

# Practice and Principle: Perspectives upon the German ‘Classical’ School of Violin Playing in the Late Nineteenth Century

David Milsom  
University of Huddersfield  
Email: [d.milsom@hud.ac.uk](mailto:d.milsom@hud.ac.uk)

*In spite of rigorous exploration of nineteenth-century performing practices, performers are still apt to characterise ‘Romantic’ performance as slovenly, sentimental and tasteless. This article challenges this view by examining the practice of a violinist whose artistic outlook was seen at the time as highly disciplined and artistically motivated – Joseph Joachim. Joachim, closely allied to the Leipzig ‘school’ and the conservative branch of German music in the nineteenth century, left ample evidence of his artistic approach in terms of a performance treatise, numerous annotated editions, and five sound recordings made towards the end of his life. This evidence attests to his rigorous application of performance theory to performance practice. In addition, Joachim’s pupils Karl Klingler and Marie Soldat were known as faithful adherents of this approach and they too made a number of revealing sound recordings which help to create a fuller picture. This article examines a number of these recordings in detail in order to propose that they show significant correspondences with Joachim’s own practice and, by extension, provide evidence of the outworking of a Classical German ‘school’ of performance theory.*

*The article suggests that, by acknowledging the basis of this tradition in performance theory (much of which displays the heritage of eighteenth-century ideals) present-day performer scholars should be encouraged to see nineteenth-century performance aesthetics not so much as devoid of principle as embodying a now unfamiliar performance language. The acquisition of this language is perhaps important to a fuller understanding of nineteenth-century music.*

This is an essay about performing practice. That it is so, in a special edition of this journal devoted to the subject of performance *theory* may seem obtuse, but theories of performance belonging to any era are inextricably linked to the performance act itself. As a consequence, hard distinctions between theory and practice are impossible. Few streams of performance aesthetics, it would seem, were more dependent upon seeing practice as the fulfilment of theory than the late nineteenth-century German ‘Classical’ school of string playing, as borne out particularly by the attitudes, motivations, performance traits and theoretical writings of its most famous protagonist, Joseph Joachim (1831–1907).

This essay attempts to confront the commonly-held view that late nineteenth-century performing practice is quaint, ill disciplined and excessively mannered. Instead, it proposes that the fulfilment of aesthetic principle and faithfulness to tradition were at the heart of the performance act. By extension, performers such as Joachim were unusually conscious of established aesthetic ideals and saw themselves as inheritors of long-standing and theoretically justified modes of performance and systems of performance expression. Our often incredulous or bemused reaction to what we hear in early recordings is prompted not only by an instinctive reaction to

the unfamiliar but also, I argue, by a lack of comprehension of the theoretical framework underpinning it. To understand the employment of languid and pronounced portamentos, frequent departures from the musical text and a sparing approach to vibrato, for example, one must get to grips with the performance theories that explain these approaches. Moreover, an overtly expressive mode of performance, bending all parameters of the performance act to serve artistic need, may appear over-the-top nowadays (in the way that early records of Shakespearean actors can sound caricatured). Its intention, though, was not an abandonment of 'good taste', but rather the fulfilment of a very different notion of tastefulness.

The scholarly underpinnings of these views are already an established part of the performing practice landscape. Clive Brown's *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900*<sup>1</sup> discusses the whole issue of changing expectations of music notation (and different meanings and intended performance consequences) in some depth, whilst my own text, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance 1850–1900*<sup>2</sup> attempts to reveal the theories behind performing practices in respect of violin-playing specifically. The inter-connectedness of theory and practice – theories informing and yet also attempting to explain practice, and practice attempting to justify its expressive traits by claiming its basis in theory – is, of course, true of all artistic production to a certain extent; my purpose in this article is to throw the spotlight on the important issue of relating principle to the performance act, using the case of the German 'Classical' school of string playing as a working example. As part of an AHRC Research Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Leeds between 2006 and 2009 I took just such an approach (what Nicholas Cook has described as the 'tribute band' method).<sup>3</sup> This involved augmenting my scholarly knowledge of nineteenth-century performing practices with the practical experience of attempting, in the manner of a posthumous Joachim 'pupil', to embody as much of his style and that of the 'Classical' German school as it was possible to do. This involved reading afresh key texts such as Spohr's *Violinschule*,<sup>4</sup> practising exercises prescribed by Spohr and contemporary violinists with scrupulous attention to technical and stylistic instructions, repeated listening to recordings (such as Joachim's) and trying to emulate them as exactly as possible. This stage was a prelude – a simple process of childlike 'copying' (analogous, perhaps, to one's immature attempts to play exactly in the manner of one's violin teacher) – which was followed by a stage of fruition – working on the basis of understanding, in practice, of performance tradition and principle. This mature understanding could then be applied to other works, with the useful intermediary of annotated performing editions with markings (such as bowings and fingerings) of key figures of this school of playing (such as Spohr, David and Joachim).<sup>5</sup> The fruits of this research will be the substance of my thesis here, aligning theory with practice in the German 'Classical' school.

<sup>1</sup> Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> David Milson, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance 1850–1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Verbal conversation with the author, CHARM/RMA Conference, Royal Holloway, September 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Spohr, *Violinschule* (Vienna: Haslinger, 1833).

<sup>5</sup> See the project webpages, which give details of the nature and scope of the project, methodology, and some sound recordings made by the author: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/music/dm-ahrc/>

Bruce Haynes's depiction of 'Romantic style' in his text *The End of Early Music* shows just how contentious and even political the common-sense premise laid out above can still be, even in the views of a fellow performing-practice scholar and performer. Thus, Haynes offers the following characterisation of such practices:

Let's begin by describing Romantic style, afterwards considering how Modern style differs from it. The main attributes of Romantic style are:

- portamento (on string instruments an audible change of position or slide),
- extreme legato,
- lack of precision (not deliberate),
- tempos that are usually slower than anyone would use today,
- lack of distinction between important and unimportant beats, due to an unrelenting heaviness and a surfeit of emphasis,
- melody-based phrasing,
- exaggerated solemnity,
- concern for expression,
- controlled use of vibrato,
- agogic accents (emphatic lingering),
- rubato.<sup>6</sup>

This view represents a growing realisation among performers and scholars that nineteenth-century performance, vividly depicted on early recordings of musicians trained as long ago as the 1830s, is very different – conceptually so, in fact – in comparison to so-called 'modern' or 'mainstream' renditions. On the face of it, all of this seems perfectly reasonable. The differences between 'period' style and what one might describe as unreformed, modern-style performance are obvious to just about everyone now, whilst the 'otherness' of the experience of listening to early recordings is equally conspicuous. Robert Philip's *Early Recordings and Musical Style*<sup>7</sup> is now twenty years old and, aided by advances in information technology, there is now a considerable amount of scholarly interest in analysing recorded performances. Whilst all of this has been happening, an entire generation of scholars and performers has grown up since Richard Taruskin's powerful tirade against the flimsy premises of 'authenticity',<sup>8</sup> to the extent that the word has been all but expunged from the language of responsible debate.

