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Joseph Joachim: Collaborator,  
Composer, Interpreter and Inspirer

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## **Introduction**

History recognizes nineteenth century virtuoso violinist Joseph Joachim for his outstanding and influential role on his contemporaries and to musicians of the present day, a role that encompassed more than merely a performing violinist but a collaborator, composer, interpreter, and inspirer of music. As a collaborator, Joachim became a sort of co-creator of the pieces he worked on with his contemporaries, for he offered a profound knowledge of violin performance that his colleagues lacked. As a composer, he skillfully contributed to many compositional processes with great insight. Joachim's incredible performance abilities allowed him to interpret the pieces he played in such a way that the composer's intentions of the pieces on which he collaborated spoke eloquently to the audience. He had a remarkable gift of conveying his musical ideas with flawless technique on the violin. It was his multi-faceted career as a collaborator that made him so inspiring and influential to his contemporaries and to people of today. His closest collaborator was his friend and composer Johannes Brahms, who sought Joachim's skill and knowledge for a multitude of chamber works as well as violin repertoire – their most popular collaboration piece is the Brahms Violin Concerto, one of the many pieces for which Joachim wrote a cadenza.

Just as Joachim influenced many other musicians, his successful collaborative efforts with composers like Brahms became an inspiration for me to collaborate with a composer as well. I experienced my own collaboration process with friend and composer Daniel Wolfert, who worked with me on a solo violin piece for my senior thesis. Daniel sought inspiration during the writing process by asking me questions about myself: discovering my Christian background and recalling his childhood growing up in the Jewish temple, he decided to make his religion the main source of inspiration for the piece *Echoes of Tefilot*. Our collaboration included

correspondence by way of email, phone, and one-on-one meetings, where I offered Daniel suggestions on how to improve the piece’s playability and potential musical ideas during various stages of its completion. Through working on *Echoes of Tefilot* with Daniel, I experienced the value that collaboration between co-creators of a work truly possesses.

## **Part 1: The Multi-Faceted Career of Joseph Joachim**

### **Joachim’s Background**

Joseph Joachim was born in Kitsee near Pressburg, Hungary on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1831 into a Jewish family, and died August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1907 in Berlin.<sup>1</sup> Joachim moved to Vienna around the age of eight years old to further his studies with the Vienna Conservatory violin teacher Joseph Böhm.<sup>2</sup> Böhm helped make Joachim the “incomparable master of the bow” that he became.<sup>3</sup> In 1843, Joachim moved to Leipzig, Germany, to study with Ferdinand David, the concertmaster of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig and an influential violinist. David was good friends with another mentor of Joachim by the name of Felix Mendelssohn, who was highly regarded as a composer for his Violin Concerto in E minor, written for David, and conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra at the time.<sup>4</sup> Under Mendelssohn’s baton, Joachim had his début performance in 1844 with the Beethoven Violin Concerto in London before the age 13, for which he received many complimentary reviews.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J.A. Fuller-Maitland, *Joseph Joachim* (London New York: J. Lane, 1905), 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

After Mendelssohn's death in 1847 Joachim served as concertmaster under Franz Liszt in Weimar, Germany.<sup>6</sup> In 1853, his career took him to Hanover where he composed most of his 56 works.<sup>7</sup> His few years in Hanover were essential for his development of life-long relationships with his mentors Robert and Clara Schumann as well as friend and collaborator Johannes Brahms.<sup>8</sup> It was here that Joachim met Brahms during a pleasant visit from his old schoolmate Reményi, who brought Brahms along as his accompanist.<sup>9</sup> Brahms performed some of his works for Joachim, which Joachim found "blindingly strong and fresh."<sup>10</sup> It was that moment that a great collaboration made its roots. In 1868, Joachim moved to Berlin where he remained for the rest of his career and became the director of the Königlische Hochschule für Musik and formed the Joachim Quartet.<sup>11</sup>

Joachim only made a few recordings in 1903 before passing away in 1907, which scholar Barrett Stoll argues does not properly convey how Joachim played in his prime years – technology for Joachim's recordings in 1903 were not highly sophisticated either.<sup>12</sup> The recordings are not without value, however; Borchard describes Joachim's recordings as portraying a "subtle command of rubato, his long-arched phrasing and his sparing use of vibrato."<sup>13</sup> During his career, Joachim was a significant performer of chamber works and violin concertos such as those by himself, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Viotti, Spohr, and the Bach solo sonatas.<sup>14</sup> We see the strong influence that Joachim had on composers of his day

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<sup>6</sup> Beatrix Borchard, "Joachim, Joseph" *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press (2016), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/14322>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 63-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>11</sup> Borchard.

<sup>12</sup> Barrett Stoll, "Joseph Joachim: Violinist, Pedagogue, and Composer" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1978), 107.

