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PERFORMING CLASSICAL REPERTOIRE:  
THE UNBRIDGEABLE GULF BETWEEN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE  
AND HISTORICAL REALITY

by CLIVE BROWN

In 1990 I was amused to see a CD of masses by Mozart, performed with period instruments, displayed in the window of Blackwell's Music Shop in Oxford with the slogan: „Mozart as he would have heard it“. We might imagine that anyone who gave that statement a few moments of serious thought would quickly have dismissed it as naïve and absurd. But the very fact that someone believed it might be an effective marketing ploy calls attention to the curious lack of intellectual integrity lying behind the promotional hyperbole that has accompanied much of the output of the „period“ performance movement.

Whatever we call it, „authentic“, „period instrument“ or „historically-informed“ performance<sup>1</sup> means very different things to different groups of people. To the concert-going or CD-listening public it will generally have the allure of something slightly exotic; unlike, but not too unlike, conventional performance. This dissimilarity will probably be attributed to the performers' use of techniques and practices associated with the composer's time and place, and audiences will usually take it on trust that the performing practices are, if not quite what the composer might have heard, at least much closer to them than those employed in conventional modern performances.

Performers may share some of these feelings, depending on the sophistication of their involvement with historically-informed performance. To some, however, it may merely be a job; in London especially, many musicians who spend most of their professional lives performing in a standard contemporary manner will double as historically-informed performers when they have the chance to earn additional income by this means. The latter are often quite unreflective or casual about the activity they engage in, content to follow the instructions of the conductor or leader as best they can, but frequently using instruments that are not historically appropriate (violins with chin rests for late 18th-century music or, if no chin rest, shoulder rests; cellists with spikes for 18th- and early 19th-century music; wind players with instruments of unsuitable provenance or date and so on) and, in many cases, employing a scarcely modified modern technique. A few, indeed, may be frankly cynical about the whole business, seeing it as merely another means of making a living.

More commonly, though, musicians, especially younger ones, who are regularly involved in performing historical repertoires with period instruments, are genuinely interested and open to new approaches. But opportunities for them to engage seriously with scholars of performing practice, either in con-

<sup>1</sup> The terminology in German, most commonly „Historische Aufführungspraxis“, differs, but the situation is similar.



servatories and universities or in the professional world, are severely limited; their engagement is thus almost inevitably with a style of historically-informed performance adopted by acknowledged practitioners, which has been sanctioned by public approbation. This style need not even pretend to be based rigorously on historical evidence. It is becoming increasingly common for more sophisticated performers to don the mantle of „post modernism“. Recognising the difficulties, both practical and philosophical, of recreating and employing a truly historical style, they draw upon features of the historical practices known to them through training, observation of other performers, or reading; a few of these, which suit their aesthetic predilections, are consciously or subconsciously adopted, giving their performing style greater individuality and a certain degree of „otherness“. But it is an unspoken principle that this „otherness“ must be sufficiently striking to rouse the interest of the listeners without alienating them.

Underlying this complex of intentions, reflections, aspirations, responses and reactions are some difficult scholarly and philosophical issues that have been discussed at length in recent years. The increasing sophistication of the debate has led to the virtual abandonment of the loaded term „authentic“ in favour of more neutral ones, such as period performance, early-music performance, or historically-informed performance. Even the most enthusiastic advocates of narrowing the gap between the composer's notation and the expectations that lay behind it in the composer's mind are acutely conscious of the limitations imposed upon them by the march of time. The more distant the period of composition from our own time, the fewer certainties we have about the range of possibilities inherent in the surviving notation; many of the aural effects that were understood to lie behind the notation are irrevocably lost to us. As the title of Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's thought-provoking book *The modern invention of medieval music* implies, the performing practices and sounds of pre-sixteenth-century music are largely unknowable. For later periods we have ever increasing documentary evidence, but much remains highly speculative. Not until the advent of recording in the late 19th century do we begin to have reliable evidence of how performers understood the notation and what they actually did. But as Robert Philip has pointed out, this evidence too presents serious challenges to performers.<sup>2</sup> There seems little enthusiasm for performing the music of Mahler, Strauss or Elgar in the manner they or their contemporaries performed it. Even where the gulf may to some extent be bridgeable, therefore, the will to embrace different notions of „good taste“ seems weak.