One area remains highly contentious in spite of the adoption of cautiously relativistic terms such as 'historically-informed' to describe the activities of scholars and performers interested in reviving past styles of performance. Very few scholars have admitted that what one hears in the earliest generation of musicians to make recordings – players such as Carl Reinecke and Joseph Joachim, and singers such as Adelina Patti and Charles Santley – may well have significant correspondences with even earlier practices (of late eighteenth-century musicians at least). Whilst such comparisons are inevitably speculative,

<sup>6</sup> Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 51–2.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

they are no more so (and arguably rather less) than the practices of so-called 'period' performers who, for so long now, have developed their own self-referential infrastructure in pre-Romantic music performance. An example of such comment is Clive Brown's 2006 article, 'Performing Classical Repertoire: the Unbridgeable Gulf between Contemporary Practice and Historical Reality',<sup>9</sup> which examines Moreschi, Reinecke and Marie Soldat-Roeger – a faithful Joachim pupil – and lends unusual credence to the likelihood that they maintained pre-Romantic performance traits, something that Reinecke at least intended more or less consciously, as Brown relates:

Born in 1824, Reinecke's direct experience reached back to the end of the Classical period when he received his early training from his father. He gave his first public performances in the mid 1830s. In later years he was closely associated with Leipzig, where he was warmly received by Mendelssohn and Schumann. The latter considered him an ideal performer of his music. From 1860 Reinecke taught at the Leipzig Conservatorium, founded at Mendelssohn's instigation in 1843, and in 1897 he was appointed its director. Reinhold Sietz observed that 'Reinecke considered it his responsibility as director to perpetuate the example of the Classical composers; he was very conscious of his position as a representative and guardian of tradition'.<sup>10</sup>

The idea that nineteenth-century performers might embody the practices and theoretical performance bases of earlier traditions and that these might still be discernible on early sound recordings is potentially quite dangerous politically, since it draws attention not to the unattainability of historical practice, as Taruskin has done, but rather to the apparently deliberate selectivity in performers' *modi operandi*. As Brown has also reflected, in the preface to his edition of the Beethoven violin concerto,<sup>11</sup> this can be borne of ignorance (for example, 'a recent recording of Spohr's Violin Duets opp. 148, 150 and 153, which were played with continuous vibrato' in which 'all the vibrato signs were performed as trills!') or out of timidity. The latter Brown discusses in his review article, 'Performing 19th-century Chamber Music: the Yawning Chasm Between Contemporary Practice and Historical Evidence' in the August 2010 edition of *Early Music*:

Despite the interest and efforts of a few bold spirits in the world of commercial performance we have, as yet, made little progress with evolving a more faithful historically informed approach to performing this music in the spirit of its creators. It is to be hoped that the rising generation of talented young musicians will commit themselves to forging a new way of playing it, which engages seriously with our ever-expanding knowledge of the performing practices of the 19th century.<sup>12</sup>

Given our current perception of early recordings and what they contain, such reticence to practise what musicians of the past did is, in a commercial environment

<sup>9</sup> Clive Brown, 'Performing Classical Repertoire: the Unbridgeable Gulf between Contemporary Practice and Historical Reality', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 31 (2007): 31–43.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, 'Performing Classical Repertoire', 36.

<sup>11</sup> Ludwig van Beethoven, Violin Concerto in D, op. 61, ed. Clive Brown (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Clive Brown, 'Performing 19th-Century Chamber Music: the Yawning Chasm Between Contemporary Practice and Historical Evidence', *Early Music*, 38 (2010): 480.

at least, wholly understandable. In his 2004 text, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*,<sup>13</sup> Robert Philip reflects on changing attitudes to early recordings:

Thirty years ago, a recording of Joachim playing a Brahms Hungarian Dance, if played to an audience, used to make them laugh. It was a completely unfamiliar and, from the perspective of the 1970s, ludicrous manner of playing, and it was impossible to imagine that this was the great violinist for whom Brahms wrote his Violin Concerto.<sup>14</sup>

Even so, taking such documents seriously (as historical testaments rather than outdated and irrelevant curiosities) does not necessarily equate to setting out to practise what happens in them, even when the relevance of Joachim's playing to the music of Johannes Brahms, for example, is beyond question. Indeed, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has developed a theory of quasi-linguistic 'hard-wiring' that results in an embarrassed guffaw rather than a serious examination, the point being, it would seem, that the weirdness and 'otherness' of such surviving fragments of Romanticism creates an almost unbridgeable gulf between past and present.<sup>15</sup> Leech-Wilkinson begins his article by quoting Rob Cowan's 2001 interview with Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and the response of an audience to Maria Galvany's 1906 performance of the Queen of the Night's Aria: 'There were 2500 people in the hall and the [lecturer] said [referring to Harnoncourt], "I wonder what the Maestro will have to say about *this*.'" And then [the Galvany recording] started ... The Vienna audience started to laugh.<sup>16</sup>

Alternatively, for example, Dorottya Fabian's article on the performances and reception of Ysaÿe, Sarasate and Joachim in late-nineteenth-century London<sup>17</sup> is predicated upon the supposed facts that: a) these violinists, who were considered completely different from each other at the time and continue to be described as such by modern scholars, are, according to spectrogram analyses, not that different from each other<sup>18</sup> and b) quite possibly the way they play is not, in certain key respects, all that different from the way we play now.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Philip, *Performing Music*, 248.

<sup>15</sup> 'A mechanism is proposed that may underlie the cross-domain mappings generating musical meaning. Music is seen to be exceptionally adaptable to the modelling of other experiences, able to offer many potential likenesses, among which those with most relevance to what an individual brain already knows and believes are favoured by conscious perception. Performance and perception styles change over time as certain kinds of potential meaning are selected for their relevance to other aspects of contemporary experience.' Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Listening and Responding to the Evidence of Early Twentieth-Century Performance', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135 (2010): 61–2.

<sup>16</sup> Rob Cowan, interview with Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *Gramophone* 79 (Nov. 2001): 10–11; cited from Leech-Wilkinson, 'Listening and Responding', 45.

<sup>17</sup> Dorottya Fabian, 'The Recordings of Joachim, Ysaÿe and Sarasate in Light of Their Reception by Nineteenth-Century British Critics', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 37 (2006): 189–211.

<sup>18</sup> 'Interestingly, the use of vibrato is fairly similar in Ysaÿe's interpretation of Fauré's *Berceuse* and Joachim's reading of his own *Romance*.' Fabian, 'The Recordings of Joachim', 201.

<sup>19</sup> Fabian quotes reviews of Ysaÿe playing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in the 1890s, which suggest that he was criticised for fast performance tempos. Fabian writes: 'That this execution sounds incredibly fast to modern listeners as well implies that in certain things taste and musical judgements have not changed much over the past 100 years.' Fabian, 'The Recordings of Joachim', 197.



Whichever way these views are examined, the idea that Romantic performance can be as 'legitimate' either as earlier practices (or our understanding of them, anyway) or as unconscious, unreformed 'modern' ways of doing things is not something that receives as much coverage.

