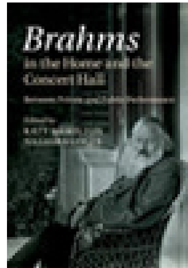

Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall

Between Private and Public Performance

Edited by Katy Hamilton, Natasha Loges

Book DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404

Online ISBN: 9781107337404

Hardback ISBN: 9781107042704

Chapter

2 - The Joachim Quartet concerts at the Berlin Singakademie: Mendelsso

hnian Geselligkeit in Wilhelmine Germany pp. 22-42

Chapter DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003

Cambridge University Press

2 The Joachim Quartet concerts at the Berlin Singakademie: Mendelssohnian *Geselligkeit* in Wilhelmine Germany

ROBERT W. ESHBACH

The great Belgian virtuoso Eugène Ysaÿe spoke of Joseph Joachim's violin playing as 'a consecration, a sort of Bayreuth on a reduced scale, in which tradition was perpetuated and made beautiful and strong'.[1] Nowhere was this feeling more evident than in the series of chamber-music concerts that the Joachim Quartet gave in Berlin's temple to musical *Bildung*,[2] the circa 800-seat auditorium of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's chaste, Greek-revival Singakademie, tucked away on a quiet square in the *Kastanienwäldchen* (Figure 2.1).

'Whenever people entered the Berlin Singakademie for a Joachim Quartet soirée, they greeted one another in a cheerful and familiar way', wrote Joachim's godson Hans Joachim Moser (1889–1967); 'all were mutually acquainted – indeed, they knew that all had been brought here for the same purpose: to pay homage to beauty. Joachim stood, his violin under his arm, in a corner of the thickly occupied podium and conversed with this one or that; he chatted and joked as though at home, and when he then walked to his music stand, it was as if he simply wanted to continue the conversation with his dear guests.'[3]

'The entire absence of the spirit of display at once made itself felt so that the listeners' attention, like that of the players themselves, became almost wholly absorbed in the music alone', wrote the Scottish violinist Marion Bruce Ranken. 'There was something venerable and priestlike in the appearance of the four elderly men earnestly applying themselves to

[1] Quoted in R. Stowell, *Beethoven: Violin Concerto* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 36.

[2] The German language represents the English word 'education' variously as *Erziehung*, *Ausbildung* or *Bildung*. Each carries a different connotation: *Erziehung* approximates to 'upbringing'; *Ausbildung*, 'training'. *Bildung* is perhaps best rendered as 'edification' – ongoing self-improvement through cultural engagement.

[3] A. Moser, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild*, revised edn, 2 vols. (Berlin: Verlag der Deutschen Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1908–10), vol. II, p. 205. All translations in this chapter are the author's own.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

Figure 2.1. Felix Possart, *Das Joachim-Quartett in der Singakademie zu Berlin.* The whereabouts of the original painting are currently unknown. The engraving appeared as a *Beilage* to the *Zeitschrift Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 4/5 (1903), between pp. 240 and 241.

their task and one felt a reverent and almost religious spirit in their whole performance.'[4]

'Words cannot describe the reverential atmosphere of those quartet evenings in the Singakademie', observed Edith Stargardt-Wolff. 'The audience listened to their playing devoutly, like the congregation of a church. Even if one did not know one's neighbours and those who were sitting

[4] M. [Bruce] R[anken], *Some Points of Violin Playing and Musical Performance as learnt in the Hochschule für Musik (Joachim School) in Berlin during the time I was a Student there, 1902–1909* (Edinburgh: privately printed, 1939), p. 46. The author is indebted to Dr. Dietmar Schenk of the Archiv der Universität der Künste Berlin for help in ascertaining the author's identity.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

nearby by name, one nevertheless felt united with them through regular encounters at this place which was consecrated to the noblest art.'[5]

