given more concrete evidence with the use of
the spectrogram analysis.

4. Case Study: Joachim’s Use of Vibrato

In what is one of the first and best comprehensive studies of written and recorded
evidence on nineteenth-century German performance practice, Robin Wilson arrives at several
essential conclusions by using the Spectrogram in conjunction with the existing written evidence.
Wilson’s study of these nineteenth-century performance practices using a combination of
recorded and written evidence is unique in that it illustrates exactly how our subjective analysis
might differ from what is there through spectrogram study. Through Wilson's use of this type
of analysis, he gives an evident impression of how much of Joachim's vibrato we observe
through the 1903 recordings. It has long been determined in written evidence such as Joachim’s

55 For additional scholarship which references Spectrogram analysis for empirical purposes see, Wilson, “Style and
Interpretation.” 310, 316-318, 322-327.
Violinschule, and through impressions of his recordings, that vibrato occurs quite sparingly. This has often given an impression of a quite stark sound in comparison to later recorded violinists. However, Wilson’s findings regarding Joachim’s use of vibrato in the Romance paints a somewhat different picture. His evidence suggests that our perception of Joachim's vibrato might be quite skewed when analyzed by the ear alone. He discovered that when compared with the spectrogram results, an analysis that relies only on aural perception detects only 56 percent of the total notes vibrated.\(^{56}\) To further enliven the matter, Wilson states that the human ear is most able to detect vibrato on notes with a duration longer than an eighth-note at a rate of 75 percent accuracy while detection of vibrato on notes with less than that duration drops down dramatically to a figure of 26 percent.\(^{57}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aural</th>
<th>Spectrogram</th>
<th>Percentage of notes detected aurally %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total notes with vibrato</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrato on notes longer than a quaver value</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrato on notes of a quaver value or shorter</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This difficulty of detection and the findings from Wilson’s spectrogram analysis raises several issues which might suggest some very different conclusions than those previously assumed. First, is that analyses relying only on the human ear have many limitations that should be

\(^{56}\) Wilson, “Style and Interpretation,” 307.

\(^{57}\) Wilson, 307.
considered in the study of Joachim’s performance both in early recordings and written recollections of Joachim’s playing. Second, is a question of how exactly might the findings of Spectrogram analysis change our perception of these early recordings?

When recording studies were first used to look at Joachim’s 1903 recordings, before the use of spectrogram analysis, it is possible that the ear’s lowered ability to detect notes which Joachim vibrated rendered an inaccurate conclusion of the quantities of his vibrato. As Carl Seashore suggested in the 1920’s and 30’s, a great deal of vibrato was diminished in the commitment of sound to early wax-cylinder and disc recordings. This would assert an unquantifiable amount of original material was suppressed by the recording medium. While Spectrogram analysis helps to analyze this loss, it seems quite likely that the limitations of the human ear have resulted in many mistaken notions of Joachim's playing. With the idea that the original recording medium of these 1903 recordings took away some degree of the vibrato, the consultation of Spectrogram analysis assists to reclaim some of that lost or diminished material. As Wilson’s vibrato diagram of the Hungarian Dance no. 1 suggests, the Spectrogram provides a more accurate representation of this diminished vibrato than is possible from an aural analysis of the vibrato alone. Not only do Wilson’s findings suggest that Joachim used vibrato more frequently than previously assumed, they also illustrate the importance of tools such as the Spectrogram to remedy the limitations of the human ear. The second conclusion of this study is that it is entirely possible that Joachim's vibrated many more notes than are captured on these early recordings. Some sources assert that Joachim had a certain flexibility of the hand which added some low-level oscillation to his sound in performance. His vibrato was generally very


narrow, however, if this flexibility of the hand is to be considered, it is possible that Joachim maintained a vibrato in much of his playing which was so minute that it would not have even been considered vibrato by himself or period audiences. If this is true, it would suggest that it is indeed the recording technology of the time along with a lack of documentation on the "flexibility" of Joachim's vibrato which obscures our evidence regarding the actual quality of Joachim's tone.

While recording has at this time become accepted as a valid form of evidence with which to study style and performance practice in the nineteenth-century, it is most effective in conjunction with examples of written evidence. While Joachim never recorded the Three Violin Sonatas, such analyses of Joachim’s recordings of other works, provide insights of his performing style with which, it is possible to hypothesize how he might have interpreted them. As discussed previously, in his 1903 recordings, it appears that Joachim performed Early music, German absolute music, and music inspired by vernacular traditions quite differently. After surveying the popular methodologies and conclusions for working with recorded and written evidence, the endeavor to assemble a historically informed manner of interpreting the Brahms Violin Sonatas is made all the more accessible.
Vibrato diagram of the Brahms-Joachim Hungarian Dance no. 1 mm. 1-48 from, Robin Wilson, “Style and Interpretation in the Nineteenth-Century German Violin School with Particular Reference to the Three Sonatas for Pianoforte and Violin by Johannes Brahms” (Ph.D. diss, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 2014), 318
Chapter 4
Moving Past “Frei Aber Einsam”: New Paths for the Violin Sonatas of Brahms