Nevertheless, during the last decades of the 20th century the end date of „early music“ came ever closer. Until the 1970s „early music“ was generally considered to finish with the Baroque. Gradually „early music“ performers began to claim the repertoire of the Classical period, performing Haydn, Mo-

<sup>2</sup> Robert Philip, *Early recordings and musical style: Changing tastes in instrumental performance 1900–1950*, Cambridge 1992, 229 ff.



zart and Beethoven on historical instruments. As late as 1980, Howard Mayer Brown still believed that although performing Beethoven's symphonies with period instruments would be revealing, „the practical difficulties of assembling and equipping such an orchestra are almost insuperable.“<sup>3</sup> But within a very short time of those words being written, performances with orchestras of supposedly Classical instruments became almost commonplace. The idea that later 19th-century music might be played in a „period“ style has taken longer to gain credence, though there is now a growing number of musicians who aspire to offer the public „period“ performances of later 19th-century compositions. The extent to which the majority of these efforts to perform Romantic repertoire in an historically-informed manner are based on a serious study and appraisal of the evidence remains questionable, yet, with the aid of early recordings, such an undertaking need not be regarded as hopeless. Whether early recordings may also be used alongside more conventional forms of written evidence to open up „Wege zur Klassik“ – „Paths to the Classical period“ – may be more problematic.

If we consider the stylistic changes that have taken place in the past century we might be highly sceptical about whether what we hear in the earliest recordings could possibly preserve any vestige of Classical practice. There seems to be a gulf of such breadth between what we do now and what the earliest recording artists did that, without the evidence of the recordings themselves, that gulf would undoubtedly be unbridgeable; how much more implausible, therefore, that we could bridge the even greater gulf between us and the 18th century. There are, nevertheless, good reasons to think that practices changed much more gradually during the century preceding the invention of recording. Ironically, although it was not the only agent of change in the 20th century, this very resource that provides us with aural knowledge of the past may have played a major part in accelerating change and encouraging a much more rigorous adherence to the written notation. With the advent of recording, musicians were unable to ignore features in their own playing that they had apparently been unaware of, but had often condemned in others. A nice example is provided by the prevalent 19th-century practice of using dislocation of the hands and arpeggiation in piano playing where these were not indicated in the score. It is clear from written accounts that towards the end of the century such practices were beginning to be seen as inappropriate. The constant demands of 19th-century composers that the performer should play „exactly what is written“ (whatever such statements may have meant to the composers who made them) were not without their effect.

Yet it seems clear that many traditional practices, which involved a departure from the literal meaning of the written notation, lingered for a long time, even in the playing of those who believed them to be outmoded and no longer in „good taste“. A comment by Sir Charles Hallé during a rehearsal

<sup>3</sup> Howard M. Brown, „Performing practice“, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, London 1980, xiv, 389.



of a Brahms Trio, in which his wife, the violinist Wilma Neruda, the pianist Leonard Borwick and the cellist W. E. Whitehouse were engaged, illustrates this nicely. Whitehouse recalled that

After the slow movement Sir Charles said, „Mr Borwick, do you mind if I say something?“ and of course Borwick said „Certainly not, Sir Charles.“ „Well,“ he said, „there is a very prevalent habit among pianists of ‚spreading‘ the notes of a chord with the idea of giving expression to a passage. It is a habit much to be deplored and should be discouraged.“ When he had quite finished his little „lecture,“ Lady Hallé said, „Yes dear, but you do it!“<sup>4</sup>

And presumably Hallé continued to use arpeggiation to the end of his life.

A few years later the pianist Max Pauer was shocked when he listened to one of his own recordings, commenting: „Was I, after years of public playing, actually making mistakes that I would be the first to condemn in any one of my own pupils? I could hardly believe my ears, and yet the unrelenting machine showed me that in some places I had failed to play both hands exactly together.“<sup>5</sup> The evidence of recording shows that these practices in keyboard playing rapidly became much rarer, or disappeared entirely, during the first half of the 20th-century. There are good grounds to believe, therefore, that the earliest recordings may have captured the final manifestations of some practices that were deeply rooted in the past, for while many aspects of performance changed during the 19th century, others were more tenacious, particularly where specific repertoires enjoyed a continuous tradition of performance by musicians whose training was within those traditions. Two such bastions of tradition, of very different character, are considered here.