The atmosphere of the Joachim Quartet's Singakademie concerts was in many ways exceptional, even for late nineteenth-century Berlin, where the 'Religion of Art', rooted in the writings of Novalis, Tieck, Schleiermacher and Hegel, could still claim a devoted following. One senses in these comments that the notion of religion is being used in an only slightly extended sense – that the audience of the Joachim Quartet concerts indeed represented a kind of ritual ingathering of the faithful who came to experience elevation and renewal; a community that shared a way of thinking about the role of music in private life and in society that has since largely been lost to the world. 'He who arrived jaded from indifferent occupations or wearying work was here refreshed', wrote Moser; 'he who had lived frivolously or thoughtlessly was here stirringly admonished. He who had experienced sadness, who had lost that which was dear to him, received solace and comfort; the mourner smiled, the angry were quieted, and the faithless confessed: 'I believe again!'[6]

Joachim in Berlin

Joseph Joachim and his family settled in Berlin in 1868. In August 1869, Joachim founded Berlin's Königlich Akademische Hochschule für ausübende Tonkunst (Royal Academic College for Musical Performance). In the same year, together with Ernst Schiever (1844–1915), Heinrich de Ahna (1835–92) and Wilhelm Müller (1834–97), he founded the Berlin incarnation of the Joachim Quartet. During the ensuing thirty-eight years, the quartet's annual eight-concert series became the spiritual home of an important faction of Berlin's musical, artistic and political elite. It is in this rarefied environment that a number of the works of Brahms were introduced to a larger public – the chamber works for strings, of course, including the premiere performance of the String Quartet No. 3 in B♭ major Op. 67,[7] but also – as a single non-string exception in the thirty-eight-year

[5] E. Stargardt-Wolff, *Wegbereiter großer Musiker: Unter Verwendung von Tagebuchblättern, Briefen und vielen persönlichen Erinnerungen von Hermann und Louise Wolff, den Gründern der ersten Konzertdirektion, 1880–1935* (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1954), p. 149. Edith Stargardt-Wolff (1880–1961) was the daughter of the impresario Hermann Wolff (1845–1902) and Louise Schwarz Wolff (1855–1935).

[6] Moser, *Joachim*, pp. 205–6.

[7] This performance took place with Joachim, Heinrich de Ahna, Eduard Rappoldi and Wilhelm Müller on 30 October 1876.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

history of the series – Brahms's chamber music with clarinet.[8] Brahms commented on this unique occurrence with a mischievous reference in a letter of 1 December 1891 to Eduard Hanslick: 'Joachim has sacrificed the virginity of his Quartet to my newest things. Hitherto he has carefully protected the chaste sanctuary but now, in spite of all my protestations, he insists that I invade it with clarinet and piano, with trio and quintet.'[9]

Joachim's move to Berlin occurred a decade after his highly public split with Franz Liszt, and nearly a decade after the embarrassing protest that he and Brahms had cooked up against Brendel's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and the New German clique. The twin institutions that Joachim founded – the Berlin Hochschule and the quartet that bore his name – might equally merit Ysaÿe's description of a 'Bayreuth on a reduced scale', or perhaps an anti-Bayreuth, since they quickly became the centre of Berlin's anti-Wagnerian faction. In the words of a contemporary writer:

> The recently-endowed Königliche Hochschule für Musik, over which Herr Joachim presides, is famous for its concerts and exercises great influence upon musical opinion in the most cultivated circles of Berlin society . . . The influence which the Hochschule has exercised has certainly tended to stem the tide of Wagnerism at Berlin, Herr Joachim being a leading spirit of the school of Brahms . . . One can conceive that the anger of the Wagner party was intense at finding this Brahms garrison suddenly planted in their midst.[10]