1. Establishing “HIP”: Performing Brahms in the Twenty-First Century

Of the works known to have been composed by Brahms for the violin and piano, his three sonatas for violin and piano, Opp. 78, 100, and 108, are at the center. While there is evidence that the composer had composed at least three other sonatas before op. 78 was published, these works did not survive the composer's later scrutiny.¹ Just as these sonatas have a central role within the violin oeuvre of Brahms, they are also a focal point for many historically informed performance scholars for nineteenth-century music, and for several reasons. The first reason is the astounding number of violinists who study the performance style of these sonatas, especially Clive Brown, Robin Wilson, Robin Stowell, and David Milsom. Each has risen to a distinguished position within the HIP field of nineteenth-century music and have published the brunt of its scholarship. These sonatas also have the advantage of being easier to perform and study because they only require two instrumentalists, unlike much of the other chamber music composed by Brahms. Finally, the availability of performing evidence, both recorded and written, is abundant. These considerations, along with the rich pedagogical materials of the nineteenth century for both the violin and piano have made these sonatas the ideal candidate for exploring Brahms’s preferred performance practice.

The study of Brahms’s violin performance practices has been a natural selection for musicians, such as Milsom, Brown, and Wilson to supplement scholarship with performance practice even if these sonatas lack nineteenth-century historical editions or even early recordings.

¹Donald Francis Tovey, “Brahms,” Cobbett’s Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 176.
from the first decade of the twentieth-century. The marriage of these two disciplines has resulted in a variety of new and exciting projects and programs to further the study of nineteenth-century German performance practices. The first of these is the development of historically informed or practice-led performance programs specializing in nineteenth-century musical repertories and traditions. While HIP programs of the sort have been around for some time, they have often been specialized in the traditions of music from the fifteenth century through the eighteenth century. Programs specializing in nineteenth-century practice are at present entirely restricted to select areas of Europe and Australia, particularly programs at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Leeds University, Oxford University, and The University of Huddersfield. These institutions have become established centers for the performance of nineteenth-century music within the field of HIP and have developed international conferences, databases, and symposiums including the (HuCPeR) Huddersfield Center for Performance Research Nineteenth Century Salon, the (CHASE) Collection of Historical Annotated String Editions, and Performing Brahms in the twenty-first century all at the University of Leeds. Similarly, a changing of focus to extend the repertory of early music to include works of the nineteenth century has included such established Historically informed performing groups as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and newly formed ensembles including, the chamber ensemble Ironwood, The Chiaroscuro Quartet, and The Ferdinand David Ensemble, among others. These ensembles have explored the concepts of using nineteenth-century scholarship to create a performing style which embraces the practices of the nineteenth century.

In working with the Violin sonatas of Brahms specifically, Clive Brown, David Milsom, Neal Peres da Costa, and Robin Wilson have produced recordings which use nineteenth-century performance scholarship to present their Historically informed interpretations of these Brahms
works. These recordings are insightful experiments which highlight the possibilities—and often difficulties—of assembling a historically informed approach to the music of Johannes Brahms. In many of these cases, the musicians made every effort to secure Historically appropriate instruments and strings with which to record. David Milsom's recordings are performed with gut strings and keyboards of the nineteenth century, including an 1865 Broadwood “boudoir” grand, an 1898 Broadwood grand, an 1854 Erard grand, and an 1870 Erard grand, instruments that Brahms would have encountered in his life.2 Neal Peres da Costa and the Sydney Conservatorium, on the other hand, took a much more elaborate path concerning the instrument da Costa would use for his recordings by commissioning a replica of Brahms's piano. The replica crafted by Paul McNulty on the model of Brahms’s own J.B. Streicher and Sons piano (1868), captures not just a sound with which Brahms would have been familiar, but one he loved and praised highly.3 While of course not all of the music of Brahms at the end of the nineteenth century was played on a J.B. Streicher, the distinctive sound of leather-wrapped hammers on the Streicher seems to have been Brahms's first choice.4 These attempts to combine studies of nineteenth-century scholarship with the Historically informed performance movement have made significant progress in developing a stylistic awareness in the twenty-first century. While a realization of "authentic" is out of the question, these musicians have been making efforts to study and apply practices which would have been familiar to Brahms, to twenty-first-century performances.


2. The Brahms Violin Sonatas: Genesis and Reception History

To develop a historically informed interpretation of the Three sonatas for violin and piano, opp. 78, 100, and 108 it is useful to not only consult evidence of performance practice but also information regarding their genesis and receptions in performance. This type of information helps to develop a context by which to situate these sonatas in the time of Brahms and Joachim. Understanding when and by whom these sonatas were performed gives the performer additional background to make judgments of style based on early performances. Examinations of musical borrowing as is the case of the first two sonatas, allows further study of the original melodies and sources which might influence the interpretation of these sonatas.