<sup>13</sup> Borchard.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

through the many pieces dedicated to and written for him: pieces by Max Bruch, Johannes Brahms, Antonin Dvořák, Franz Liszt, Pablo de Sarasate, Clara Schumann, among them.<sup>15</sup>

Due to his international fame, it was Joachim's performances that made many pieces of music popular. For example, the Joachim Quartet, founded by Joachim in 1869, is responsible for providing much acclaim and appreciation to the late quartets of Beethoven upon their performances of such pieces.<sup>16</sup> He expanded the knowledge and popularity of many Baroque works for violin, including the Handel sonatas, Tartini sonatas (particularly "Devil's Trill") and most significantly the Bach solo sonatas, which are now included in the classical violinist's standard repertoire.<sup>17</sup>

### **Joachim the Collaborator**

Joachim was influential to other musicians and composers of the nineteenth century for his collaborations on works with contemporaries including Schumann, Dvořák, and particularly Brahms, for in chamber pieces as well as solo violin works. Joachim collaborated early on in his career with Schumann, who coached Joachim particularly in composition but also sought Joachim's assistance when writing his own pieces for violin.<sup>18</sup> Schumann wrote to Joachim during his composition of the Violin Sonata in D Minor, Opus 121, stating, "You were often in my mind as I wrote it, and that encouraged me; tell me of anything in it that you consider too difficult to play, for I have often given you unpalatable dishes, or at any rate mouthfuls. Strike

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<sup>15</sup> Stoll, 292-5.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 227.

out anything unplayable.”<sup>19</sup> Schumann’s correspondence with Joachim portrays the importance Schumann placed on Joachim’s critiques of his works.

Joachim collaborated with Dvořák as soon as they had met in 1879 when Joachim encouraged Dvořák to write violin concerto.<sup>20</sup> Scholar Stoll describes their collaboration together: “Joachim kept the manuscript for six months, spending considerable time going through the score and adding suggestions in instrumentation and in the solo part...After Dvořák’s revision, he sent the manuscript back to Joachim. Joachim kept the manuscript for two years, during which time he extensively revised the solo part and advised Dvořák to lighten the instrumentation.”<sup>21</sup>

Although Joachim collaborated with a number of composers during his career, he was most famously an influential collaborator with Brahms, and for a significant number of pieces of chamber literature such as the Piano Quartet in C Minor Opus 60,<sup>22</sup> as well as violin literature including the Double Concerto for Violin and Cello in A Minor Opus 102. However, one of the most successful and popular pieces on which Brahms and Joachim collaborated was the Brahms Violin Concerto, Opus 77.

### **Brahms Violin Concerto**

Brahms and Joachim’s close collaboration on the concerto was the epitome of collaborations between composer and performer, for Brahms and Joachim constructed the piece

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<sup>19</sup> Stoll., 228.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 233-4.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 230.

from a foundation of 25 years of friendship.<sup>23</sup> They corresponded by mail not only for social reasons, but for their work on contrapuntal studies and to discuss some of Brahms's pieces. During the writing of Brahms's Violin Concerto, Brahms and Joachim wrote 33 postcards and letters relating to the Concerto, between August 21, 1878, and June 26, 1879 the year of the piece's premiere.<sup>24</sup> The healthy collaboration that ensued between Brahms and Joachim could be because they never lived in the same city at the same time and only communicated mainly through letters and music. Schwarz states that "this distance saved their friendship," for despite their reciprocated admiration, they found annoying traits in one another.<sup>25</sup> Their disagreements only caused real concern when they broke ties between 1881 and 1883 after Brahms supported Joachim's wife Amalie in their marital dispute, which only ended in a divorce.<sup>26</sup> However, Joachim and Brahms reconciled and continued in their collaboration, though without the same level of intimacy and trust as before.<sup>27</sup>

Scholar I-Chun Hsieh discusses the three stages of Joachim's influence on the concerto: from August to the end of 1878 between letter exchanges and at least one meeting in which Brahms adopted most of Joachim's suggestions for the solo violin and orchestration, after the concerto premiere from January to April 1879 when Joachim had the original full score and made dark red ink marks for permanent changes sent to the engraver, and mid-May to the end of June 1879 in which Brahms did not use most of the suggestions Joachim gave.<sup>28</sup> Though Brahms did not use most of Joachim's ideas in the third stage of the collaboration, he made many

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<sup>23</sup> Boris Schwarz, "Joseph Joachim and the Genesis of Brahms's Violin Concerto," *The Musical Quarterly* vol. 69, no. 4 (Oxford University Press, Autumn 1983), 504. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741978>

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 506.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 505.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 506.