Sidestepping the inconvenient truths shown by early recordings, and trying to appraise such nineteenth-century styles as principled, coherent and musically logical, it is my view that when the evidence of early recordings (the 'practice') and performing treatises and writings (the 'theory') are brought together they can reveal that such performance is as rooted in theory as anything else. Whilst the extent to which music performers have ever conformed to theories of execution and style is a matter for debate, the preconception that Romantic performance is, necessarily, unruly, ill disciplined and even inept (which Haynes seems to imply) is without foundation. Of course, such an observation is not necessarily universal. As in all ages and genres of performance, not all practitioners adhere to aesthetic principles and the results may or may not receive critical acclaim. Nonetheless, it is perhaps convenient to this thesis that the musicians whose performances sound most unfamiliar to modern ears – those with roots in what might be called the 'Classical' German school of performance (centred around Leipzig and the legacy of Mendelssohn) – are also likely to reflect established (written) theories of execution more closely than others. This is certainly the case with Joseph Joachim and two of his most faithful protégés, Marie Soldat and Karl Klingler.

It seems appropriate here to summarise some of the key characteristics and ideals of late nineteenth-century performing practice in order to create a taxonomy of features relevant to this topic. I will confine this to the four main topics of discussion in my *Theory and Practice*, thus:

#### *Phrasing*

- Predominantly legato, reflecting an overwhelming concentration on vocal style as the ideal for the violinist's tone; phrase lengths often conforming to sung phrases;
- Fine gradations in the use of different accent and accentuation signs;
- Sparing use of very short (off the string) bowstrokes in the Classical German school (the techniques not being taught in Spohr's *Violinschule*) in favour of a variety of species of on-string staccatos, often executed in the upper half of the bow; tendency to see generic dots above notes as 'separations' rather than short, sharp staccatos.

#### *Portamento*

- Encouraged by earlier writers such as Spohr, as a means of achieving a heightened 'fine style'; embodiment of principles as laid out by the early Paris school. Spohr was greatly influenced by Pierre Rode, who, of the three protégés of Viotti (Rode, Kreutzer and Baillot) was known in particular as an advocate of the device;
- Warnings against overuse and misuse not to be confused with an avoidance of the device, which appears to have been widespread;
- The portamento used as a vehicle of the legato, thus encouraged mainly within slurs, over more widely spaced leaps (as a singer might execute on the same syllable) and often arising from fingering patterns that favoured remaining on one string in order to achieve homogeneity of tone colour;

- In position changing in general, an avoidance of even-numbered positions for simpler uses of first and third positions, clearly evident in editions by Joachim's teacher, Ferdinand David (although Joachim uses a greater variety of positions in his editions).

#### *Vibrato*

- Universally acknowledged as a vocal effect, to be applied very selectively, as justified by heightened states of emotional projection, rather than continuously;
- Generally only to be found on long and particularly expressive notes, indicated perhaps by the messa-di-voce sign (< >) or more generally on chromatic notes or more 'expressive' harmony notes;
- Arises naturally from the musical texture, rather than having fingering systems built around its use (as can be found in editions by Carl Flesch, for example, and other exponents of a newer style of use in the early twentieth century);
- Selective use indicated by the preponderance of open strings, harmonics and fourth fingers (which do not favour the vibrato) in editions of the German 'Classical' school;
- Generally tighter and smaller than the modern vibrato, made by finger movement rather than wrist or arm generation of the effect, as found in modern practice (evidencing a slight pitch oscillation rather than the much more pronounced effect found in modern players).

#### *Tempo and Rhythm*

- General tendency towards faster tempi, possibly influenced by Mendelssohn's preference for fast speeds; slow movements often not as slow as more modern renditions (which seem to show the legacy of Wagner's influence in favouring very slow 'expressive' tempi);
- Tendency to favour strict time, rather than more general applications of tempo flexibility (aggregate slowing down or speeding up), which are also hallmarks of Wagner's practice and not the 'Classical' German school;
- Nonetheless, endemic use of small-scale rhythmic manipulations, including tendency to over-dot long and short notes, and widespread adoption of 'agogic' accentuation in the playing of Joachim, who was known for this effect and emulated for it by musicians such as Donald Francis Tovey;
- As with all nineteenth-century theorists and players, tempo and rhythm were seen as elements of music that could be adapted, relaxed, heightened and changed for expressive purposes, as opposed to the twentieth-century trend of prizing textual 'accuracy' in this regard.

Joseph Joachim, whose artistic credentials were formulated in Leipzig in contact with musicians such as Felix Mendelssohn, Louis Spohr and Ferdinand David, appears to have seen himself (as many of the Leipzig-based musicians did) as an inheritor of this established, theoretical position. Accordingly, Joachim's former pupil, biographer, and co-author of the *Violinschule*,<sup>20</sup> Andreas Moser, asserts the superior legitimacy of Joachim's approach by claiming, as he does in the *Violinschule*,<sup>21</sup> that Joachim's

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser, *Violinschule*, 3 vols, trans. A. Moffat (Berlin: N. Simrock, 1902–05).

<sup>21</sup> See Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*, vol. 3, 32.

authority emanates from his continuation of the ideals and practices of the Italian originators of the instrument, summarised in terms of key characteristics in the précis above. The Berlin *Hochschule* is praised not only for its basis in Joachim's own esteem, but also for its place as the inheritor of a long and proud tradition. Moser thus attempts to grant permanence as well as legitimacy to Joachim's legacy, claiming that 'As centuries ago multitudes of German musicians made pilgrimages to Italy in order to learn at the very cradle of instrumental music, so to-day Italian and French students flock to Berlin to learn at the German capital how their forefathers practised the art of fiddle-playing.'<sup>22</sup> This is no dusty academicism, for Moser bestows upon Joachim the compliment that 'He is the first who has played the violin, not for its own sake, but in the service of an ideal, and has lifted up his calling from the rank of mere mechanical skill to an intellectual level'.<sup>23</sup>

In reality Joachim's ethos soon faded after his death, and the Berlin *Hochschule*, which enshrined his aesthetic and practical approach, was seen by many of the more progressive figures as reactionary. Carl Flesch even claims that technical aspects of the teaching of Joachim's method (as regards his bowing technique of a low elbow and loose wrist) were technically faulty.<sup>24</sup> By the 1930s, almost nothing of Joachim's playing style survived. We can hear remnants of his playing in that of Arnold Rosé who, as late as the 1940s, used little vibrato and made a dry, ascetic tone perhaps comparable with Joachim's.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, as a wide-ranging study of string players on record shows<sup>26</sup>, by World War II most players spoke an aesthetic language that was, in many respects, the opposite of Joachim's.