Rain Song: Violin Sonata No. 1 in G major, Op. 78

The first of Brahms's sonatas, op. 78, was composed by Brahms in the summers of 1878 and 1879 in Pörtschach am Wörther See. These summers were highly productive for the composer, also yielding The Violin Concerto in D Major, op. 77 and the Rhapsodies for piano, op. 79. The first appearance of the op. 78 sonata was in a letter sent from Brahms to Clara Schumann with the first twenty-four bars of the second movement on the other side. The letter attached to the excerpt, explains these first bars of music as an expression of affection for Frau Schumann and her son, Felix. Felix Schumann, a gifted violinist, poet, and Brahms's godson, had been suffering from a bought of tuberculosis which would eventually end his life. Thus, this

---


sonata has often been associated with the young violinist. In a letter to his publisher Theodor Billroth, Brahms eludes to a connection between the third movement of op. 78 and one of his songs. Although Brahms only mentions one song, it is the case that both Regenlied, op. 59 no. 3 and Nachklang, Op. 59 no.4 have been referenced in the Violin Sonata. Both the first and last movements of the op. 78 sonata use the same motif for the opening of these songs, which correlate with the topic of “raindrops”. Next, on the 22nd of June, Brahms would write to the violinist, Joseph Joachim: “I hope very much to go through the proof correcting of the concerto with you in Salzburg, and to recuperate we can then also play a little sonata.” While the première in Vienna was to be given by Josef Hellmesberger with Brahms at the piano on November 20, 1879, their efforts were undermined by Robert Heckman and his wife, Marie Heckmann Hertig who gave performed this work first on the 8th of November. Although this sonata received somewhat mixed reviews throughout Brahms's life, it is the most loved of his sonatas in the twenty-first century.

**It Moves like a Melody: Violin Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 100**

The A major sonata of Johannes Brahms, op. 100, was composed in 1886 while summering near Lake Thun. This summer was a time of similar productivity to that of 1878 and 1879, accommodating the composition of the Cello Sonata in F op. 99, the op. 101 Piano trio, several songs of the opp. 105 and 106 song collections, and the final Violin Sonata in D minor op. 108. The first recorded distribution of any part of the op. 100 sonata was in a parcel of four

---


first-movements sent, on August 8th to Theodore Billroth. There is evidence to suggest that the first reading of this work likely in the house of Josef Victor Widmann, with Brahms at the piano and Friedrich Hegar, a student of Ferdinand David, performing the violin part. It has often been acknowledged that this Sonata in A major, was inspired in part by a deep interest in Hermine Spies, a contralto whom he met at Widmann's house. Similarly to the G major sonata, Brahms creates an essential connection between the sonata and his songs. In a parcel of manuscripts sent to Billroth on August 18 in the same year, he suggests that two of the songs, one which would later be published in the op. 105 collection, had a connection to his new Sonata. The songs, with text by Klaus Groth, are “Wie Melodien zieht es” (op. 105 no. 1), and “Komm bald” (op. 97 no. 5) and which profoundly influenced both themes of the sonata's first movement. One of, if not the first, performance in Vienna of this sonata was given on October 20th, 1886, performed by Brahms and Marie Soldat-Roeger. This 1896 performance was followed closely by other early performances of this sonata by violinists Joseph Hellmesberger Sr., Jenö Hubay, and Hugo Heerman.


14 For scholarship on the inspiration for the A major sonata refer to: Max Kalbeck, Johannes Brahms, 4th ed., vol. 4, 1 (Berlin, 1921), 16-17.

15 Gottlieb-Billroth, Billroth Und Brahms, 398.

16 Gottlieb-Billroth, Billroth Und Brahms, 398.


18 For more scholarship on the early performance of the op. 100 sonata, see Clive Brown and Neal Peres da Costa, “Op. 100 Critical Commentary,” IV-VIII.
Symphony in a Sonata: Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108

The D minor Violin Sonata, Op. 108, is the most significant sonata of Brahms in both size and texture. The significance of this sonata is due in part to its four-movement structure while the two earlier sonatas, opp. 78 and 100 only have three. The inclusion of a scherzo movement seems to show the influence of Brahms’s work in the symphonic genre a concept that is perhaps supported by the lack of borrowing from his own songs, a characteristic of his first two Violin Sonatas. While the work was, according to Brahms's journal, composed during the same summer as the A major sonata, it would not be circulated by Brahms until October 21st, 1888. This delay has been suggested as an attempt to elongate the successes of the summer of 1886. It was sent in manuscript first to Elizabeth Herzogenberg, who quickly studied the sonata with violinist Amanda Röntgen. The work would continue to be frequently performed in its first years by Brahms and several members of his circle, although it was primarily in specific conjunction with Jenö Hubay that many of the final edits were made. This sonata, which was perhaps the most successful in its own time, would garner brilliant reviews from critics and composers alike.