[8] The Joachim Quartet programmes focused primarily on classics of the quartet literature – works by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms. Contemporary works (by, among others, Eugen d'Albert, Woldemar Bargiel, Ernö Dohnányi, Friedrich Gernsheim, Heinrich von Herzogenberg, August Klughardt, Eduard Reuss, Charles Villiers Stanford and Wilhelm Taubert) were a relative rarity, and were generally performed on so-called *Novitätenabende* (novelty concerts). Brahms was treated as an exception among contemporary composers: he was virtually the only 'modern' composer to receive repeated performances of his works, which were placed among the classics in an effort to include them in what was clearly meant to be understood as the 'canon'. Over the years, the String Quartet No. 1 in C minor Op. 51 no. 1 was performed nineteen times, the String Quartet No. 2 in A minor Op. 51 no. 2 was played twenty-three times, and the String Quartet No. 3 in B♭ major Op. 67 was given eleven times. The latter two quartets were first performed prior to their publication. The quintets and sextets were also given repeated performances in the Singakademie concerts. Performances of multiple Brahms works on one programme were rare. For a thorough discussion of the Joachim Quartet Singakademie concerts, including their complete repertoire, see B. Borchard, *Stimme und Geige: Amalie und Joseph Joachim. Biographie und Interpretationsgeschichte* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), pp. 521–50 and accompanying CD-ROM.

[9] F. May, *The Life of Johannes Brahms*, 2 vols. (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), vol. II, pp. 625–6. The concert took place on 12 December 1891.

[10] H. Vizetelly, *Berlin Under the New Empire, Its Institutions, Inhabitants, Industry, Monuments, Museums, Social Life, Manners, and Amusements*, 2 vols. (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1879), vol. II, p. 271.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

Joachim's ascendancy in Berlin may indeed have helped to provoke Wagner himself, against all good sense, to reissue his notorious *Judenthum* article of nineteen years earlier.[11] Wagner's original 1850 article had been directed largely against Mendelssohn and the influence of the Leipzig Conservatory, and obliquely against Mendelssohn's concept of music's role in the formation of a *gebildete Gesellschaft* – that is, a society founded on the quasi-religious concept of *Bildung* that had informed the German educational system since 1810, and that continued to resonate so strongly in assimilated Jewish circles until well into the twentieth century. Wagner reissued his *Judenthum* attack in 1869, together with his essay on conducting,[12] which specifically references Joachim's activities, no doubt recognising that Joachim's plans represented a conscious continuation of the Mendelssohnian *Bildungsprojekt*, directly inspired by Mendelssohn's musical, educational and social ideals.

Mendelssohnian *Geselligkeit*

The Berlin Singakademie had, of course, a long and distinguished history of *Geselligkeit* – a kind of enlightened, culturally edifying sociability for which there is no equivalent term in English – going back to the days of Carl Friedrich Zelter, Carl Maria von Weber and the young Mendelssohn children. That history was surely well known to Joachim, who grew to young manhood in the intimate company of the Mendelssohn family.

Thirteen-year-old Joseph had been introduced to the extended Mendelssohn family at the Royal Palace in Potsdam, during the premiere of the Mendelssohn/Tieck production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (14 October 1843). A month thereafter, he performed for the first time in one of Fanny Hensel's *Sonntags-Morgenmusiken* (Sunday morning musicales), which she had established in 1831, taking up a family tradition that had lain dormant for several years. The musicales took place in the beautifully embowered garden room of the Mendelssohn family's Berlin home, the former Reck'sche Palais at Leipzigerstraße No. 3 – a space suitable for a gathering of several hundred people, the walls and cupola of which were adorned with graceful frescoes, and whose movable glass wall opened onto

[11] R. Wagner, 'Das Judenthum in der Musik', originally published under the pseudonym 'K. Freigedank' ('K. Freethought'), *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 33/19–20 (3 September 1850), pp. 101–7; (6 September 1850), pp. 109–12; later published in a revised and expanded edition by J. J. Weber, Leipzig, 1869.

[12] R. Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren* (Leipzig: C. F. Kahnt, 1869).