The papal chapel was the last institution to employ castrati. In the earlier part of the 19th century, they were to be found in a number of German court chapels, most notably Dresden, and their role on the operatic stage continued tenuously until about the middle of the century. The last important operatic castrato role was Armando in Meyerbeer's *Il crociato in Egitto* (1824), written for Giovanni Batista Velluti (1781–1861). After unification in 1870, the Italian state quickly made castration illegal, and in 1878 a papal decree forbade the engagement of any further castratos for the Sistine Chapel, but the remaining castrato members of the choir continued to sing there, tacitly supported by the conservative Pope Leo XIII, until pensioned off by a decree of the new pope, Pius X, in 1903. This increasingly narrow role for castrati in the second half of the 19th century may well have encouraged the preservation of a number of older practices. One prominent feature in the performance style of the castrato Alessandro Moreschi (1858–1922), which is evident in his 1902 and 1904 recordings, seems especially likely to have 18th-century origins. He made very frequent use of a kind of un-notated grace note at the beginning of a syllable, swooping up to the written note from a pitch belonging to its harmony; this

<sup>4</sup> W. E. Whitehouse, *Recollections of a violoncellist*, London 1930, 27.

<sup>5</sup> J. F. Cooke, *Great pianists on piano playing*, Philadelphia 1913, 201s.



occurs from intervals as distant as a tenth, though more commonly from a third or fifth below.

The practice was certainly current in the choir in 1831, when Mendelssohn commented on it in a letter to Zelter, and noting that they referred to it as an „appoggiatura“ and that it produced a „most disagreeable“ effect.<sup>6</sup> An ornament of this kind is described as a form of portamento by Vaccai in his *Metodo pratico di canto italiano*, published at about the same time as Mendelssohn's visit to Rome, where he refers to it as „less usual“ than the kind of portamento that occurs on the preceding syllable.<sup>7</sup>

The ornament is, however, documented much earlier, in connection with operatic repertoire sung by late 18th-century castrati, in Domenico Corri's *Select collection*, where it is called the „leaping grace.“ In the introduction to the collection Corri explains that such graces „are not to be considered as forming any part of the air; but are only intended to give to certain notes a particular emphasis or expression.“ And he observes that the execution „ought to be so rapid that, while the effect is felt, the ear shall yet be unable to determine the character of the sounds or distinguish them from the predominant note.“<sup>8</sup> While it cannot be proved that what we hear on Moreschi's recordings is the same as the effect envisaged by Corri, it is undoubtedly consistent with Corri's description. The circumstances in which these graces are introduced certainly correspond closely with those in which Corri indicated them in his carefully annotated editions of arias and songs, as becomes graphically evident when Moreschi's graces are notated in the same way as Corri's.<sup>9</sup> Moreschi's recordings, therefore, provide a persuasive aural embodiment of a practice that, as notated and described by Corri, would otherwise be hard to envisage. The fact that this grace, executed in a similar manner, is also used by Adelina Patti, the oldest important soprano on record, in repertoire from Mozart to Bellini, but is absent from the performances of younger singers, is also suggestive of its connections with late 18th- and early 19th-century singing.<sup>10</sup>

The other bastion of tradition in which elements of Classical practice may have been preserved until the era of recording is broader and less easy to define. It encompasses a circle of German musicians, many of whom were closely associated with Mendelssohn and shared his ideals, particularly his reverence for the work of his great predecessors from Bach to Beethoven. Mendelssohn's powerful influence on the musical life of his time in Germany was not confined to his work as a composer. He played an active and proselytising role

<sup>6</sup> Mendelssohn's *letters from Italy and Switzerland*, trans. Lady Wallace, 2nd edn., London 1862, 181.

<sup>7</sup> Lesson xiii.

<sup>8</sup> Domenico Corri, *A select collection*, Edinburgh, 3 vols, [c. 1782], i, 8.

<sup>9</sup> For a transcription of Moreschi's performance of the „Crucifixus“ from Rossini's *Petite Messe Solenne* compared with an example from Corri see Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic performing practice 1750–1900*, Oxford 1999, 429–435.

<sup>10</sup> For further discussion of Patti's practices, with music examples, see Brown, *Classical and Romantic*, 436 and 621.



in practical music making. At the heart of his mission was the cultivation of true reverence for the great legacy of the past.<sup>11</sup> It would hardly be surprising, therefore if musicians who had matured under his personal influence should have sought actively to perpetuate received traditions of performing Classical repertoire. Among the most prominent of his protégés who lived long enough to make recordings were the pianist Carl Reinecke and the violinist Joseph Joachim.