3. By whose Authority?: Urtext vs. Historical Editions

One of the first questions that anyone attempting to assemble a historically informed interpretation of these sonatas must ask is: what is the best edition to use in this endeavor? It is this question that draws out the issue of using Urtext editions as is so prevalent today. While it is often thought that the most informed or accurate interpretation might come from the utilization of such a clean source, it may not be the most reliable source. There are performing practices of the late nineteenth century which differ by a large degree from our own. This suggests that the use of an Urtext edition would still leave the interpreter ignorant of many stylistic practices with which Brahms would have been familiar. Without knowledge of these nineteenth-century practices, it is difficult to render a successful historically informed interpretation. Therefore, it is highly recommended that an edition is found which has some connection to the practices of the time and the musicians who performed this music. While not all practices of this time are notated, as suggested in Chapter III, there is indeed a great deal of performance information within the bowings and fingerings of nineteenth-century performers. The early twentieth-century historical editions of the Brahms sonatas that are most closely connected to the traditions of the time are:

1917   ed. Leopold Auer and Rudolph Ganz (New York: Carl Fischer)
1918   ed. Franz Kneisel and Harold Bauer (New York: Schirmer)
1926   ed. Ossip Schnirlin and Robert Kahn (Berlin: Simrock)
1926   ed. Carl Flesch and Artur Schnabel (Leipzig: Peters)
1929   Ed. Arthur Seybold and Gustav Groschwitz (Berlin: Anton J. Benjamin)
1929   Ed. Clemens Schultze-Biesantz and Leo Kähler (Braunschweig: Litolff)
1933   Ed. Emil Telmányi (Copenhagen & Leipzig: Wilhelm Hansen)

Depending on the individual editorial practices and their connections to the practices of the nineteenth century, there is much information to be found which can be used to form an informed interpretation. While each of these editors has some connection, it should be left to the performer to decide which practices and Historical style they choose. For those wishing to engage with the editor who had the closest chamber music relationship to Brahms, the edition by Franz Kneisel, who was a frequent chamber music partner with Brahms throughout the 1890’s might be the most reliable option. The editions by Leopold Auer and Ossip Schnirlin, both students of Joachim’s, provide the closest examples to Joachim’s practices through their pedagogical connection. For the performer wishing to engage with the playing style of Jenő Hubay, Telmányi, his student, provided annotations which might have come directly from his teacher. These editions give the performer a variety of options for engagement in the practices and styles which would have been familiar to Brahms himself. Finally, recent editions published by Bärenreiter and edited by Clive Brown and Neal Peres da Costa represent the most recent findings of Historically informed performance practice in a critical edition. Each sonata includes extensive critical commentary on written and unwritten practices in string playing of the nineteenth century along with a clean urtext part and an edition by Clive Brown. The edition marked by Brown, as a result of his many years of engagement with nineteenth-century German violin practice, and the Urtext part also supplied engage both the written and unwritten evidence of string performance in this century. As a scholar of these nineteenth-century practices, Brown's


editions provide a synthesis of much of the available evidence in an easily accessible format. His markings are derived from a mixture of written and recorded evidence and his scholarship which, provides the performer with a Historically informed interpretation in a "ready-to-play" format. While Brown’s edition is quite valuable for both the nineteenth-century performance scholar and the relative neophyte, it is only through critical study of the available Historical editions that one will develop a higher element of nuance in the interpretation.

4. **Tempi in the Three Violin Sonatas**

Once all available options of editions are explored, a decision of tempo is of next significant importance. Deciding the tempo for one's interpretation is a similar process to choosing an edition. Each editor’s proximity to the tradition and connection to the practices of the late nineteenth century should be critically evaluated and compared to other extant examples.\(^{25}\) The subject of tempo in the music of Brahms is a notoriously difficult due to the composer’s great ambivalence to prescribing metronome markings, as suggested in the composer's remark to George Henschel: “Good friends have talked me into putting them there, for I myself have never believed that my blood and a mechanical instrument go well together.”\(^{26}\) This apprehension to provide metronomic tempo indications is most certainly tied to the composer’s wish for rhythmic freedom in performance.

Brahms was often known to have performed his works at different tempos from performance to performance as noted by Willy Rehberg, who asserted that Brahms often played

---


his own work slower than was marked in the Italian tempo markings. It is only upon entry to the twentieth century, as the style of Brahms and Joachim began to fade, that metronome markings began to make their way into editions. The lack of metronome markings in the last two decades of the nineteenth century suggests that Brahms had a much more flexible sense of what tempos were appropriate for his music. This also suggests that Brahms might have appreciated the variety in tempo as interpretational liberty, a crucial part of the performance itself. Acknowledging the idea that the style of performing Brahms in the present time is a different aesthetic from that of the late-nineteenth or even early twentieth centuries; it is important to develop some idea of reconciliation between these styles.

It is important to take into consideration the entire spectrum of marked metronome markings in the available historical editions. In six of the Historical editions available for the Sonata in G Major op. 78, the tempi for the opening of the first movement range from minim=50-60. Recorded evidence of the first sonata from the first half of the twentieth century can then be used to help make a more informed conclusion. Clive Brown has asserted that upon referencing early recordings such as those of Telmányi, Joseph Szigeti, and Jascha Heifetz, a conclusion of minum=54 for the opening is supported. However, the often-overlooked recording of Adolf Busch with Rudolf Serkin recorded in 1931 suggests a lower boundary of 50 bpm to the minim in agreement with the edition of Schnirlin. Adolf Busch, a student of both Willy Hess (a student of Joachim) and Bram Eldering (a student of Jenő Hubay), might reflect the qualities of Joachim, Jenő Hubay, and the late nineteenth-century style better than the