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

a park adjoining the gardens of Prince Albrecht, made fragrant by lilacs, enlivened by nightingales, and cooled in the summer by the shade of ancient trees. Hensel's neighbour, Fanny Lewald (1811–89), recalled the occasion. Included in the dazzling audience were such notables as Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853), Henrik Steffens (1773–1845), Friedrich von Raumer (1781–1873), the Princes Radzivill with their families, a princess from Dessau, the English ambassador Count Westmoreland (*sic*),[13] and two of Bettina von Arnim's daughters. In the middle of Joseph's performance, Lewald writes, 'all eyes suddenly turned to the door, and a cheerful smile passed over all faces as a still-youthful man appeared in the doorway of the room. He was a slim, mobile figure. He entered silently, head held high, with sparkling eyes, which had something uncommonly startling, indeed overwhelming about them. It was Franz Liszt.'[14] Somehow, one cannot help viewing Liszt's sudden, disruptive appearance at this event as prophetic – it would, after all, be Liszt, his associates and disciples, who, at mid-century, would pose an unsettling, radical challenge to music and society in Germany, injecting a Byronic and French attitude into the comfortable, bourgeois world of north-German *Geselligkeit.*

By the 1840s, what had begun as private entertainments had taken on a more public face. As Fanny described it in 1846:

> It has gradually – and naturally without our doing – become a remarkable cross between private and public in character, so that 150–200 people are present at every concert, and such that, if I have to cancel, and don't give notice, no one comes, because the fact publicises itself.[15]

What is a public? In the Leipzig and Berlin of Joachim's youth, the contemporary phenomenon of an audience as a gathering of strangers, unknown to one another, hardly existed. A 'public', as young Joachim's contemporaries would have understood it, was a social organism – an audience, not a crowd. As Lewald's account implies, that which she ingenuously called 'eine aus allen Ständen gemischte Gesellschaft' ('a mixed company comprising all classes') formed a nexus of familiar people: a complex fabric of family, friendship, business relations and celebrity. While this may seem obvious in the case of Fanny's gatherings, the same could also be said of audiences at such

[13] The person referenced is clearly John Fane, 11th Earl of Westmorland, who was ambassador to Prussia during those years.

[14] F. Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, ed. U. Helmer, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 1989), vol. III, p. 106.

[15] H.-G. Klein (ed.), *Die Musikveranstaltungen bei den Mendelssohns: Ein 'musikalischer Salon'?* (Leipzig: Mendelssohn-Haus Leipzig, 2006), p. 49.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

ostensibly fully public events as Felix Mendelssohn's Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts, for which he had complete musical and administrative authority, much as Fanny did in her *Sonntagsmusiken*. Mendelssohn's Gewandhaus, the site of many of Joachim's early triumphs, had a capacity of barely 500. Leipzig was a small town, and one can assume that the Gewandhaus patrons were all acquainted with one another, and with Mendelssohn himself. Many were musically trained. Some, like Henriette Voigt (1808–39) or Livia Frege (1818–91), regularly made music with Mendelssohn at home – Voigt as an amateur, Frege as a professional, with no implied distinction as to the level of their musical attainments.

For the Mendelssohns, there seems to have been no sharp division between public and private performance, between professional and amateur. For them, public performance evolved as a natural outgrowth of their family traditions of salon *Geselligkeit*. In this, their understanding of public life was similar to what Herman Grimm (1828–1901) wrote about their friend Bettina von Arnim:

> Bettina's being, even when she addressed herself to the unnamed public, was still only bounded by the circle of those whom she knew – a company that was a far cry from all that we today call the public domain. Our life today hardly enables us to imagine this. . . . Even when she had her books published, her thoughts went out only to friends, who would read them, and whose sympathetic understanding she took for granted. All these friends she believed to be partners in her efforts, maintaining the high ground with equally noble aims, united with her in the highest endeavour.[16]

Shortly after Felix Mendelssohn's death in 1847, W. H. Riehl wrote that the composer was 'the first musician who made music for "fine society" – in the good sense of the word'. Riehl located the unique depth and breadth of Mendelssohn's influence throughout Germany in the fact that the '"gebildete Gesellschaft" [educated society] in which he had lived and worked – whose spirit he had expressed – was, *throughout all of Germany, the same*' (original italics).[17] He might have gone further to include England in this sphere of influence – the *gebildete Gesellschaft*, which originated in the Enlightenment Republic of Letters, was intrinsically supranational in scope,

[16] G. von Arnim, *Alt Schottland: Drama in fünf Akten mit einem Vorspiel* (privately printed, n. d. [1889]), pp. iv–v.