<sup>27</sup> I-Chun Hsieh, *Performance of the Violin Concerto and Sonatas of Johannes Brahms with an Analysis of Joseph Joachim's Influence on His Violin Concerto* (Ann Arbor: Bell & Howell, 1997), 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

significant changes in details that Joachim suggested in the first and second stages. Hsieh discusses the 38 major changes that Joachim made in red ink on the manuscript after the premiere, which included crossing out notes to make the solo violin part more playable, adding slurs, dynamic markings, and accents to indicate musical phrases and direction, changing the bowing for more easier bow distribution, completely crossing out some lines and writing in his alternative melodic line with different rhythms and notes, and adding double stops to grow the line's intensity.<sup>29</sup> According to Hsieh, the modern version of the Brahms Violin Concerto takes most of Joachim's suggestions, while few modern editions do not use Joachim's suggestions. In some modern editions, Brahms's original writing in addition to Joachim's suggestions are both included to allow the violinist the choice of either, such as page 71 measure 3,5,6,7, and 8.<sup>30</sup>

One could argue that the Violin Concerto was just as much Joachim's as it was Brahms's for the violinist's role as the performer. The concerto could be given some ownership to Joachim because of his monopoly on all early performances of the piece, for sharing the piece in this way was a large part of Joachim's role in his collaboration with Brahms.<sup>31</sup> Scholar Karen Leistra-Jones explains how the public saw the piece after its premiere: "until the concerto was published ten months after the premiere, he was the only soloist with access to the work. Indeed, as far as the musical public was concerned, during these months Brahms's new concerto "existed" only through Joachim's officially sanctioned performances, and he seems to have achieved a kind of

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<sup>29</sup> Hsieh., 25-75.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 44-46.

<sup>31</sup> Karen Leistra-Jones, "Improvisational Idyll: Joachim's 'Presence' and Brahms's Violin Concerto, op. 77," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, vol. 8, no. 3 (University of California Press, Spring 2015), 243.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2015.38.3.243>.

symbolic ownership of this work.”<sup>32</sup> The public associated Joachim with the Violin Concerto just as much as they did Brahms, for Joachim was responsible for introducing the piece to the world.

### **Joachim the Composer**

A portion of Joachim’s great success as a collaborator stemmed from his early career as a composer – his compositional skills proved very useful throughout his life when he composed many cadenzas, for which he is particularly famous. In addition to his cadenzas, Joachim composed a number of pieces including *Andantino and Allegro Scherzoso* Opus 1 for violin and orchestra, Concerto in G minor for violin and orchestra Opus 3, Three Pieces for violin and pianoforte (*Lindenrauschen, Abendglocken, Ballade*) Opus 5, Overture to “Henry IV” Opus 7, and Hungarian Concerto in D Minor for violin and orchestra Opus 11, among others.<sup>33</sup> He dedicated many of his compositions to other significant musicians of his time, such as his *Andantino and Allegro Scherzoso* for his teacher Joseph Böhm, who was a significant influence on Joachim’s musical career, and his Weimar mentor Liszt with his Opus 3 Concerto in G minor.<sup>34</sup> Brahms, Schumann, and Liszt very much admired Joachim’s works. “They reveal, especially in the overtures, a mastery of orchestration, and have a distinctive tone of voice” describes scholar Borchard.<sup>35</sup> However, despite their musical value, Joachim’s pieces have disappeared from the repertory due to their highly technical demands.<sup>36</sup>

Joachim wrote cadenzas to concertos such as the Beethoven Concerto in D Major Opus 61, which he performed at his debut concert under Mendelssohn, the Mozart Concerto No. 4 in D Major K. 216, the Mozart Concerto No. 5 in A Major K. 219, and the Brahms Violin Concerto in

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<sup>32</sup> Leistra-Jones, 243-4.

<sup>33</sup> Fuller-Maitland, 56.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>35</sup> Borchard.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

D Major Opus 77, all of which have remained a part of standard repertoire for violinists.<sup>37</sup>

Regarding the Brahms Violin Concerto cadenza, Donald Tovey stated that “the pupils of Joachim are not the only ones who will regard his cadenza to Brahms’s Violin Concerto as an integral part of the composition,” for the cadenza has remained a significant part of the performance practice of the piece.<sup>38</sup>

During their friendship before collaborating on the Violin Concerto, Brahms and Joachim became conduits for each other to develop their compositional skills. It was through this growing relationship with Brahms that Joachim he realized his compositional abilities were overshadowed his companion’s. In 1856, Joachim and Brahms began sending each other contrapuntal studies to improve their compositional skills and learn technical writing skills from each other.<sup>39</sup> Brahms laid down the rules of their contrapuntal practice: “Every Sunday some work must go either back or forth... And whoever misses the day, i.e., sends nothing, will be fined one thaler, with which the other can buy himself some books!!! One is excused only when instead of the exercise, he sends some compositions, which will be then all the more welcome...double counterpoint, canons, fugues, preludes or whatever it may be.”<sup>40</sup> It was a practice which Brahms took very seriously: whoever misses a day must send a thaler to the other. Joachim states that Brahms “is already very accomplished in the manipulations of this kind of composition, whereas I never occupied myself with it beyond the basic grammatical necessities.”<sup>41</sup> Joachim, however, often needed some encouragement to continue the exercises, though the “musical relationship” he developed with Brahms through these exercises meant “a

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<sup>37</sup> Stoll, 177.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader* (New Haven: Yale University, 2000), 68.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 68.

great deal” to him.<sup>42</sup> These exercises not only helped improve both of their compositional abilities, but it helped to maintain a strong and collaborative relationship between them.