---


recordings of Heifetz or Telmányi. This slightly slower opening tempo reflects Brahms’s propensity for broader tempos than what was marked, for providing musical space for high levels of rhythmic flexibility. In returning to the specifics of metronome markings in these sonatas, again a comparison of sources might be used to develop a better concept of the range of historical evidence regarding tempos. Historical editions place the first movement tempo range of the A Major sonata between 100-116 bpm to the crotchet while that of the D minor sonata, op. 108 is suggested between 72-84 bpm to the minum. The Busch recording, however, recorded in 1932, pushes the upper limit of the suggested range to 132 bpm=crotchet for the opening tempo. While a large quantity of rubato is used, Busch and Serkin open the D minor sonata at approximately 98 bpm to the quaver in their 1939 recording, much faster indeed than the written evidence. While it is impossible to know what tempi would have appealed most to Brahms, it can indeed be inferred that such a wide range of tempi suggests a lack of standardization at all, even in Brahms’s time.

V. The Interpretation of Italian Tempo Markings and Dynamics

While Brahms gives no direct tempo markings for his Violin sonatas, he does provide specific Italian tempo and expression markings which serve as a scheme by which he organizes the tempo relationships in his sonatas. These tempo markings are of course indicative of specific tempo ranges however, there is evidence to suggest that there were also unwritten practices which accompanied these Italian terms. It is also apparent that these unwritten practices also extended to various dynamics and accents, which served to add an expressive nuance to the

phrase. These practices suggest such ideas such as a slowing or hastening of tempo, which highlight the natural connotations of these tempo markings in a very expressive way. In the words of Clive Brown, terms such as, “expressive, dolce, ritardando, sostenuto, meno mosso, animato, con anima, calando, sotto voce carried particular implications for dynamic and agogic shadings, tempo, and sound colour.” These nuances are precisely what made Brahms and Joachim so adverse to the limitations of the metronome and the specificity of tempo it demanded.

For the Italian tempo and expression markings in Brahms's music, there is an important focus that Brahms attached to their meanings. There are many instances where Brahms changed these markings throughout the composition and first performances of his sonatas, such as his addition of ma non troppo to the first movement of the G major Violin Sonata which appears first in the autograph as only, vivace. The third movement exhibits similar anxiety over the Italian marking by Brahms’s correction of the beginning tempo on no less than three occasions. The care that the composer put into these markings is reflected in surviving evidence, which seems to suggest that each Italian tempo mark had an unwritten performance convention attached. While these practices affected the piano in equal measure, often denoting an expectation of dislocation or arpeggiation, the expectations of the violinist were no less demanding. Evidence suggests that these practices generally consist of slowing down, restraining speed, and speeding up, albeit to different degrees. Often, there may have been some unwritten dynamic expectation which would have emphasized the marking such as in mm. 164 of op. 78’s first movement. This marking in mm. 164, sempre p e dolce is only marked in the piano line

however it seems that it is for both instruments to maintain.\textsuperscript{34} Clive Brown suggests the marking suggests a restraint in tempo, dynamic, and intensity which would apply to both the violin and piano until the crescendo indicated.\textsuperscript{35} However, it is perhaps more likely that given the violin’s \textgreater \textless inflections, which often would have been accompanied by a swelling of tempo, it could be an indication that the violin should manipulate time while the piano remained strictly in tempo and subdued in dynamic.\textsuperscript{36} Adolf Busch’s 1931 recording reflects this sentiment along with his use of an accelerando from m. 170, further suggesting that dynamic and expressive indications often had unwritten links with tempo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The term \textit{sostenuto} seems to have been a particular favorite of Brahms, generating an intimate feeling and a heightening of harmonic and formal tensions. From recollections of Brahms and Joachim’s performance manner, \textit{sostenuto} was a marking that demanded varying levels of ritardando or tempo. For example, Fanny Davies marked in her copy of Brahms’s Piano Trio, op. 8, above the marking, \textit{in tempo ma sempre sostenuto}, ”sostenuto actually means ‘slower tempo’ as though one could not get enough richness out of the sentence.”\textsuperscript{37} For a composer so concerned with precision and accuracy in his marking, we are left with minimal idea of what distinction should be made between sostenuto and other markings which suggest a slowing of tempo. While the nuances of each marking may be sparsely referenced in Brahms's hand, concert reviews and recollections of those who would have heard Brahms’s music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century provide some supporting evidence. Such evidence is found in

\textsuperscript{34} Brown and Peres da Costa, “Op. 78 Critical Commentary,” XIII.


suggestions that *Sostenuto* might have meant a greater holding back than *tranquillo* and in J.A. Fuller-Maitland’s assertion that in the music of Brahms, *Sostenuto* is a slowing of tempo between that of *meno mosso* and *ritardando*.\(^{38}\) Other similar terms such as *calando* are suggested to also have some purpose other than to merely signify *ritardando*. While *calando* seems to have incited a slowing of tempo, Joachim and other musicians of the time would have taken the term also to mean a, "weakening in volume, accent, rhythm, and tempo."\(^{39}\)