Whilst historically-informed performance has created a challenge to the 'mainstream' approach to playing, this newer style of playing retains its dominance today, which explains the unfamiliar nature of the performance taxonomy summarised above and, I would argue, our incredulity when faced with the artistic results on early recordings. The most obvious traits of this twentieth-century manner of playing can be seen not only in the so-called continuous vibrato, rare use of portamento and preponderance of sprung staccato bow-strokes, but also in more basic aspects: rhythmic accuracy and fidelity to the printed score, stability of tempo, and the apparently unassailable ideal of ensembles playing 'together'. All of these aspects of performing stand in stark contrast to Joachim's approach and its continuation of practices described throughout the nineteenth (and even eighteenth) centuries.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, by the 1930s Joachim became synonymous with all that was considered old-fashioned. Whilst Joachim's name has always been treated with respect (especially, in recent times, for his cadenzas and indeed his original compositions) what he actually

<sup>22</sup> Andreas Moser, *Joseph Joachim: A Biography*, trans. L. Durham (London: Philip Wellby, 1901): 241.

<sup>23</sup> Moser, *Joseph Joachim*, 241.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example Carl Flesch, *The Memoirs of Carl Flesch*, trans. H. Keller (London: Rockliff, 1957): 34–5, and H. J. Fuller-Maitland, *Living Masters of Music: Joachim* (London: John Lane, 1905): 36.

<sup>25</sup> See Yfrah Neeman's recollections in Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*, 236–7. Rosé's continued use of a 'pure' tone can be heard in the 1930 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performance of Mahler's ninth symphony (conducted by Bruno Walter), in the finale solos. HMV DB3613-3622 (2VH 7027-46); re-issued as CDEA 5005 by Dutton Laboratories.

<sup>26</sup> In compiling my *A-Z of Solo String Players* (Naxos Books, forthcoming) I was able to gain a privileged glimpse of a wide range of string players from the dawn of recording to the present day, which in many ways corroborates this assertion.

<sup>27</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see David Milsom, *Theory and Practice*.



did as a violinist has been quietly forgotten. The resurgence in knowledge of his playing created by re-issue of his 1903 recordings on CD in the 1990s has led many to dismiss what one hears as the sad remnants of a great player's reputation, obscured by the infirmities of old age.

In spite of this, there is much that can be learnt about Joachim's performances in terms not only of his practice (as revealed by his recordings) but also, of course, his theoretical ideals on paper. His *Violinschule*, written in collaboration with Andreas Moser,<sup>28</sup> is a major three-volume document enshrining his aesthetic ideals and perpetuating into the twentieth century many of the key tenets of established nineteenth-century stylistic taste. Joachim and Moser write at length on aspects not only of violin technique, but also of performance style. They reveal a remarkable parity with established figures of the German tradition, even in matters as fashion-sensitive as vibrato and portamento, which suggests the conscious inheritance of performance tradition. Joachim also promulgated his ideals through his editions of Classical masterworks of both solo violin and chamber repertoire. Following Spohr's example (he concludes his *Violinschule* with editions of Rode's seventh and his own ninth violin concertos, complete with bowings, fingerings, vibrato signs and verbal commentaries), Joachim and Moser published sixteen key solo violin works with verbal prefaces. Although the written descriptions are more often of Moser's authorship than Joachim's, Joachim himself contributed lengthy articles on works of particular personal relevance such as Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, in which he expounds upon his experiences of learning the work with the composer.<sup>29</sup> Taken as a whole, these sixteen masterworks reveal much concerning Joachim's bowing and fingering styles as well as his philosophical ethos. Attention might be drawn, for example, to his edition of Viotti's Violin Concerto No. 22.<sup>30</sup> This work, for which Joachim had a personal fondness and for which he mounted a (ultimately unsuccessful) revival crusade, is presented with not only a full complement of cadenzas at all available junctures, but also an ornamented slow movement and reference to now-obsolete bowing styles such as *fouetté*.<sup>31</sup> The ornamented slow movement, 'following tradition',<sup>32</sup> places Joachim's edition in the context of his former mentor Ferdinand David,<sup>33</sup> an equally prolific editor of Classical solo and chamber works and with whom Joachim shares many editorial traits of style. It also hints at Joachim's attempt, at some considerable historical distance, to encapsulate appropriate historically-informed performance of the work two-thirds of a century before this concept reached anything like its current form, whilst his care to present Viotti's original notation as well as his ornamented version of it (a trait also shared by David) displays his scholarly bearing and caution. Joachim clearly intended to act as a torchbearer for an established tradition.

<sup>28</sup> See Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*.

<sup>29</sup> Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*, vol. 3, 228–31.

<sup>30</sup> Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*, vol. 3, 86–103. For a detailed examination of nineteenth-century editions of this concerto see Clive Brown and David Milsom, 'The Nineteenth-Century Legacy of the Viotti School: Editions of the Violin Concerto No. 22', in *Giovanni Battista Viotti: A Composer Between the Two Revolutions*, ed. Massimiliano Sala (Bologna: Ut Orpheus, 2006): 157–98.

<sup>31</sup> A 'whipped' effect in which the bow is thrown with some force onto the string in the upper-half or at the point of the bow.

<sup>32</sup> Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*, vol. 3, 86.

<sup>33</sup> Published as part of *Concert-Studien für die Violine* (Leipzig: Bartolff Senff, plate number 22470.22476, 1860).

Joachim's recordings<sup>34</sup> corroborate his writings. Whilst he tempers his remarks in the *Violinschule* with the pragmatic acceptance that 'all rules applied to the art of music performance are not of unbending strictness',<sup>35</sup> it is surprising how much he follows his own stylistic advice. Analysis of his five recordings reveals a discreet use of vibrato, fastidious and variegated phrasing and use of agogic accentuation.<sup>36</sup> His portamentos are quite restrained – very much so against the backdrop of many of the earliest recordings – and he employs a degree of stylistic sensitivity, using the device infrequently in the Bach G-minor Prelude in spite of the many potential opportunities for it in this fantasia-like composition. Whilst Arnold Rosé, a superficially similar but rather less intellectual executor,<sup>37</sup> uses 23 slides in his 1928 performance of this work,<sup>38</sup> Joachim employs the device a mere four times. Portamento appears more frequently in his own *Romance in C* (which also contains the most frequent and fundamental departures from the rhythmic text), suggesting that Joachim's veneration of Bach prompted a comparatively chaste interpretative treatment. Whilst some of the mannerisms of these recordings may well be accounted for by his advanced age (such as the oddly snatched and clumsy chords towards the end of the G-minor Prelude), a practiced ear can pick out many important stylistic characteristics. The recordings have obvious value because they provide us with a context in which to understand Joachim's written remarks. In some respects, they confirm the impression created on paper; in others, they reveal aspects of practices one might not have understood without listening. In this latter category might come the manner of Joachim's agogic accents, rhythmic volatility and tempo changes as found in his *Romance* (Appendix 1). Whilst his use of agogic accentuation is well documented and explored in significant detail by Fuller-Maitland in his biography,<sup>39</sup> the way in which Joachim puts this into practice could not have been predicted from other sources alone. Slight as Joachim's discography is, its value cannot be underestimated.