### **Joachim the Interpreter**

Joachim made a strong impression on musicians and scholars as a collaborator not only through his compositional skills, but also for his ability to interpret pieces in performance in such an authentic manner. Stoll articulates that “Joachim’s concern with composers’ original intentions led him to a scholarly approach to editing procedures not typical of his time.”<sup>43</sup> Joachim was not only a highly esteemed and progressive violinist for his efforts in becoming a translator for the composers’ pieces, but he sought out and performed works by such composers during an era where violinists rarely performed works by composers other than themselves.<sup>44</sup> Violinists would focus on playing their own works because they were “tailored to fit their own technical ability, and designed to highlight their personal style.”<sup>45</sup> Joachim became more of a multi-faceted violinist than expected of violinists at that time.

During much of classical music history into the Romantic Era, freedom for improvisation during performances was a standard procedure of musicians. Mozart for example was as much of an expert improviser as composer. Often during memorized performances of his own pieces previously written out, he would change it by improvising on the spot.<sup>46</sup> However, improvisations in the concert hall became more and more excluded from concerts during Brahms’s and Joachim’s time while performances that honored more text-oriented, and canonic,

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<sup>42</sup> Musgrave, 68.

<sup>43</sup> Stoll, 248.

<sup>44</sup> Hsieh, 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Taruskin, “Chapter 11 The Composer’s Voice,” *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, *Oxford History of Western Music*, (New York). <http://www.oxfordwesternmusic.com/view/Volume2/actrade-9780195384826-div1-11005.xml>

*Werktreue* compositions became the standard.<sup>47</sup> In the Romantic Era, a musician performing in an improvisation-like style, rather than actually improvising, became an important aspect of the concert experience.

Scholar Karen Leistra-Jones wrote that Joachim had an ability to offer such a solid interpretation and performance of a piece that the audience imagined Joachim playing and communicating as if he himself were the composer. Joachim saw himself as a “servant” of the composer with whom he collaborated: he played pieces in order to understand how the composer intended the piece before adding his own ideas.<sup>48</sup> Scholar Schwarz describes him as the “musical conscience of Europe – incorruptible and uncompromising in musical quality, textual fidelity, and artistic integrity.”<sup>49</sup> One might say he would take on the role of a translator for the composer to the audience. Donald Francis Tovey wrote that “when Joachim played, there was no player and no listener. There was Beethoven or there was Bach.”<sup>50</sup> Composer, conductor, and pianist of Joachim’s time, Hans von Bülow similarly said, “Yesterday Joachim did not play Beethoven and Bach; Beethoven played himself.”<sup>51</sup>

Joachim also succeeded in performing the Brahms Violin Concerto in this improvisational-like style – not only was the concerto written to sound improvisatory in a multitude of ways, but Joachim’s ability to portray the piece as improvised on the spot aided in Joachim’s connection to the piece through the eyes of the audience. His performing practices made a noteworthy statement for his contemporaries and future generations.

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<sup>47</sup> Leistra-Jones, 248.

<sup>48</sup> Schwarz, 504.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 504.

<sup>50</sup> Donald Francis Tovey, “Joseph Joachim, 1831-1907 (1907),” *The Classics of Music: Talks, Essays, and Other Writings Previously Uncollected*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 294.

<sup>51</sup> Leistra-Jones, 246.

In fact, he performed with such enthusiasm and commitment that he began the practice of performing pieces from memory, and subsequently influenced other performers to do the same.<sup>52</sup> Today, performers play pieces from memory as a common practice so that they develop a deeper understanding of the material and give an impression to the audience of improvising on the spot, just as Joachim captured in his performances. The *Illustrated London News* reported about his performance debut performance of the Beethoven concerto in London, 1844: “Joachim plays from memory, which is more agreeable to the eye of the auditor than to *see* anything read from a music-stand.”<sup>53</sup> This review of Joachim’s performance illustrates that performing from memory was not a normal or typical practice for other violinists before Joachim.

Joachim was able to accurately perform such interpretations partly because of his technical mastery of the violin in addition to his zeal for solid interpretation. Critic Eduard Hanslick in 1867 during Joachim’s Vienna tour described Joachim’s performance enthusiastically: “Technically, he is so near to absolute perfection that we are scarcely capable of detecting the imperceptible difference which separates him from it. At the same time, it is the grandeur of Joachim’s interpretation which is its most prominent feature, and it is only after the performance that one realizes his wonderful technique.”<sup>54</sup> Stoll articulates that most reviews describe Joachim as having a strong sense of control.<sup>55</sup> In terms of tone, London businessman Walter Willson Cobbett (1847-1937), who heard Joachim perform multiple times, described his tone quality: “I use the word ‘qualities’ in the plural because he knew the secret of varying the tone quality in harmony with the sentiment of the music.”<sup>56</sup> His bow mastery received many

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<sup>52</sup> Leistra-Jones, 246.