While Moreschi was relatively young at the time of his recordings, Reinecke was the oldest important 19th-century musician to leave an aural record of his playing. This was not in the form of acoustic recordings, but of piano rolls, made on the sophisticated Welte-Mignon system in 1905 and on the apparently somewhat less refined Hupfeld (later Triphonola) system in 1906.<sup>12</sup> 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>13</sup> He was considered to be a particular authority on the performance of Mozart's piano music; to make Reinecke's respected interpretations more widely available, recordings of all the Mozart piano sonatas on Hupfeld piano rolls were projected, but it is unclear whether anything substantial came of that project.<sup>14</sup>

In 1905, however, Reinecke made seven piano rolls for Welte, including compositions by Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann and himself; two of these have appeared on a commercial CD<sup>15</sup> and Denis Hall (London) has kindly supplied me with four recordings of rolls played on his own finely regulated piano.<sup>16</sup> Reinecke made twenty rolls for Hupfeld,<sup>17</sup> but none of these is, to my knowledge,

<sup>11</sup> See Clive Brown *A portrait of Mendelssohn*, New Haven and London, 2003, especially 159 ff and 261 ff.

<sup>12</sup> According to Denis Hall, a leading expert on piano rolls, one or two Hupfeld Triphonola pianos in good working order may exist (personal communication 14 September 2007), but I have not so far been able to hear any of Reinecke's rolls for this instrument.

<sup>13</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., London, 2001, xxi, 158.

<sup>14</sup> Eszter Fontana (ed.), *Namhafte Pianisten im Aufnahmesalon Hupfeld*, Halle 2001.

<sup>15</sup> *The closest approach to 19th century piano Interpretation* ARC-106 (1992): Schumann „Warum“ and Mozart Piano Concerto No. 26 K. 537 2nd movement (Larghetto).

<sup>16</sup> The Larghetto from Mozart Piano Concerto K. 537, the „Minuet“ K. 498a attributed to Mozart (wrongly listed in the Reproducing piano roll foundation's catalogue as the second movement of the Piano Sonata K.333), Mozart's „Rondo „a la Turca““ from the Piano Sonata K. 331 and Beethoven's „Eccossaisen“ WoO 86.

<sup>17</sup> These include 7 pieces by Mozart (some in his own arrangements), 1 by Haydn, 2 by Beethoven, 1 by Hiller, 1 by Field, 1 by Schumann and 6 by Reinecke himself.



currently available in a modern recording. I want to focus here on a couple of aspects of performing practice that are particularly striking in Reinecke's recordings. The first concerns his execution of passages marked with portato dots and slurs in his own arrangement for solo piano of the „Larghetto“ from Mozart's Piano Concerto K. 537.<sup>18</sup> Reinecke's style of performance in general is characterised by a very substantial amount of arpeggiation where none is indicated by the usual wavy vertical line (although this symbol is used from time to time in his arrangement of the „Larghetto“).<sup>19</sup> The use of portato notation, however, which occurs very frequently in Reinecke's arrangement, where Mozart did not mark any, may also have been seen by Reinecke and his contemporaries as a means of indicating vertical dislocation or a delay of the upper notes in relation to the bass; that style of performance coincides to a very considerable extent in Reinecke's recording with the employment of portato notation in his arrangement.

Ex. 1: W. A. Mozart, *Piano Concerto K. 537*, Larghetto.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the Larghetto movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto K. 537, as arranged by Carl Reinecke. Each system consists of a piano (p) part on a treble clef staff and a bass (b) part on a bass clef staff. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system begins with a piano dynamic marking 'p semplice' in the piano part. The piano part features a series of eighth-note chords, while the bass part plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Reinecke's arrangement is marked with 'Ped.' (pedal) and '\*' Ped.' (pedal) symbols below the bass staff, indicating specific pedaling points. The second system starts with a mezzo-forte 'mf' dynamic in the piano part, which then transitions to 'dim.' (diminuendo) and finally 'p' (piano). The piano part includes a trill 'tr' in the final measure. The bass part continues with its eighth-note accompaniment, also marked with 'Ped.' and '\*' Ped.' symbols. The notation includes various slurs and articulation marks throughout both parts.