One last technique to suggest a slowing of tempo seems to have been the *decrescendo* both as an independent marking and in its place as the latter half of a hairpin. The *decrescendo* is most often found in the music of Brahms when ending a phrase or coming to the point of sudden and renewed vigor. This seems to request that the performer heighten the tension from such a conclusion by employing such a slight slowing in tempo. This seems to have often been used as a foil for the crescendo and its similar implication for an *accelerando*, as is the case in mms. 16-20 in the first movement of op. 78. Similarly, those markings suggesting a hastening of tempo are equally as complex, as in the case of the marking, *con anima*. This term for an animation of tempo also seems to have affected articulation and dynamic, in a similar manner the execution of the term, *calando* would. Brahms's chamber music collaborator, Hugo Becker, explained that *animato* was, "The term for the vitality with which we more rapidly relate events that move us strongly."\(^{40}\) For Becker thus, the term was not merely a direction to increase inertia. The multiplicity of terms Brahms embraced to indicate a slowing of tempo suggests that the

---


composer felt that this slowing was a crucial part of his music, each demanding a different style of execution.

While terms such as *con anima* and *sostenuto* carried mainly implications of tempo for the violinist of Brahms’s time others, such as, *espressivo* and *dolce*, are examples that primarily concern style. Indicative of this is the marking of *Adagio espressivo* for the second movement of Brahms’s Op. 108 Violin Sonata. *Espressivo* in Brahms’s time would have opened the doors to a variety of practices including but not limited to, “rhythmic alteration achieved through agogic accentuation (particularly on dissonances or melodically prominent notes), inequality of rhythm in the 8th- and 16th-note figurations, dislocation between melody and accompaniment, and chordal arpeggiation”, according to Clive Brown.41 It is possible, judging from the fingerings annotated in several early historical editions, that the combination of Adagio and espressivo also would have suggested a preference for the lower strings and that a higher quantity of portamento be used.

Marion Ranken, a student of Karl Klinger, recalled that amongst Joachim and his colleagues the term *espressivo* was often accompanied by slow bow speed with “considerable pressure” as well as a sparing or absent vibrato.42 It is this observation by Ranken that puts evidence in direct conflict with the modern way of interpreting such sections. For example, the first theme of the D minor Violin Sonata of Brahms would never be performed today without vibrato. It would seem that while the contemporary taste associates vibrato with intensity, quite the opposite was true in the time of Brahms. The term *dolce*, seems to have differed quite a bit from *espressivo* in the manner a violinist would perform it. August Wilhelmj, a student of

Ferdinand David, describes the method by which a *dolce* or *dolcissimo* might be enacted.

Wilhelmj instructs:

> If the Bow is placed at a great distance from the Bridge (and therefore almost over the fingerboard-“sur la touché”) while the Bow moves at a considerable speed, so without pressure, the result is a tone of little intensity, but of clarinet like sweetness and much-carrying power. This is known as Dolce.\(^{43}\)

Ranken also provides evidence to suggest other specific qualities of Dolce, by suggesting that vibrato would have been used quite freely in cooperation with a fast bow speed.\(^{44}\) These examples are highly indicative of the differences in aesthetic between Brahms's time and our own. The most challenging part of developing a historically informed interpretation is precisely that, a difference of aesthetic. However, this evidence gives the advantage of allowing the use of a nineteenth century aesthetic to construct a new Historically informed style for performing these works.

**VI. Portamento**

Early twentieth-century fingerings for the first sonata provide many examples of artistic techniques of the left hand such as portamento and harmonics. The opening figure of the first movement mm. 1, is marked by all of the editors available as a harmonic, except for Schultze-Biesantz and Leopold Auer, and is also reflected in Joseph Szigeti’s 1951 recording.\(^{45}\) This fingering seems to have been deemed appropriate in figures where the same note was written consecutively more than twice. While this harmonic fingering does not seem to be a universal

---


\(^{44}\) Bruce Ranken, *Some Points of Violin Playing*, 19.

tradition amongst the violinists of the tradition, it instead provides a popular expressive option often evidenced in historical annotations.\textsuperscript{46} Historical editions of the opening violin theme in the \textit{Adagio} movement, by contrast, suggests that the use of portamento would have been an essential expressive practice. In most of the Historical editions of this movement, portamento is either suggested through the fingerings themselves or, in the case of Schultze-Biesantz, marked with lines between semitones. While all of the early editions suggest some manner of the practice, they are each unique in the implementation of the device. Recordings of the Adagio, such as those by Telmányi, Adolf Busch, and the 1931 recording of Toscha Seidel, not only provide evidence of the appropriateness of the practice but also suggest how it might be used effectively in performance. To assemble a historically informed interpretation in these sonatas, historical editions and recordings are of critical importance.