The Klingler Quartet, taking its name from Joachim's pupil Karl Klingler (1879–1971) appears to have propounded as one of its stylistic intentions the perpetuation of the legacy of the Joachim Quartet. Carl Flesch, ever the self-opinionated critic, charges Klingler with the status of an epigone:

After Joachim's death he [Klingler] founded his own quartet and soon succeeded in attracting the orphaned Joachim community about him. Klingler no doubt possessed great technical and musical talent which, however, did not fully mature, owing to the peculiarities and shortcomings of his training. His bowing technique was still dominated by the fallacious theory of the lowered upper arm and a 'loose' wrist, not to speak of the unpleasant swells during his portamentos.

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<sup>34</sup> OPALCD 9851.

<sup>35</sup> Joachim and Moser, *Violinschule*, vol. 2, 95.

<sup>36</sup> Detailed consideration of Joachim's recordings under the global headings of phrasing, tempo and rhythm, portamento and vibrato are contained in my *Theory and Practice*.

<sup>37</sup> This was Flesch's view (*Memoirs*, 49–52), and is supported to a certain extent by his recordings. Rosé's playing, as revealed in his solo recordings of c1909–10 is very much within the sound-world of the old German school, with a discreet vibrato and portamento characteristic of the tradition; yet he made little difference in approach between different repertoires, and his approach to expression is somewhat arbitrary in comparison to Joachim's theoretically-justified approach.

<sup>38</sup> Czech HMV matrix no. ES665 (CA 48), on LAB056/057.

<sup>39</sup> Fuller-Maitland, *Living Masters of Music*, 28.

His interpretative power, on the other hand, was considerable, and he even inherited some of the holy fire of his unforgettable master – though to the detriment of his personality. He stood, as it were, posthumously hypnotised by Joachim ... He shaped his music more under the compulsion of a revered tradition than with the independent, personal imagination.<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to note that Flesch's main objection to Klingler was his adherence to Joachim's practice. Arguably, individuality in the artist is seen as of great importance as much today as at any time in the past. Of course, the conservatism to which Flesch seems to object is in fact an established technical and aesthetic approach. What Flesch describes as the 'peculiarities and shortcomings' of Joachim's technique are, in fact, the characteristics of an established bow-action found in Spohr's writings, as well as those of the early Paris school; it even has similarities with that described by Leopold Mozart. Crucially here perhaps, it is the very characteristics that Flesch spurns that help us further understand Joachim. The Klingler Quartet made a number of sound recordings, the earliest of which were only shortly after Joachim's death and it is therefore credible to assert that these performances embody something of the Joachim Quartet's practices. They will be examined in due course.

A similar strain of criticism can be found in the case of another Joachim protégé who made recordings to which we will turn later in this essay: Marie Soldat-Roeger (1864–1955). Soldat-Roeger (née Soldat) also suffered denigrating comments in the twentieth century, which might explain her relative obscurity (and the fact that, save for her performance of the slow movement of Spohr's ninth violin concerto, her recordings have yet to be reissued in a modern format and remain, as a result, little known except to a select few present-day scholars<sup>41</sup>). Soldat's case is a particularly interesting one, and deserves more detailed explanation.

Marie Soldat began studies in Graz, with the leader of the opera orchestra there, one Edouard Pleiner, but soon moved to take instruction from Augustus Pott, who was a former student of the violinist who can be seen perhaps as the originator of the 'Classical' German school of violin playing – Louis Spohr. In 1879, Joachim heard her play and offered her a place at the Berlin *Hochschule für Musik* from which she graduated in 1882 with the Mendelssohn prize. After three further years of study with Joachim, Soldat (who was befriended by Johannes Brahms) gave the Vienna premiere of the Brahms Violin Concerto, on 8 March, 1885. She was one of the three female former Joachim students who handed him the violin on which he performed the Beethoven Concerto at his Diamond Jubilee concert in Berlin in 1899.<sup>42</sup>

There is substantial evidence that Soldat inhabited the close-knit circle of Brahms and Joachim disciples. At the 5th Bonn Chamber Music Festival, her all-female string quartet shared the stage, perhaps symbolically, with the Joachim

<sup>40</sup> Flesch, *Memoirs*, 251. In actual fact, Klingler founded his quartet in 1905, two years before Joachim's death, although he also played in the Joachim Quartet towards the end of Joachim's life.

<sup>41</sup> Soldat's performance of the slow movement of Spohr's ninth concerto has been accessible via Pearl's compendium of violin recordings, *The Recorded Violin*, Volume 1 (BVA 1) for some time. Her entire discography was included in James Creighton's L.P. re-issue *Masters of the Bow* (MB 1019) but this disc has not been re-issued in modern format. The author's own copy of this record has encouraged inclusion of Soldat's performances in several discussions (spoken and in print, see footnote 5) by Clive Brown, with whom the author worked closely as part of an AHRC project at the University of Leeds, 2006–2009.

<sup>42</sup> Moser, *Joseph Joachim*, 328.

Quartet itself. In England (where she made her London debut with the Brahms Concerto under the baton of Charles Villiers Stanford on 1 March 1888) she gave regular Sunday evening recitals at Balliol College, Oxford, with Ernest Walker, performing with Arthur Williams (cellist of the Klingler Quartet). She also played in London with Donald Francis Tovey, who, as a young man, had been much influenced by Joachim's own playing (and his agogic accentuation can be heard in his performance of the op. 96 Brahms Violin Sonata performed with another Joachim pupil, Joachim's niece Adela Fachiri).<sup>43</sup>

Contemporary comment drew attention to the similarities between Soldat's playing and that of Joachim himself. Reporting on her first visit to London, the *Musical Times* wrote, for example:

The programme was completed by Brahms's Violin Concerto, introduced for performance by Miss Marie Soldat, a clever young artist, who has been a pupil of Herr Joachim. Miss Soldat played the work in a brilliant fashion. Her method and style are those of her master who must have found it an easy task to direct the studies of a young lady so highly gifted with musical feeling and intelligence.<sup>44</sup>

Interestingly, however, Soldat's reputation became tarnished in a manner perhaps similar to Flesch's criticisms of the Klingler Quartet, and it is plausible that this was due to the fact that as styles of playing changed and Joachim's aesthetic ideals and performance theories faded into the past. As will be seen when her c1926 recordings are examined, Soldat seems to have maintained substantial embodiment of practices which, if not the same as Joachim's own (after a significant passage of time!) then certainly can be *compared* to them. Indeed, proof perhaps of how rapidly string performance was changing after Joachim's death can be seen in Barbara Henderson's review of Soldat in *The Strad* as early as 1910, which, whilst complimentary, hints at a degree of stylistic antiquity:

Mme Marie Soldat-Roeger, with whom we have recently renewed acquaintance through the medium of the classical concerts, is a very interesting personality amongst the lady violinists of today, not only on account of her qualities as an artist, but also because she is the representative of a class which is rapidly becoming rare. She represents the Joachim school at its best period, and is imbued with all the traditions of the great classical school.<sup>45</sup>

By 1928, however, William Cobbett was more openly snide, speaking of her performance in the past tense and suggesting that she 'had a following among those who admire solid before brilliant acquirements'<sup>46</sup> – a reference, perhaps, to the increasingly sensuous tone of younger artists of that time.