<sup>53</sup> Fuller-Maitland, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Stoll, 114.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 109-11.

compliments as well: “For such work Joachim’s bowing was superbly adapted. In broad playing he used every atom of bow length, and gave an impression of illimitability. His detaché was noble...his special staccato, however, I never heard from anyone else - - a round, beautiful, flexible thing, midway between the close and the sautillé, with the weight and balance obtained from the kind where the bow remains on the string, yet with the resilience and sparkle of the springing bow.”<sup>57</sup>

### **Joachim the Inspirer**

#### ***F-A-E Sonata***

When considering how inspirational and influential Joachim was to his contemporaries, the *F-A-E Sonata* is a great example of his positive influence on composers and friends. After Joachim made a surprise visit to the Schumanns in Düsseldorf, Robert Schumann decided to surprise Joachim by writing him a sonata: he recruited his student and German composer Albert Dietrich, and new mentee and friend Johannes Brahms in 1853 to assist him in writing the piece for Joachim.<sup>58</sup> Joachim had recently introduced Brahms to the Schumanns, for which Brahms’s capabilities as a composer highly struck the Schumanns— Brahms had also met Dietrich through Schumann quickly after that, and both developed an immediate friendship.<sup>59</sup> Schumann, Dietrich, and Brahms all composed this sonata collaboratively in honor of the “beloved friend” Joachim’s birthday and for his arrival to perform in Düsseldorf.<sup>60</sup> Dietrich composed the first

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<sup>57</sup> Stoll, 115.

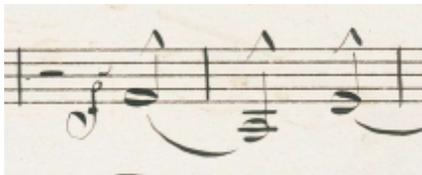
<sup>58</sup> Swafford, 82.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

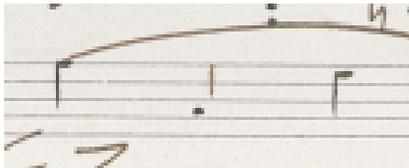
<sup>60</sup> Edith Eisler, “The ‘F-A-E Sonata’ Is an Ode to Kindred Spirits,” *Strings*, 25, January 2011, 33, <http://ezproxy.ups.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/817178516?accountid=1627>; Stoll, 58.

movement, and Schumann the second Intermezzo and fourth Finale movements while Brahms wrote the third Scherzo movement.<sup>61</sup>

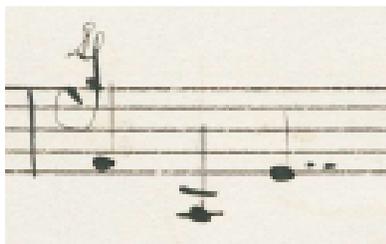
The name of the Sonata derived from Joachim's motto "Frei aber einsam" (German for "free but solitary" or "free but lonely") that influenced Dietrich and Schumann to create the leitmotif using pitches f, a, and e within their movements of the Sonata.<sup>62</sup> Here are examples of the motif used in the violin part of the movements by Dietrich and Schumann, each of which uses different articulations, note durations, and octaves but still display the pitches f, a, and e (Brahms did not use the motif in his *Scherzo* but instead quoted Dietrich's *Allegro*):



**Movement I *Allegro* by Dietrich**



**Movement II *Romanze* by Schumann**



**Movement IV *Finale* by Schumann**

Scholar Jan Swafford wrote about the unveiling party for the sonata: "Among invited guests for the occasion [was] Gisela von Arnim, from whom Joachim had recently become free

<sup>61</sup> Eisler., 33.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 33.

but lonely,” indicating that Joachim had a former relationship with Gisela, a relationship which was likely the origin of his motto.<sup>63</sup> Joachim played the piece with Clara Schumann on piano during the party, and easily guessed who wrote which movement.<sup>64</sup> The collaboration of Schumann, Dietrich, and Brahms on the *F-A-E Sonata* was a significant step in building future relationships particularly between Schumann, Brahms, and Joachim. Schumann remained a strong mentor and friend for both Brahms and Joachim until his death in 1856.

### **Coda**

Joachim’s successful career as a musician was evident in his influence on musicians and audiences of the nineteenth century and to today, influence which came from Joachim’s multi-faceted musical career as a composer, performer and interpreter, and collaborator. Although Joachim became one of the most influential violinists of the nineteenth century, his role in the musical world was so much more than that, for all of these aspects of Joachim’s life contributed to the success of one another. Joachim’s knack for composing only strengthened his abilities as a collaborator when working with Brahms on his Violin Concerto, and his success as a performer and “translator” of works helped him know what would compositionally work best in the collaboration as well. He could successfully write violin pieces for himself as a highly trained violinist composer, adhering to his strengths. The *F-A-E Sonata* is an excellent display of the influence he had on his contemporaries as a highly qualified musician and a friend, for it was a collaborative effort by friends Schumann, Dietrich, and Brahms as a gift to Joachim. He composed a multitude of works, including cadenzas. His most famous cadenza was for the Brahms Violin Concerto, a piece in which Joachim greatly influenced during his close

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<sup>63</sup> Swafford, 82.