5. \textbf{Vibrato}

As previously explored, \textit{vibrato} as a performance practice is amongst one of the most contentious of all. To discuss how the practice might be applied to the three Violin Sonatas of Brahms, a necessary distinction must be made between two different styles of performance for which there is evidence. The first is the style of Joachim which embodies perhaps a purer conception of the classical German style as passed down from Spohr and Ferdinand David. The other is the style of the early twentieth century composed of the students and contemporaries of Joachim. The style of Joachim is suggested to have been characterized by a high level of restraint concerning vibrato. In all evidence, the vibrato of Joachim is quite narrow and originates from the wrist and fingers. Evidence of Joachim’s playing seems to advocate for this technique to be

used during such moments as: *Messa di Voce, dolce,* and in the *Hongrois Stil.* While Joachim used vibrato quite selectively, it is clear that the vibrato was not of the continuous variety which has become popular from the latter half of the twentieth century.\(^{47}\) To compare the vibrato and its use by Joachim against violinists of the following generation such as, select examples of Joachim's students, it is not altogether accurate to place the playing aesthetic of these violinists in the same category. While in the first decade the continuous use of vibrato was highly debated, a 1910 German treatise by Siegfried Eberhardt remarks, “Artistic finish is *impossible* without a correctly made vibrato”.\(^{48}\) By the second decade of the twentieth-century, it would seem that some manner of a continuous vibrato had become to be an integral part of violin technique judging by Carl Flesch’s assertion that all of the most celebrated violinists of the day used employed an ‘uninterrupted vibrato’.\(^{49}\) While these musicians recording in the early twentieth century indeed exemplify several performance idioms which were typical of Joachim, they occupy a transitional style of a kind between that of the nineteenth century and that of the twentieth. Of the violinists of the German tradition who occupy this transitional space between centuries, it is logical to place within its confines such violinists as, Hubay, Auer, Bronislaw Huberman, Joseph Szigeti, Adolf Busch, and Jelly D’Aranyi. This latter group of violinists embraced a wider and more frequent use of vibrato although, in comparison to later violinists, the effect was still used quite selectively. This leaves us with the question of, whether Brahms might have preferred, or at least been more familiar, with the style of vibrato exemplified by

---

\(^{47}\) Katz, “Aesthetics out of Exigency,” 94.


Joachim? It has been suggested that there is little to no evidence which implies Brahms’s views on the use of vibrato. While there is much evidence to suggest that Brahms was a staunch promoter of Joachim’s style which might advocate a preference for selective vibrato, he also praised Jenő Hubay’s performance aesthetic which likely exhibited this newer style, characterized by the much broader use of vibrato than that of his teacher.

While evidence of Joachim’s use of vibrato is not wholly conclusive, there is a great deal of it which seems to suggest his selective use. In this case, recorded and written evidence provide the best clues regarding how Joachim might have used vibrato in the performance of these sonatas. Robin Wilson has suggested that Joachim's performing style of these sonatas would have reflected that of both the recordings of his Romance in C and Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 1. However, the disparity of vibrato between both recordings suggests that they reflect two different styles of playing for Joachim. The Hungarian dance, seems to reflect the influence of the Hongrois stil, while the Romance seems to represent a style which was probably much more compatible with absolute music without any Hungarian connotation. It is far more likely that Joachim's style in performing the Brahms Sonatas would have been much more closely aligned with his style in the Romance in C. As in Joachim’s recording of the Romance and written evidence of his use of vibrato, the primary occasions for its use seem to have been during hairpins, moments marked dolce, and at the heights of phrases.

While it is clear that the vibrato would become much more of a utilized expressive medium in the generation of violinists after Joachim, it is not so clear whether even some violinists of the late nineteenth-century German tradition would also have used it to a greater

51 Wilson, “Style and Interpretation,” 5.
degree than Joachim. Jenő Hubay, a student of Joachim and frequent performer of Brahms’s music, seems to have embraced an altogether broader and more frequent vibrato than his master. Hubay's 1935 video premiere in the movie, *Halló Budapest*, shows the violinist using a very wide vibrato and a much more frequent vibrato than Joachim might have used. It is clear from this recording that while Hubay’s vibrato is infinitely more accessible to modern listeners than Joachim’s, it is not yet of the continuous type that would pervade the playing of such violinists as Fritz Kreisler, Jascha Heifetz, and Mischa Elman. This 1935 recording positions the 77-year-old violinist in an enigmatic position in the German tradition because of his use of vibrato and style. It is unlikely that the violinist adopted such a quality of vibrato so late in his life or that his vibrato would have widened over time, since age often stiffens the vibrato. More research might conclude that Hubay was one of the first, if not the originator of this type of vibrato in the German tradition. Hubay’s outlier style amongst violin playing in both the late nineteenth century and twentieth century positions his playing as a transitional example. Unfortunately, evidence of Hubay’s life and playing is not readily accessible, compared to that concerning Joachim. The study of Hubay and other violinists might prove to provide more style evidence with which to perform these Three Violin sonatas of Johannes Brahms.