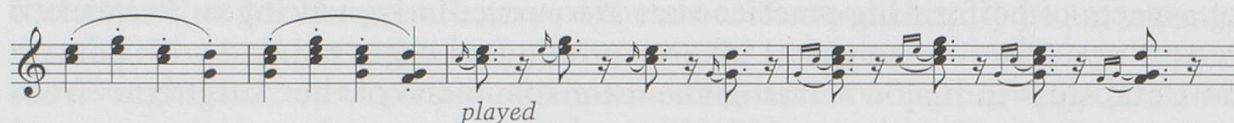
There is significant documentary evidence that this type of execution was understood by pianists to be implicit in portato notation. Reinecke's older Leipzig colleague, Ignaz Moscheles, a close friend of Mendelssohn's and briefly an associate of Beethoven, explained the execution of portato in his Op. 70 studies (c. 1843) as a kind of arpeggiation.

<sup>18</sup> *Larghetto/ aus dem Krönungs-Concert / (D dur No 20) / W. A. Mozart / für Pianoforte solo zum Concertvortrage / bearbeitet und / Frau Sarn Heinze geb. Magnus / zugeeignet / von Carl Reinecke. / Pr. 10 Ngr / Mk. 1 / Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel / 13653.*

<sup>19</sup> For discussion of issues surrounding the improvisatory use of arpeggiation in general see Anselm Gerhard, „Willkürliches Arpeggieren – ein selbstverständliches Ausdrucksmittel in der klassisch-romantischen Klaviermusik und seine Tabuisierung im 20. Jahrhundert“, *BjBHM* 27 (2003) 123–134; and Neal Peres da Costa, *Performing practices in late-nineteenth-century piano playing: implications of the relationship between written texts and early recordings*, Diss., University of Leeds 2001.



Ex. 2: I. Moscheles, *Studies for the Piano Forte* op. 70, 2 vols. (London, [ca. 1843]).



The idea that the notes of a melody marked with portato are to be sounded later than the accompaniment is graphically illustrated by Lichtenthal (1826), Pollini (1811), and Adam (1804). Comparison of Reinecke's performance with his notation in the „Larghetto“ strongly suggests that his careful inclusion of portato was quite deliberately intended to indicate dislocation to the pianist rather than any of the other meanings attributed to it by 19th-century theorists. There seems little doubt that this usage is linked with well-established practice, going back at least to the late 18th-century and Reinecke's performance may help us to imagine the kind of effect that was envisaged in other similar instances where composers used this marking in their keyboard music. Whether Reinecke's portato notation and his use of dislocation in these passages indicates his belief that this style of performance represents Mozart's practice is, of course, another matter, which must remain speculative. It seems absolutely clear from documentary evidence, however, that a liberal employment of arpeggiation and dislocation where none was marked was characteristic of late 18th-century piano performance.

Another feature of Reinecke's playing that links him with other members of the Mendelssohn/Leipzig tradition is the manner in which he departs substantially from the literal notated rhythms of the music he performs. In his performances of Mozart, Reinecke shows a distinct tendency to elongate the „good“ note (to use Leopold Mozart's terminology) and shorten the „bad“ note in a succession of notes of equal value. He does this to a very marked extent with slurred pairs, for example in the section of the K. 537 „Larghetto“ marked „con espressione“ in his arrangement.

Ex. 3:



In differing circumstances he employs a variety of unequal effects. In his recording of the „Minuet and Trio“ KV6 Anh C25.05,<sup>20</sup> for instance, he uses inequality structurally in the Minuet, to emphasise important notes in the

<sup>20</sup> Unpublished recording supplied by Denis Hall.



phrase; in bars 18–22 he strikingly elongates the first of six right-hand slurred quavers and hurries the others (the effect is more pronounced when the section is repeated), playing the right hand rhythms independently of the left hand. In the Trio he uses inequality to give a lilt to the repeated ♩. ♪♪ figure in the first eight bars by slightly elongating the quaver on the third beat; and in the continuous right-hand quavers in bars 9–12, by employing a repeated long-short pattern independently of the ♩. ♪♪ in the left hand.