<sup>64</sup> Stoll, 58-9.

collaboration with colleague and friend Brahms. His compositional abilities in addition to his interpretative skills as a performer made the concerto as successful and popular as it is today.

## **Part 2: My Personal Collaboration with Daniel Wolfert**

As a violinist, I was inspired to work closely with a composer as Joachim had done with Brahms, and experience the process of collaborating on a piece of music. I asked my classmate and friend Daniel Wolfert to collaborate on a piece with me. Daniel is a senior at the University of Puget Sound who is studying for his Bachelor of Arts in Music with an emphasis in Composition. Daniel found my idea compelling and a great opportunity to learn more about composing for the violin, so he gladly accepted the proposal. We agreed upon a solo violin piece because this form would be the easiest on which to collaborate, despite the absence of solo violin pieces on which Joachim and Brahms collaborated.

Our collaboration began in October 2015 when Daniel gave me an unnamed portion of music that was about 1 minute 45 seconds in length. Daniel planned this part to be about a fourth of the piece. He wrote me an email the same day with questions for me to answer for him, which he used to write the piece while keeping in mind whom he was writing for. Below, I have included Daniel's questions in bold and my response following each question:

**1. You mentioned that one piece in particular that you enjoy is Vaughan William's *Lark Ascending*. What about this piece strikes you? Is there a particular moment, theme, historical fact or other aspect that appeals to you?**

I really love the introduction, because the violin has so much room for interpretation. To me, the melody is really saying something, like it's telling a story through the violin. The arpeggio runs are light and fluttery. I also love the capacity the piece has for being super light and airy, but also deep and expressive with the use of vibrato, dynamics, rubato, etc. I feel like its mood is a stark contrast with the Brahms *Scherzo*, because though the Brahms is very passionate, it's less dainty and elegant but powerful and in your face.

**2. What is something that you tend to gravitate towards in times of trouble?**

When I am stressed or upset, I try to remind myself to look to God for comfort. I struggle with this sometimes as a Christian, but I try to remember that I only find true joy in God. I find comfort in friends and family as well. I think just knowing I have people there for me who love me and are proud of me, no matter what, helps me through my version of tough times.

**3. What is your favorite thing about playing violin?**

What I love most is playing really good music for those who want to listen. I played the Brahms *Scherzo* in studio class about a month ago, and the performance was definitely not perfect, but I had the most fun I have had in a while when I played that piece because I knew exactly how I wanted the piece to go and how to shape it. I felt comfortable with it, and I performed in good company. I enjoy when I feel like I have something good to express in the music to others.

**4. What would you consider the top most rewarding pieces you've ever played?**

The Brahms *Scherzo* definitely comes to mind. However, when I have a Bach Sonata or Partita movement really nicely polished, that is really rewarding. Most violinists who have played a Bach movement probably feel the same way in that you never seem to play a perfect run of Bach: they are surprisingly challenging, such as Bach's *Adagio* from Sonata No. 1 in G minor. When I am solid on my intonation, my musical gestures, and the emotion or story I want to tell in it, the movement is so very rewarding to perform.

**5. What do you want out of this piece - in any and every capacity? I don't just mean musical per se, but also emotionally, or intellectually, or figuratively.”** I would love to feel like my personality, or maybe what I love about playing music can be heard in the piece, as well as your own personality or love of music too. I enjoy feeling like I can tell a story or express an emotion in pieces I play.<sup>65</sup>

Daniel used my answers to his questions as inspiration for his completion of the piece. He almost completely altered the composition from what he wrote originally since he “couldn’t seem to take it anywhere” or develop any musical ideas.<sup>66</sup> He instead took only some of the pre-existing material and expanded it to create the first official draft now titled *Echoes of Tefilot* (“Tefilot” is Hebrew for “Jewish prayer”).<sup>67</sup> After receiving Daniel’s first draft on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, we corresponded on the phone about suggestions I had for the piece, and he made the changes that I recommended in order to improve the playability of the piece. He sent his second and final draft on January 17<sup>th</sup>, in which I began my work on learning *Echoes of Tefilot*.