As stated earlier, both the Klingler Quartet and Marie Soldat made sound recordings that can help flesh out Joachim's own performances on record to provide rather more fulsome practical evidence of the traits of this 'Classical' school of violin playing and how they align with nineteenth-century performance theories. Some analysis of these recordings is thus appropriate.

<sup>43</sup> National Gramophonic Society, c1927; re-issued on *The Great Violinists* Volume XIX (Symposium 1312).

<sup>44</sup> Review of her London debut (1 March 1888) in *The Musical Times*, 29 (1888): 218.

<sup>45</sup> Barbara Henderson, Review of Soldat, *The Strad* (Feb. 1910): 362.

<sup>46</sup> William Cobbett, 'Soldat, Marie', *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Volume IV (London, 1928): 800.

The Klingler Quartet's sound world is immediately recognisable in the context of the Classical German style, and there are many obvious similarities with Joachim's own playing. In the early acoustic performances of 1911–12 there is a general avoidance of vibrato, and where it does exist it is shallow and tight and certainly in keeping with the device in Joachim or Auer's playing. In the *Alla danza tedesca* movement of Beethoven's op. 130 quartet,<sup>47</sup> the Klingler Quartet's 'dry' sound is accompanied by occasional, slow and pronounced portamentos (a feature commented upon by Flesch), as in bar 7 from the C down to the F# in the Violin I part. The tone is predominantly *senza vibrato*, and the staccato dots (as in bar 27) are executed on the string. In this bar, Klingler anticipates the barline, giving the first note of the bar an agogic accent. As often with Joachim, the agogic accent is accompanied by a simultaneous 'dynamik' accent; perhaps as a reflection of Leopold Mozart's advice to stress the on-beat portion of tied figures,<sup>48</sup> Klingler 'leans' into the downbeat portion of his elongated first quaver:

Ex. 1 Beethoven, String Quartet op. 130, mvt. v, bars 25–28 (Violin I)



Although this might appear to be a rather minute dissection of a localised moment in this recording, there are many other examples of such rhythmic treatment and, indeed, other rhythmic features associated with nineteenth-century performance. In the passage from bar 89, the first violin's decorated semiquaver passage is treated with rhythmic freedom. This freedom, however, exists above a largely 'metronomic' accompaniment, creating a rare instance of obvious tempo dislocation in early recorded string playing. In part this occurs as one might expect, where there are widely spaced leaps and string crossings, but technical concerns alone do not explain some of the most startling passages. At bars 105–107 Klingler dwells on the first part of the bar, hurrying the remainder to remain within the bar and align with the accompaniment, as at bars 113–115. At bars 118–120 the pace of the dislocation changes and becomes a more general application of tempo flexibility – bars 118–119 push forward, and at 120, the tempo eases back into the theme:

The c1923–25 Rosé Quartet recording<sup>49</sup> makes an interesting comparison. The later, electric recordings of this ensemble<sup>50</sup> are well known and oft quoted as suggestive of a nineteenth-century style preserved (comparatively) intact into the

<sup>47</sup> Odeon recording of 1912 (matrix no. 79169:xxB 5670), on Japanese HMV SGR 8506.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756/ R1922), trans. Edith Knocker as *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948): 39–40.

<sup>49</sup> Re-issued on Arbiter 148 (*Arnold Rosé – First Violin of Vienna*); Cherubini, Quartet No. 1 – Scherzo (matrix no. H 4-8772, 52130); Boccherini, Menuetto arranged for quartet (matrix no. H 4-8772, 52131); Beethoven, op. 130 – *Alla danza tedesca* (matrix no. H.B.8216,51077); Mozart, Quartet K465 – Menuetto (matrix no. H.B. 8216, 51076).

<sup>50</sup> Beethoven, Quartets opp. 18 nos. 4, 74 and 131; re-issued on Biddulph LAB 056/ 057 (*Arnold Rosé and the Rosé String Quartet*).



## Ex. 2 Beethoven, String Quartet op. 130, mvt. v, bars 105–120 (Violin I)

era of recordings. Listening to the two ensembles' recordings side-by-side, though, reveals the Rosé Quartet's as more modern, lacking many of the rhythmic features of the Klingler performance. Arnold Rosé uses appreciably more vibrato in general, particularly on the dotted crotchets near the start, and rhythms are played more precisely. The repeated quaver figure, as at bar 27, is rendered much more regularly (and rather without shape) by the Rosé Quartet, and the passage at bar 89 is likewise comparatively metronomic, although there is a general tendency, as with Klingler, to make the second half of the bar lighter and faster than the start, perhaps in order to define the downbeats. The impression of these two recordings, both apparently representative of 'old-fashioned' playing, is that Klingler's performance is one of movement, even informality, whilst Rosé's sounds well-drilled and disciplined.

This comparison is reinforced in a later example of the Klingler ensemble in the Scherzo of Cherubini's first quartet. Some twenty years younger, this 1935 recording<sup>51</sup> is interesting because it shows, in part, how Klingler retained some of the rhythmic features found in his earlier discography, whilst more modern features were also 'imported' on top, so to speak, of the earlier sound. There is much more vibrato in this recording, particularly in evidence after the fermatas before the trio and in the curiously languid reading of the final reprise of this section. This illuminates the difficulties inherent in examining the style of younger players. Klingler, who was of Kreisler's generation,<sup>52</sup> may well have retained Joachim's playing in his memory and sought to perpetuate his style, but the quartet could not, in all probability, perpetuate the sound world of a period that would have been considered aesthetically outmoded. This might also explain the Rosé Quartet's regular, if very slight, vibrato, although one might also note that Rosé's early solo recordings contain very much more of it than even the later electrical quartet recordings. This suggests, perhaps, that Rosé's quartet

<sup>51</sup> Electrola matrix nos. EH 939-943, 2RA 810-3, 811-1, 812-1, 813-1, 814-2, 815-2, 816-1, 817-1m, 818-1, 819-1; re-issued on Japanese HMV SGR-8506.