[17] W. H. Riehl, *Musikalische Charakterköpfe: Ein kunstgeschichtliches Skizzenbuch* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1853), p. 104.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

and Mendelssohn's sway over the English public was profound and far-reaching.[18]

Joachim's early career was conditioned by these Mendelssohnian ideals, as were the activities of his maturity. In this respect, the important English component of his career can be seen as continuous from his early youth to the end of his life. In Germany, however, the Mendelssohnian ideal of music-making for the *gebildete Gesellschaft* was substantially interrupted by the social changes that came with the revolutions of 1848, and by the radical challenge from the New German School, which viewed the *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated middle-class public) as essentially and irrecoverably philistine. Joachim's mid-career work in establishing the Hochschule and the Singakademie concerts must be seen in this context as a counterweight to the social and political programme of the New Germans: picking up the Berlin Hochschule project that Mendelssohn had left undone, and attempting to perpetuate the social ideals of pre-March music-making. The most significant of these ideals was that of *Bildung* – edification – an ideal that incidentally formed the basis of Joachim's friendship with Johannes Brahms, drawing the two young men together despite their radically divergent backgrounds and personalities.

Bildung

Originally a religious concept, *Bildung* derives from *Bild*, an image or picture, a likeness or representation. To the early German mystics such as Meister Eckhart (*c.* 1260–*c.* 1327), it was literally the construction of the human spiritual edifice, the purposeful transformation of the personality in the image, or *Bild*, of God.[19] From the beginning, then, *Bildung* was

[18] The Republic of Letters (*Respublica literaria*) was a loosely constituted, international intellectual community that arose in seventeenth-century Europe and America, which strove to further the intellectual goals of the Enlightenment through the exchange of letters, pamphlets, and other published works. Recent interest in the Republic of Letters has come largely from feminist scholars, who, building on the work of Jürgen Habermas, have focused on the role that salon sociability and rhetoric played in that exchange of ideas. See D. Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

[19] Eckhart, the originator of the concept of *Bildung*, considered Man to exist in a state of estrangement from God – or, more specifically, from his original state of having been created in the image of God. For Eckhart, the process of *Bildung* (which begins with a process of self *Ent-Bildung* – separating from the image of oneself) was a way back into a state of grace. See H.-J. Fraas, *Bildung und Menschenbild in theologischer Perspektive* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), pp. 44ff.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

conceived as a teleological, or end-driven, process, carried out in reference to a normative ideal.

Bildung attained a significantly different meaning in the philosophy of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803). For Herder, *Bildung* had no *telos* – no end point, no *Bild* or archetype towards which it strives.[20] Freed from the *telos*, Man becomes, in Nietzsche's memorable phrase, 'ein aus sich rollendes Rad'[21] ('a wheel rolling out of its own centre'), a person who is literally *evolving*.[22] As Emerson expressed it: 'Man is endogenous, and education is his unfolding.'[23] Herder would have thought more organically: *Bildung* is the growth of the individual out of his own seed – the continuous process of becoming, of learning to fulfil the demands of each hour and age in a unique and personal way. It is not difficult to imagine what implications this conceptual innovation, this freeing from the *telos*, had for the development of Romantic art.[24]

In later years, the concept of *Bildung* became secularised, and, in the wake of the Winckelmann-inspired Hellenic revival, took on a decidedly Attic cast. The nineteenth-century concept of *Bildung* has deep concordances with the Athenian notion of *Paideia*: the process of educating man to his own ideal form, the *Kalos Kagathos* – the 'beautiful and good'. As S. H. Butcher expressed it in 1904: 'The Greek *Paideia* (παιδεία) in its full sense involves

[20] See for example J. G. Herder, *Vom Erkennen und Empfinden der Menschlichen Seele* (Riga: J. F. Hartknoch, 1778).