Throughout my process of learning the piece, I consulted with Daniel a few times to suggest more artistic and musical ideas – all changes made after his final draft are only written into my

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<sup>65</sup> D. Wolfert, personal communication, October 11, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, October 11, 2015.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1, 2016.

part, and therefore the changes are not evident in the final draft.<sup>68</sup> Since then, I have performed *Echoes of Tefilot* in my senior thesis presentation on March 9<sup>th</sup> and in my senior recital April 2<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>69</sup>

### **Daniel's Inspiration**

Not only did Daniel use my answers as inspiration for his piece, but he also found ideas elsewhere, most of which came from his Jewish background. Since Daniel recognized that my faith is a great source of strength and joy in my life, he decided to make religion an integral part of the piece's meaning. He stated that he does not wish *Echoes* to be a "Jewish" piece "but rather an *echo* of the music that has had such an indirect but profound influence" on him.<sup>70</sup> His intention for the piece to *echo* Judaism directly inspired his title of the work. He stated that

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the earliest memories I have of making music are in synagogue, singing Jewish prayers with my congregation. What made these memories so significant, however, was not their religious associations or even my congregation, but my congregation's rabbi. He doubled as the congregation's cantor, and as the congregation sang the plain, simple versions of the prayers, he would ornament them with these long, winding countermelodies. I distinctly remember thinking as a child, 'What is he doing? That's not the melody,' and curious about what he was doing, I began to imitate him, singing the countermelodies with him rather than the prayers. I guess that was my version of childhood rebellion. Soon enough, I began to make new countermelodies to coincide with his, and unknowingly, I took my first steps toward being a composer.<sup>71</sup>

His interest in the rabbi's "winding countermelodies" as a child was therefore an inspiration for him to begin composing in general. He looked at other fond memories of his Jewish upbringing for some direction, such as the epic poem *The Song of Songs* which he describes as "a tale of romantic courtship that has often been used as a metaphor for the relationship between God and

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<sup>68</sup> See Appendix 2 for Daniel Wolfert's final draft of *Echoes of Tefilot*

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix 1 for recital program notes on *Echoes of Tefilot*

<sup>70</sup> D. Wolfert, personal communication, April 1, 2016.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1, 2016.

the House of Israel.”<sup>72</sup> He loved that a person’s relationship with God does not have to be somber, but “it could be happy, playful, even ecstatic.”<sup>73</sup> His discovery of my faith as a Christian and with his connection to Judaism became the main inspirational link for Daniel’s *Echoes of Tefilot*.

Daniel wrote *Echoes of Tefilot* in a variation rondo form similar to ABA’CA’’. The violin introduces the rather antiphonal main melody of the piece in section A at the very beginning: Daniel wrote the melody using a Middle-Eastern maqam (mode) used in Jewish prayer or trope singing called “Hijaz” (flat 2<sup>nd</sup>, raised 3<sup>rd</sup>, flat 6<sup>th</sup>, and flat 7<sup>th</sup> scale degrees).<sup>74</sup> In measure 4 of the piece, the violin introduces the antiphony by playing the open E string as a one-measure drone and adding a flurry of four 16<sup>th</sup> notes followed by three 8<sup>th</sup> notes on the A string, which suggests the type of countermelodies Daniel heard in the Jewish temple. This double-stop playing continues at measure 12 with the full statement of the main melody – the melody appears repeatedly through the piece in diminished, augmented, fragmented, or altered forms. The changing of the melody represents Daniel’s constant growing and changing relationship with his faith.<sup>75</sup>

### **My Suggestions**

As I am a significantly stronger violinist than a composer, I focused on giving Daniel advice based on how to make the piece more playable on the violin throughout the collaboration process, since Daniel does not play the violin. He stated in our correspondence in October, 2015:

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<sup>72</sup> D. Wolfert, personal communication, April 1, 2016.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., February 22, 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., February 22, 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., February 22, 2016.

“I’m sure that there are plenty of stops in there that are difficult or unplayable. I’ve been consulting a chart of violin voicings to try and make performable stops, but undoubtedly some of them will not be possible. Would you mind making notes on the piece as to what works and what doesn’t?”<sup>76</sup> Daniel’s statement truly is an *echo* of Schumann’s statement to Joachim during their collaboration on Schumann’s Violin Sonata, in which he told Joachim to “strike out anything unplayable.”<sup>77</sup>

After playing through the first draft, I determined parts of *Echoes of Tefilot* that were unplayable or awkward for the violinist so that Daniel could make any necessary changes for his final draft. After his completion of the final draft, we collaborated further and made a few more compositional and musical changes. Daniel included rehearsal markings in the piece but inquired whether or not such markings were necessary for solo pieces. I told him that only the measure numbers are crucial in a solo piece, so Daniel took out these markings for the final draft.

After completing his final draft, I suggested adding a different texture in the sound in measure 35 by trilling between the G and a false harmonic C instead of G and the written C. Daniel liked the idea, so I made this change to measure 35. I made the same change to the C in measure 36 as well, but the C would be a natural harmonic instead of a fingered or false harmonic from measure 35.