In its marked freedom from the restraints of the notated rhythms Reinecke's playing resembles that of Joseph Joachim, with whom he played publicly in performances of Classical repertoire (for instance Beethoven piano trios with Alfredo Piatti). On the evidence of their recordings, both musicians frequently modified the written note values within a basically constant pulse, extending some values and compressing others. They did this differently in different repertoires however. Joachim, unfortunately, did not record any Mozart, Haydn or Beethoven, so it is impossible to draw a direct comparison between them in this respect. Joachim's expectation that the performer should avoid too strict a realisation of the notated rhythms in Classical repertoire is suggested, however, by his revealing comment, reported by Andreas Moser, that Vieuxtemps and other violinists of the French school were inadequate performers of Classical chamber music because they „adhered too strictly to the lifeless printed notes when playing the Classics, unable to read between the lines.“<sup>21</sup> That Joachim believed he was perpetuating the true tradition of Classical performance can scarcely be doubted. The essay in volume 3 of the Joachim and Moser *Violinschule*, written by Moser but clearly based on Joachim's views, condemns the Franco-Belgian School of string players for betraying their inheritance, and maintains that only the German School, represented by Joachim, his close colleagues and pupils, continued the traditions of the „old Italian School“ as handed down through Mannheim and through Viotti and his immediate disciples, Rode, Kreutzer and Baillot.<sup>22</sup> Despite the fact that Joachim did not record any Classical repertoire, it may nevertheless be possible to draw some conclusions about his approach to performing it from the playing of two of his most faithful pupils, Marie Soldat and Karl Klingler, who recorded music by Mozart and Beethoven in which they employ performing practices similar to those of Carl Reinecke.

Marie Soldat (b. 1864) was recommended to Joachim by Brahms; she studied with Joachim both at the Hochschule in Berlin and privately thereafter. Contemporaries considered that her playing strongly reflected Joachim's. After a performance by her string quartet in Berlin in 1896, a critic wrote: „It appears

<sup>21</sup> „[...] weil er [Vieuxtemps] sich, wie übrigens in neuerer Zeit die meisten Geiger der französisch-belgischen Richtung, beim Vortrag der *Klassiker* zu sehr an die leblosen Notenköpfe hielt, nicht zwischen den Zeilen zu lesen verstand [...]“; Andreas Moser, *Joseph Joachim, ein Lebensbild*, 2nd edn., Berlin, 1908–10, ii, 292.

<sup>22</sup> „[...] bel canto der alten Italiener“; Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser, *Violinschule*, 3 vols, Berlin, 1905, iii, 32f.



to me as if the dashing leader has best understood Joachim's style. With closed eyes one could believe that the Master sat at the first desk."<sup>23</sup>

Soldat's recordings<sup>24</sup> date from quite late in her career (c. 1926) and it seems possible that over the years she may have assimilated to some of the more recent trends in 20th-century performance. Her vibrato is more frequent than Joachim's though, in comparison with almost all other violinists on record at that time, she is extremely sparing in its use and it still seems to be an ornamental feature rather than an essential constituent of tone production. Her portamento, too, is very similar to that in Joachim's 1903 recordings. Overall, her recorded performances emphasise the connection with Joachim and the German tradition not only in performing style but also in choice of repertoire. Beethoven's „Romanze“ in F and the first movement of Mozart Violin Concerto K. 219 seem related to the editions in Joachim's and Moser's 1905 *Violinschule*; (the Mozart includes Joachim's cadenza); Schumann's „Abendlied“ was a favourite encore piece of Joachim's, and the two items from Bach solo Sonatas and Partitas will undoubtedly have been learned under his tutelage. The Adagio from Spohr's Ninth Violin Concerto, which she seems to have performed for many years,<sup>25</sup> may initially have been learned under one of her earlier teachers, August Pott, a pupil of Spohr, but Joachim, who also performed the Ninth Concerto, had probably heard Spohr play and was closely connected with Spohr's pupil Ferdinand David. There is every reason, therefore, to believe that Soldat's performances will have reflected many features that she imbibed from Joachim.