[21] 'The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a wheel rolling out of its own centre, a prime motion, a sacred yea-saying.' F. Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* (Leipzig: C. G. Naumann, 1899), p. 35.

[22] From the Latin *evolvere*, to unroll; the noun *evolutio* referred originally to the unrolling of a scroll in the process of reading or writing. In this sense of *Bildung*, each person could be thought of as gradually revealing the story of his own life, rather than progressing in imitation of an externally determined ideal.

[23] R. W. Emerson, *Representative Men: Nature, Addresses and Lectures* (Philadelphia, PA: David McKay, 1892), p. 10.

[24] A related aspect of *Bildung*, a novelty when compared with the older notion of the compulsory transformation of man in the image of God, is the idea of *Selbstbildung*: that *Bildung* should be a self-directed, self-fulfilling process. *Bildung* may be influenced by *Erziehung*, by upbringing, but its ultimate goal is the mature, self-realising individual. Humboldt organised the Prussian educational system with this in mind, with general education preceding more specialised training, allowing ever-greater freedom of choice to each student as he matured. This notion of self-directedness is related to nineteenth-century Germany's admiration for the quality of sincerity – an admiration that we also find in British thinkers like Carlyle, for whom sincerity was a prerequisite for growth, and for greatness. In this view, the sincere person is one who always strives for the true, the better. The sincere youth who struggles to achieve spiritual and moral maturity became the protagonist of the numerous *Bildungsromane*, the 'novels of formation' of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, of which Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* novels (1795–1829) are perhaps the most characteristic and best-known example.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

the union of intellectual and moral qualities. It is on the one hand mental illumination, an enlarged outlook on life; but it also implies a refinement and delicacy of feeling, a deepening of the sympathetic emotions, a scorn of what is self-seeking, ignoble, dishonourable – a scorn bred of loving familiarity with poets and philosophers, with all that is fortifying in thought or elevating in imagination.'[25]

To this, the renowned educational reformer – and Mendelssohn family friend – Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) added a notion derived from the French Enlightenment: that individual self-realisation can properly take place only within a social context.[26] Personal growth was to be achieved through creative or critical encounter with others, in an environment that required feelings and ideas to be expressed and shared. It was this last aspect of *Bildung* that informed the salon *Geselligkeit* of nineteenth-century Leipzig, Weimar and Berlin. This social context was also understood to include the family, the *Volk*, the *res publica* and, in an ever-widening circle, all of humanity. In this sense, *Bildung* was ultimately a social and political ideal as well as a strictly personal one: a *gebildete* society was thought to function like a healthy organism in which each constituent member is responsible for making a unique contribution to the whole, according to his or her fully developed talents. Society was thus imagined to be a sort of meta-individual, itself subject to a dialectical process of self-realisation through history. The epigraph to John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, quoted from Humboldt's *Sphere and Duties of Government*, encapsulates this *Bildungsideal*, which Humboldt had absorbed from Berlin's Jewish *salonnières*: 'The grand, leading principle, towards which every argument unfolded in these pages directly converges, is the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity.'[27] 'The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the

[25] S. H. Butcher, *Harvard Lectures on Greek Subjects* (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 124. Similarly, Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote: 'Supreme is the morally beautiful character, who through reverence for the holy and a deeply felt love of the purely good and true, is educated to a noble revulsion against everything unclean, indelicate and coarse.' Letter of February 1861, in W. von Humboldt, *Briefe an eine Freundin: Zweiter Theil*, 5th edn (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1853), p. 291.