6. **Conclusions**

Today, the historically informed performance movement has made great strides to change the way musicians play the music of the past. While the brunt of the movement's force has been directed at music from the 18th century backward, the last decade or so has been marked by a

---

52 Vajda, *Halló Budapest*. 
reappraisal of the importance of such performance studies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the availability of early twentieth century recordings, the popularity of the romantic repertoire, and the perceived proximity to the nineteenth century, it was primarily held until recently that the practices of the nineteenth century were the same or quite similar to the ones we employ in the modern time. Through the efforts of performer-scholars such as Clive Brown, Neal Peres da Costa, Robin Stowell, George Kennaway, Robin Wilson, and their pedagogical ilk, there is a new and more conscientious appraisal of the performing practices of the late nineteenth century Germany.

It is worth mentioning that perhaps Joachim and violin studies make up such a significant portion of the available evidence regarding the performance practices of this tradition because a significant majority of these scholars are in fact violinists. With this renewed interest in the practices of the late nineteenth century, the field has isolated and placed a particular interest in the nineteenth-century German tradition of playing. It begs the question of why the German nineteenth-century school has been elected while others such as the Franco-Belgian and Russian schools have been comparatively neglected. This is most likely because the practices of these other schools have both, in the contemporary time, been primarily influences upon our modern practices, and have therefore been kept in a better state of preservation. This is certainly not to state that those styles have been thoroughly explored, but rather that it was the late nineteenth-century German tradition that fell into relative obscurity following the start of the twentieth century. Whatever the reason, it is clear that it is the German aesthetic of music performance which performance practice scholars have attempted to revive. As a focal point of this performance practice revival, there has been perhaps no composer more studied than Johannes Brahms.
More than almost any composer of the late nineteenth century, the music and traditions of Johannes Brahms have captivated the imagination of the Historical performance movement. His dynamic social and musical circle, better known as the conservative party in the "War of the Romantics," has often been summoned to embody what seems to be considered the pinnacle of German Romanticism. With such figures as Clara and Robert Schumann, Joseph Joachim, Eduard Hanslick, Carl Reinecke, and Albert Dietrich, the study of Brahms and this group's performance aesthetics has gained a certain mystique which has certainly helped its position as the chosen tradition of HIP scholars. Joseph Joachim, as the "rightful heir" of the German Classical tradition, has then played perhaps the most substantial role in the study of performing the music of Brahms. Joachim, as the first recorded violinist and the most acclaimed of the time, has therefore been esteemed as the principal architect of the style of Germanic string performance of the late nineteenth century. Every bit of evidence that is used towards assembling a set of performance practices for the interpretation of the string chamber music of Brahms is critically checked against the knowledge of Joachim, only reinforcing the violinist's position. Therefore, any prescription of style in the string music of Brahms depends on Joachim as the gatekeeper.

To assemble the most convincing Historically informed interpretation of the Three Sonatas for Piano and Violin, opp. 78, 100, and 108 of Johannes Brahms, it is necessary to take a somewhat holistic approach. To perform this music in a historically informed manner is possible only by connecting a variety of types of evidence. It is especially difficult, in the present day, to develop an approach of this kind to interpret these three sonatas because the nineteenth-century practices captured in writing and recording are markedly at odds with the manner in which we perform these works today. Because of changing aesthetics of performance, the Brahms sonatas
have, in the twenty-first century outside of the “HIP” community, developed a performance style which does not reflect the practices of violinists such as Joachim. While these post factum practices have indeed been accepted as the primary way to perform this music, therein lies their danger. Pedagogues and musicologists have more and more touted this style of performance as, "The style of Brahms" or a historically informed approach in itself. This belief, while widely held, has impeded the progress of informed approaches which have some grounding in tangible evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to develop a critical reappraisal of the style of Brahms if the goal is to understand and apply practices with which Joachim and Brahms would have been familiar.

This reappraisal of the style in which we perform the three Brahms sonatas is not a simple one, nor is it a pursuit with one singular aim. It is one that should ultimately not just be built on Joachim, but those exceptional musicians who carried on his legacy in their playing such as Klinger, Jenö Hubay, Maud Powell, Marie Soldat-Roeger, and Huberman. In developing a Historically informed approach to the performance of these Brahms works, it seems the value is as much in the process than the end result. While one will invariably battle against the problematic nature of authenticity and all of the issues that arise from the concept, it is not with the goal of being authentic that an attempt at Historically Informed performance should be made. Instead, I would argue that the most beneficial outcomes from this venture are a developed familiarity with the quantities and quality of nineteenth century practices and an eviction of the twentieth century post-factum manipulations of this music not based on evidence, manipulations which have become both common practices in modern interpretation and entirely alien to the evidence of musicians who composed and performed this music. In this spirit, a historically
informed interpretation can be much more than an impossible reproduction of the past but rather, a method by which we can approach the music of Brahms with greater attentiveness to evidence.
Bibliography


——. “Marie Soldat-Roeger and the Twilight of a Nineteenth-Century German School of Playing.” Article in a symposium, Wien, n.d.


C. “Dragonetti.” *The Court Magazine and Belle Assemblee*, 1832.


Sydney Conservatorium of Music: Recital Hall West, 2015.


https://archive.org/details/josephjoachim00fulluoft.


https://archive.org/details/johannesbrahmsi00herzgoog.


http://chase.leeds.ac.uk/view/pdf/1195/1/.


https://archive.org/details/johannesbrahmsi00widmgoog.