Her use of inequality in the first movement of Mozart's Violin Concerto K. 219 is even more striking than Reinecke's. Indeed, it sometimes seems exaggerated, for where much of Reinecke's rhythmic alteration closely resembles the kind of 3:2 inequality implied by 18th-century writers, hers is generally more pronounced, frequently 2:1, and often approaching a 3:1 proportion. The pairs of slurred semiquavers in the Adagio and quavers in the Allegro aperto are strongly unequalled. She also applies inequality to demi-semiquavers in the Adagio, and in the Allegro she normally elongated the first of a group of two or four slurred semiquavers very noticeably. Her recording of Beethoven's F major Romance op. 50, also demonstrates her tendency to unequalise the strong beat in many equally notated slurred figures, principally semiquavers, but occasionally demisemiquavers where, for instance, a slurred pair is followed by a group of separate notes. The inequality is not applied rigidly or routinely in either of these pieces, although it is applied systematically

<sup>23</sup> „Mir will es scheinen, als habe die schneidige Anführerin Joachims Art am besten erfaßt. Wer das Auge schloß, konnte glauben, der Meister säße am ersten Pult.“ *Kleines Journal*, 19 Jan. 1896, quoted in *Urtheile der Presse über das Streichquartett Soldat-Roeger*, Vienna 1898, 2–3.

<sup>24</sup> Originally issued on Union A 3000–3009 and 3012–3013l; transferred to LP: *Masters of the Bow*, MB 1019.

<sup>25</sup> It was included, for instance, in the programme of a concert in Olmütz on 6 January 1896 (programme from the private collection of Elisabeth Czerwenka, Vienna).



and consistently. In this respect her approach seems closer to the performing practice indicated by Leopold Mozart's injunction that the first note under a slur must be longer and the following note(s) hurried to make up the lost time, than to Quantz's more regulated inequality. Soldat's performance of Spohr's Adagio is freer in this respect, probably reflecting its rhapsodic nature and later date of composition (1820), but it is noticeable that in more „Classical“ figurations, particularly slurred pairs, she seems to adopt the long-short pattern as a matter of course.

Karl Klingler (b. 1879) was one of Joachim's last important pupils and remained closely associated with him until his death in 1907. He played in the Joachim Quartet towards the end of Joachim's life and the Klingler Quartet, which he founded in Berlin in 1905 became widely seen as the successor to the traditions of the Joachim Quartet. The Klingler Quartet recorded several movements by Mozart and Beethoven in 1911 and 1912, which reveal a very different approach to this repertoire than is encountered in recordings by other quartets at that time. In a number of respects, the Klingler Quartet appears to preserve practices that have their roots in the Classical period. In respect of tempo, for instance, they adopt a much faster pace in their minuets. In the „Menuetto“ of Beethoven's op. 18 no. 5<sup>26</sup> their tempo, at dotted minim c. MM69, comes fairly close to Beethoven's metronome mark (MM76),<sup>27</sup> while in this movement the Rosé Quartet<sup>28</sup> took a distinctly slower tempo (c. MM56) and the Capet Quartet<sup>29</sup> were slower still (c. MM48). The Klingler Quartet also adopted brisk speeds for the three Mozart minuets they recorded at that time; the Rosé, Capet and other early 20th-century quartets, evidently influenced by the Wagnerian conception of the stately minuet, played them much more slowly.

In addition to this apparently pre-Wagnerian approach to minuets, the Klingler Quartet's performances of this repertoire exhibit a similar kind of subtle inequality to that which characterises Reinecke's Mozart performances. In the minuet from Mozart's Quartet K. 428, recorded in 1912,<sup>30</sup> for instance, the groups of slurred quaver figures beginning in bars 2, 8 etc. and many other shorter groups of slurred quavers are distinctly unequalised while the staccato accompaniment figures in b. 11–15 and the melodic staccato notes in b. 17–19 and 22–26 are played equally (as would be expected in classic mid 18th-century practice). Although there are far fewer figures of this type

<sup>26</sup> ODEON 7267: xxB 5549; reissued on CD SGR-8506 „Klingler Quartet vol.1“.

<sup>27</sup> Beethoven's metronome marks, published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1818, were not printed in the Joachim and Moser edition of the quartets nor other editions available at that time and it is by no means certain that Klingler would have been aware of their existence.

<sup>28</sup> PATHE 9595: 6046; reissued on CD SGR-8501 „The Rosé Quartet“.

<sup>29</sup> L1244–51; reissued on CD OPK2051 „Capet String Quartet 1“.