<sup>52</sup> Karl Klingler (1879–1971), Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962).

playing was comparatively puritanical and that he reserved the vibrato ornament mostly for solo playing.<sup>53</sup>

The Klingler performance is curiously eccentric. Cherubini's metronome mark of crotchet = 126 is conspicuously contradicted by the ensemble which begins at about 84, accelerating after the first few bars to *circa* 100. Frequently the three-quarter figure of the opening is treated to accents on the first and third of the group, giving it an oddly grotesque effect. In spite of the superior frequency and dynamic range of an electric recording, relatively little difference between forte and piano can be heard. In bars 9–10, for example, Cherubini's detailed and specific marking is curtailed in favour of a more generic bringing-out of high notes and strong beats. Nonetheless, rhythmic volatility and instances of more specific agogic accentuation remain, as in the Beethoven performance. Thus at bars 13–14 the paired semiquavers are held and the remainder of the figure played lighter and faster. This unequal effect is a well-documented feature of Joachim's playing, discernible in his recordings. Aside from more general (already observed) tempo flexibility (which also includes a slow start to the Trio and slight accelerando to crotchet = 112, perhaps in parallel to the same feature at the very start of the movement), Klingler sometimes uses very obvious agogic accents, as in bars 58–59 which, in the slow and rather flaccid final reading, involves a substantial rhythmic change of a kind that had become very rare by the mid-1930s:

Ex. 3 Cherubini, String Quartet No. 1, Scherzo, bars 57–60

The Rosé quartet also recorded this in the mid-1920s.<sup>54</sup> They begin at a faster crotchet = 112, which is still substantially at variance with the composer's marking, but, as the Klingler Quartet do, they accelerate in the first few bars. There are a few stylistic mannerisms of dubious taste, as in their Beethoven, such as Rosé's slight 'swoop' up to the G in bar 7 and descending portamento on the two quavers of the following bar – features that, unlike in Joachim's playing and the theoretical stance of most German school commentators, do not arise naturally out of the music but are oddly 'tacked-on' mannerisms. Rosé also tends to stress the second, not first note of a slurred pair (as at bar 6). This said there is much in common with Klingler's playing. The semiquavers in bars 13–14 are also played unequally and in a similar manner. Rosé treats the Trio as a virtuoso exercise, setting off at a 'moto perpetuo' tempo of crotchet = 132, and with a

<sup>53</sup> A comparison of his solo playing of c1909–10 (re-issued on Arbitrator 148) and his electric quartet recordings of 1927–28 (re-issued on LAB 056/057) is quite revealing.

<sup>54</sup> Re-issued on Arbitrator 148.

Ex. 4 Cherubini, *String Quartet No. 1, Scherzo*, bars 77–78 (Violin I)

bright, off-string timbre. Accordingly, the figure at the opening of the second half of the Trio has the semiquavers very short and late, further enhancing the bravura effect and indeed, a sense of discipline and technical élan:

The comparison of these two examples is revealing. It shows, perhaps, that the Rosé Quartet, although superficially allied to the 'Classical' German style, has a rather different motivation, in which technical aspects (albeit within the aesthetic ideals of the late nineteenth century) are of primary concern.<sup>55</sup> The Klingler ensemble seems to place such matters rather lower down the list of priorities and, notwithstanding the evident 'modernisation', some aspects of their playing retain links to earlier practices. It is tempting to see their use of tempo rubato, agogic accentuation and tempo dislocation as part of their Joachim heritage and, commensurately, the legacy of the aesthetic precepts underpinning the 'Classical' German school in general.

Early recordings afford us further fascinating glimpses into this area. A good example is the opening of the finale of Beethoven's op. 127 quartet recorded by the Klingler ensemble, involving a rich variety of rhythmic changes and tempo manipulations:

Klingler begins in a declamatory style, arpeggiating the octave opening chord and treating the lower note as a grace note before the beat, an effect that relaxes the verticality of the rhythm at the start and throws extra weight upon the initial downbeat. The effect is repeated in a more subtle way by means of a slight 'spreading' of the sforzato chord on the third beat, in which the second violin slightly anticipates the first. Given that the two violins are an octave apart here, this might be said to reflect the style of the opening chord. The subsequent crotchets are very slightly hurried after a (fractionally) sustained sforzato minim. In bars 5 and 6, Klingler minutely elongates the first quaver of each bar (slightly more in 6 than 5) and the other quavers are played a little faster and lighter to compensate. The minims in these bars are held for their full value and slightly stressed, but then Klingler lengthens the A $\sharp$  in bar 7 very obviously (preceded by a slow and accental portamento). The passage of slurred crotchets afterwards rushes with corresponding urgency in order to compensate for the time lost, a feature repeated in bars 13–20. There is then a sizeable caesura before the next theme starts.

To what extent, 28 years after Joachim's death, might this bear *any* relationship to the practice of the Joachim Quartet? Empirically, of course, this is an unanswerable question. It seems highly unlikely that these performing practices remained unchanged, when so many other aspects of playing had, by then, been so fundamentally transformed. This having been said, the detailed manipulation

<sup>55</sup> That is to say, aesthetic decisions are comparatively arbitrary and seem to reflect a greater emphasis on showmanship than musicianship.

## Ex. 5 Beethoven, String Quartet op. 127, Finale, bars 1–20

Finale

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system begins with a forte sf dynamic, followed by a piano p dynamic. The second system features a [smile] marking above the first staff. The third system also features a [smile] marking above the first staff. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

of tempo, the subtle handling of agogic accentuation and the compensation rubato that results in corresponding accelerandi after ritardandi are all features known to have been a major part of Joachim's style and the performance theories underpinning the style of the 'Classical' German school of violin playing. It is plausible to assert that the Klingler Quartet here is at least *trying* to perpetuate this established style of playing. This might also explain the curiously 'staged' effect of the above passage, as if the style had become in some respects petrified with age. This is a long way from Joachim's legendary spontaneity. Nonetheless, it might help provide the modern player with more information with which to understand Joachim's style.

The solo recordings of Marie Soldat<sup>56</sup> corroborate many of the features of the Klingler recordings. As solo recordings, comparisons with Joachim's own are more direct and indeed whereas the Klingler Quartet seem to have adapted their style quite significantly in the later electric performances, Soldat's playing shows the Joachim style in a less modified form. Certainly, she takes more liberties with the use of vibrato, but the extent to which this reflects artistic difference of

<sup>56</sup> MB 1019.

opinion or, indeed, the effects of performing at a much later time than Joachim's own records (when she cannot, surely, have been entirely impervious to the changes of taste in the intervening quarter of a century!) is hard to ascertain. Nonetheless, the comparison is quite a telling and useful one.

Soldat's performance of the first movement of Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5<sup>57</sup> is notable for its agogic accents and a manner of tempo flexibility that seems entirely consistent with Joachim's own practice. The Adagio exhibits a sonority similar to Joachim's, although it should be noted that Soldat does not perform the same fingerings as in Joachim's edition, and she uses a little more vibrato than he might have endorsed. Nonetheless, the character of the vibrato is discreet and superficial and, coupled to the evident but tasteful portamentos, shows that Joachim's approach is still present.

In the following 'Allegro aperto' section (bar 46) one finds a fascinating variety of rhythmic manipulations, entirely congruent with accounts of Joachim's playing and aesthetic postulation of the nineteenth century. The dotted rhythm at the opening is rather over-dotted and the falling quaver figure at bar 48 is performed as a dotted rhythm, whilst important notes are highlighted by agogic accents, such as the high A in bar 47, or the E in bar 48. In the semiquaver passage (comparable to passages in the Cherubini quartet described above) the pair of slurred notes are dwelt upon, and the following notes rushed to a very obvious and noteworthy degree.

Ex. 6 Mozart, Violin Concerto No. 5, i (Allegro aperto), bars 46–60 (Violin Solo)

<sup>57</sup> Union A 3006/8, in MB 1019.