In measure 41 and measure 151, the quadruple stops included the pitches C, B flat, G, and E flat, all which were to be played on each of the four violin strings. In order to play all four pitches, the fingers must stretch out in an uncomfortable manner, which risks good intonation. Daniel then changed this chord in the final draft to G, C, G, and E flat so that I could play the bottom G as an open string and play the rest of the notes in the same hand position, not in an

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<sup>76</sup> D. Wolfert, personal communication, October 11, 2015.

<sup>77</sup> Stoll, 228.

uncomfortable and risky stretch. He later changed the notes to G, D, G, and E flat so that I could play both of the bottom notes G and D on the bottom two open strings.

In measure 44, the first draft had an A below the treble clef staff in a double stop with the E an octave and a half above the A. This double stop is unplayable because the hand cannot reach far enough from where the A must be fingered to the high E on the D string. Both notes can be played in first position easily on their own (the A pitch is played on the G string, and the E pitch on the A string) but the order of the strings on the violin (G, D, A, E) does not allow for the G and A strings to be played at the same time without playing the D string simultaneously. To mitigate the issue, Daniel lowered the high E to an A, a fifth below the previous pitch E, so that I could instead play octave As in first position on the adjacent G and D strings.

The chord in measure 53 is again an uncomfortable reach with the pitches A flat, F, E flat, and C. In order to keep all the notes in the same hand position and make intonation easier, Daniel changed the notes to A flat, F, C, and A flat for the final draft.

After the completion of the final draft, the false harmonic D in measure 58 was changed to a normal D on the A string instead of a false harmonic, so that the end of the harmonic passage sounds more final like Daniel wanted.

In measures 85 to 102, Daniel wrote consequent quarter note double stops high up on the E and A strings for a powerful and intense sound but which were very challenging in terms of intonation, especially because the passage requires the player to constantly shift hand positions. Daniel therefore changed the passage to a monophonic or single note melodic line, which remains at fortissimo in order to still achieve a powerful sound.

After the final draft, another minor change was made in measure 125. The D pitch, played on the open D string, means the melodic line above must be played on the A string, which

enters a rather uncomfortable position. To mitigate this, the D note now changes to an A played on the open A string so that the hand can stay in one position to play the melodic line.

In measure 141 of the first draft, Daniel wrote a drone on the pitch E and a countermelody below that starts on the G string with the pitch C sharp, over an octave away. These notes cannot be played together because the C sharp must be played on the G string, and the E pitch in the correct octave would be too far up the fingerboard for the hand to reach at the same time. Again, the E is playable in first position on the A string, but the G and A strings are not adjacent with one another. In the final draft, Daniel rewrote the E down a fifth to the pitch A in order to play both the C sharp and the pitch A at the same time.

### **Learning the Piece**

Inspired by Joachim's wish to convey his pieces as authentically as possible, I worked with Daniel to discover what exactly he wants to convey in his piece and how I can make that possible in performance. My knowledge of Daniel's inspiration for the piece was helpful for me when I considered sound color and melodic shape. During my process of learning *Echoes of Tefilot*, I met with Daniel a couple more times to make musical alterations, including the addition of ritardandos in measures 5 and 122, a change from forte to mezzo piano in measure 8 and a subsequent crescendo in measure 11, *normale* and *non vibrato* markings in measure 54 until adding *vibrato* back again at 58, and a crescendo in measure 131 leading to a subito piano in measure 133. Daniel gave me free reign on the piece's bowings and fingerings as the performer but made minor bowing suggestions in a couple spots.

### **Conclusion**

After working with Daniel in a collaboration setting, I felt that I received only a glimpse really of what Joachim and Brahms experienced in their collaboration on the Brahms Violin

Concerto. Though separated by time, Joachim and I both aided in the creation of a completely new piece of music with a friend. We offered valuable insight into the technique of violin playing that helped shape the piece for the better, and we were able to share the music with others through our own performance and translation of the music that allowed the composer to speak through us. However, as Joachim found success in his performing and interpreting abilities through his succinct technique, I wish to improve my performance abilities in order to become more capable of achieving the technical mastery that successful violinists such as Joachim possessed.

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**Appendix 1:**

Program notes on *Echoes of Tefilot* for my senior recital Saturday, April, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016: “A senior music major at the University of Puget Sound, Daniel Wolfert composed *Echoes of Tefilot* as a collaboration with me for my senior honors thesis presentation. He titled the piece *Echoes of Tefilot* (“tefilot” meaning “Jewish prayer”) because he wrote the piece as an “echo” of his experiences with religion as a child. He found inspiration for the piece in the epic poem *Song of Songs* for its use as a metaphor between God and the House of Israel—he “loved the idea that a person’s relationship with God didn’t have to be somber—it could be happy, playful, even ecstatic.” The piece is in a variation rondo form (ABA’CA”) in which the A section is built from the Middle-Eastern maqam (mode) “Hijaz” of a flat 2nd scale degree, raised 3rd, flat 6th and flat 7th, often used in Jewish prayer or trope singing (or direct singing from the Torah).”

**Appendix 2:**

Daniel Wolfert’s final draft of *Echoes of Tefilot*:

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