<sup>30</sup> Reissued on CD SBT 2136 „The Klingler Quartet 1905–1936. The Joachim Tradition“; also on SGR-8507.



in the minuet from Mozart's Quartet K. 421, recorded in the same year,<sup>31</sup> a similar unequalising of slurred quavers can be heard in this recording, most notable in the slurred pairs in bar 8 etc. Inequality is less apparent in their 1922 recording of the minuet from Mozart's Quartet K. 465,<sup>32</sup> perhaps because of a gradual assimilation to prevailing early 20th-century practices, although it is still discernible in the slurred pairs at b. 16–19. In the „Menuetto“ from Beethoven's Quartet op. 18 no. 5, recorded in 1911, the inequality in slurred pairs is less pronounced than in the Mozart recordings, but these figures are nevertheless played with a lilting rhythm that is very different from the rhythmic rigidity of most modern performances. In the Andante Cantabile of this quartet, too, there is distinct inequality in the treatment of semiquavers, at b. 9ff for instance. Another feature of these performances that may have its roots in 18th-century practice is the routine over-dotting of dotted figures, although this is more widespread in early 20th-century recordings of a wide range of repertoire.<sup>33</sup> Close listening to these recordings also reveals other practices, for instance different types of tempo rubato and a variety of characteristic bowing styles, that undoubtedly reflect long-established practice.

How far we can assume that practices in these recordings, apparently corresponding with those described in earlier texts, were employed continuously throughout the 19th century, however, remains unclear; and even if they were, it can by no means be certain that what we hear in early 20th-century recordings is quite what we might have heard a century or more earlier. Yet there is every reason to believe that Reinecke's and Joachim's recordings reflect a style that would have been familiar in Mendelssohn's Leipzig, and much to suggest that they preserve elements of even older performing practices. There can be no doubt that over time the correspondence between the composer's notation and its aural realisation by performers has increased; the departures from the literal meaning of the notation in early recorded performances of Classical repertoire, therefore, are unlikely to be greater than those we might have heard in the Vienna of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Whether they are similar or significantly different is more difficult to determine, but the correspondences between what we hear in these recordings by Moreschi, Patti, Reinecke, Soldat and Klingler, and practices described by 18th-century writers are striking. So too is their radical difference from modern performances of Classical repertoire by conventional and period performers alike.

The implications of these recordings for our approach to Classical performance are profound. They strongly reinforce the view that what we currently do in the name of historically-informed performance of this repertoire has only a tenuous connection with anything that might have been considered a fine style by Mozart or his contemporaries. Yet the possibility that we might more creatively use this evidence to attempt to recapture something of the

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings*, op. cit, 77.



spontaneity and freedom of Classical performance is exciting. Paul Sacher undoubtedly did not have Classical music in mind when he defined the purpose of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, founded in 1933: „to research and experiment practically with all questions that relate to the revival of old music to produce a lively interchange between musicology and practice,”<sup>34</sup> but his words might just as well apply to it now. So too might the words of Ina Lohr, another founding member of the Schola: „In the work of concert ensembles and in teaching, the aim of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis was, as far as possible, to find answers, at first internally, but then publicly, to the problems of old music and then to put the results at the service of contemporary musical practice.”<sup>35</sup> It is heartening that the Schola Cantorum continues to pursue these aims through its conferences and its teaching. The fruitful interaction of musicologists and performers is vital to the healthy future of our musical heritage. We must not be afraid to challenge received opinion. The gulf between contemporary practice and the historical reality of eighteenth century music making may be ultimately unbridgeable, but with the aid of scholarship, imagination and courage, we may find new ways, derived from our growing knowledge of the past, to recapture some of the veiled meanings that lie behind the bare notation of our Classical inheritance.

<sup>34</sup> „Seine Aufgabe ist die Erforschung und praktische Erprobung aller Fragen, welche mit der Wiederbelebung alter Musik zusammenhängen, mit dem Ziel, eine lebendige Wechselwirkung zwischen Wissenschaft und Praxis herzustellen.“ Wulf Arlt, „Zur Idee und Geschichte eines ‚Lehr- und Forschungsinstitut für Alte Musik‘ in den Jahren 1933 bis 1970“, *Alte Musik – Praxis und Reflexion*, Peter Reidemeister und Veronika Gutmann (eds.), Winterthur 1983, 36.

<sup>35</sup> „In der Arbeit der Konzertgruppe und im Unterricht wird in der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis zunächst intern, dann aber vor der Öffentlichkeit versucht, die Probleme der alten Musik, soweit es möglich ist, zu lösen, um dann die Resultate der heutigen Musikpraxis dienstbar zu machen.“ Vgl. Wulf Arlt, op. cit., 35