When this passage recurs at bar 144, Soldat's interpretation becomes more impetuous. The unequal treatment of the semiquaver passage now includes marked *accelerandi* (bars 147–148, for example) and this playing seems to capture some of the fiery excitement known to have characterised Joachim's playing. Her cadenza continues this trait. It is, in fact, remarkable how closely this resembles Joachim's playing. There is only one obvious vibrato example that Joachim might not have effected, on the chord in the fifth quaver of bar 8 in the cadenza. Otherwise the tone is, if anything, purer here than in the main body of the movement. She follows Joachim's fingerings (in this, his own cadenza) quite faithfully, exploring their inherent possibilities for portamentos, whilst chords are spread quickly and cleanly in a manner very similar to Joachim's in his G-minor Bach Prelude performance. Her non-vibrato tone retains a warmth and richness, suggesting a firm bow-stroke in the upper half of the bow, characteristic of nineteenth-century technique.

Such traits are perpetuated in her recording of Bach Partita No. 3 (Largo),<sup>58</sup> which also makes for an interesting comparison with Joachim's own unaccompanied Bach. Indeed, if one listens to Joachim's G-minor Prelude and then this recording, the similarities are startling. Soldat uses a little finger vibrato on some of the longer notes, but then so does Joachim (and it is all too easy to simplify Joachim's approach to the device by claiming, inaccurately, that he uses no vibrato in this performance). With reference to David's edition of the work, Soldat changes a few of the fingerings, often to invite discreet but regular portamentos, including across wider intervals, as in bar 8 in which consecutive fourth fingers are implied by her playing – a fingering system entirely in agreement with those of the nineteenth-century German school. As with Joachim, tempo is quite freely treated, time being taken in particular at the points in the texture where there are portamentos over larger intervals, all of which gives the movement a lyrical and reflective character. Chords are spread quickly and accented in a manner not unlike Joachim's (although his rich and organ-like tone in these passages is not so well conveyed in Soldat's playing).

Soldat's other recordings further demonstrate these traits. There is no space here for more examples, although mention must be made of what is at present her most famous recording – that of the slow movement of Spohr's Violin Concerto No. 9, in which (after the teaching of Augustus Pott, a Spohr pupil) she adheres remarkably closely to Spohr's fingerings and vibratos as indicated in the edition of the work published as part of his *Violinschule*.<sup>59</sup>

What is revealed by this examination of performances of Joachim's apparently faithful protégés is that his style and aesthetic did not die out entirely in players whom he taught. Nor indeed, is what one hears in his 1903 recordings merely the accidents of fortune in a performer in old age, nor indeed, a slovenly and mawkish 'Romanticism' lampooned for excess and lack of taste by a range of modernist perspectives in the twentieth century (including, perhaps, those of historically-informed performance!). Rather, one might argue, they provide further evidence to show that nineteenth-century aesthetics as regards performance were as principled as any other.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, the genesis of this manner of playing, with its use of flexible

<sup>58</sup> Union A 3004, in MB 1019.

<sup>59</sup> Louis Spohr, *Violinschule* (Vienna: Haslinger, 1833), English trans. J. Bishop (London, 1843): 214–18.

<sup>60</sup> The reader may be motivated to ponder upon the issue of more 'modernist' German performance aesthetics associated perhaps with Richard Wagner and his school of thought as opposed to the Leipzig tradition as espoused by musicians such as

rhythms, sparing vibrato and expressive portamentos, can be found in the writings of the strict disciplinarian Louis Spohr. Thus many of the things heard in the recordings here reflect his definition of 'fine style':

For a fine style ... the following technical expedients are required: - 1st a tone, from the strong or even course, to the soft and fluty, - as also, in particular, to the accentuation and separation of musical phrases; 2ly the artificial positions, which are not employed on account of their facilitating the performance, but for the sake of expression and tone; to which may be added the gliding from one note to another and the changing of the finger on the same note; 3ly the tremolo (vibrato) in its four degrees, and 4ly the accelerating of time in furious, impetuous and passionate passages, as well as the slackening of it in such as are of a tender, doleful or melancholy cast.<sup>61</sup>

As previously observed, Joachim and Moser quote Spohr verbatim on the subjects of portamento and vibrato in their *Violinschule*, in spite of the passage of some seventy years. Joachim's attempt to embody the ideals of this school in his writings, editions and recordings hint at a coherent, theorised performance style, inherited and still practised at some historical distance by the Klingler Quartet and heard in the less well-known recordings of Marie Soldat.

This kind of 'performance theory justification' of a certain manner of playing should, perhaps, make it easier for present-day musicians to try adopting an older aesthetic without embarrassment. Rather, a truly 'historically-informed' approach – or even a reconstructive one – is a legitimate and important part of understanding and practicing historical performance styles. The ability of modern musicians (with sufficient incentive) to do this in a stimulating way should not perhaps be dismissed, as it often is. When we are able to know much (and reasonably infer even more) of a performance tradition that is rooted in consciousness of principle, tradition and history, it is perhaps time to put away our latent bigotry towards its stylistic attributes. It is to be hoped that, as part of the wide spectrum of performance motivations that are encapsulated in the modern term 'historically-informed', more performers will have the courage to take this way of playing seriously, not applying 'period' techniques in a selective way that leaves out controversial elements, but rather appraising fully the theoretical precepts behind an aesthetic and attempting to put them into practice. As nineteenth-century music slips further and further away from contemporary culture, style and practice, the importance of such an approach is, I suggest, self evident.

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Mendelssohn, Spohr, Reinecke and Joachim. As I argue in my article, 'Style and Sonority in Wagner String Performance', *The Wagner Journal* 3/2, (2009), 4–12, there is compelling evidence that Wagner nonetheless praised Joachim's playing and did not take issue with this performance aesthetic in the manner in which he did the conservative compositional practices associated with Joachim's colleagues, such as Robert Schumann.

<sup>61</sup> Spohr, *Violinschule*, 182.

Appendix

Appendix I Joachim, *Romance in C op. 20* (Violin part), annotated with rhythmic adaptations to illustrate Joachim's own 1903 recorded performance

8 *dol. e espress.*

19 *f* *dim.* *p* *pp* *poco rit.* *a Tempo* *cresc.*

28 *f* *p* *cresc.*

39 *dim.* *p* *2da Corda*

48 *p* *pp*

56 *accel.* *cresc.*

61 *4da Corda e con fuoco* *ff*

71 *cresc.* *p*

81 *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *espress.* *dim.*

90

99 *morendo e riten.* *poco accel.* *al.* *Tempo 1°* *cresc.*

108 *p cresc.* *f*

117 *dim.* *f* *4da C.* *con fuoco*

126 *3ra C.* *dim.* *p* *f* *f dim. e riten*

136 *p* *accel.* *al.* *Tempo 1°* *cresc.* *ff*

145 *p*

154 *4da C.*

163 *p* *dol. assai*

169 *pp*

174