[26] In 1809, the year of Felix Mendelssohn's birth, Humboldt was appointed to head the Department for Religion and Education of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. In that capacity, he undertook a top-to-bottom restructuring of the educational system, according to this particular *Bildungskonzept*. Humboldt's work established Germany's still-extant system of humanistic gymnasia and trade schools, and culminated in the founding of the Berlin University in 1810. These educational innovations had a wide-ranging influence. Mendelssohn's founding of the Leipzig Conservatory, and Joachim's of the Berlin Hochschule can be seen as a continuation and adaptation of this work in the musical realm.

[27] J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* (London: John W. Parker, 1859), p. 4. Quotation taken from W. von Humboldt, *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staats zu bestimmen* (1792;

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

individuals composing it', wrote Mill at the end of his essay, 'and a State which postpones the interests of *their* mental expansion and elevation . . . a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes, will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.'[28] For Humboldt's Germany, with its emphasis on *Bildung* and diversity, the salon was simply the ideal state in a nutshell: society's incubator, in which the *salonnière*'s role was to promote the 'mental expansion and elevation' of each of her guests in a climate of unforced social interaction.

The Mendelssohn family played a critical role in the establishment of salon *Geselligkeit* in Berlin. Under their influence, the Berlin salon took on a unique character – strongly intellectual, and predominantly Jewish. Through their occupation as *salonnières*, women such as Rahel Varnhagen (1771–1833), Henriette Herz (1764–1847), Sarah Levy (1761–1854), Caroline (1781–1864) and Wilhelmine (1798–1865) Bardua, Bettina von Arnim (1785–1859), and later Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805–47) took on a powerful role as leaders in Berlin's intellectual and cultural life.[29] Music was central to Mendelssohn family *Geselligkeit*, and amongst their circle, music-making came to exhibit many of the characteristics and foundational values common to Germany's Romantic literary salons. The description by Royal Saxon physician Carl Gustav Carus (1789–1869) of Ludwig Tieck's famous salon readings captures some of the values and aesthetics common to the educated classes of Saxony and Prussia in those times – in a way that closely mirrors the reception that Joachim would later receive for his music-making:

> There were three things in particular that distinguished this reading: first the individuality of the reader; the rich experience, the broad erudition, the fine Attic *Bildung*, the sonorous, deeply inward-sounding organ of speech, and his own high gift as a poet. These attributes explain why, when he performed a poet's works, we found it so easy to enter into the thoughts of the poet himself, and in so doing often forgot the reader, and were able all the better to penetrate the powerful idea of the work he was performing. – Secondly, a certain *Cultus* that was adopted at these readings; a certain solemnity and devotion that tolerated not the slightest interruption, and thereby made it possible to grasp a whole work truly as a whole, and not piecemeal. – Once the reading began, a tacit agreement prevailed among

first published Breslau: Eduard Trewendt Verlag, 1851), currently known in English by the title *The Limits of State Action.*

[28] Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 207.

[29] For an exhaustive and authoritative study of the Berlin salon in all its aspects, see P. Wilhelmy-Dollinger, *Der Berliner Salon im 19. Jahrhundert: 1780–1914* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989).

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

each and every one, to abstain from even the slightest disturbance. Latecomers took their seats as quietly as possible; those who were called away . . . slipped away as unnoticeably as possible through the never-creaky doors . . . Thirdly, the choice of works to be performed came into consideration. – Not that the choice always fell to the most exquisite, the greatest, the most brilliant; many light-hearted works were also numbered in the repertoire. But the empty philistine, the merely modern, the inherently inane was always absent.

In this sense, in particular, these readings by Tieck had an inspiring effect on many; if I were to express what they meant to *me*, I would have to say that they produced in me what every genuine reading should: namely, a deeper insight into my own breast – into the true art of living – and a freer outlook toward an infinite world.[30]

The world of the German Romantic salon that tolerated no interruption – the world that Liszt interrupted – was a world founded upon private experience. The interrelationship of private experience and social interaction implicit in the concept of *Bildung* has seldom been so succinctly captured as in the well-known painting *Quartettabend bei Bettina von Arnim* by Carl Johann Arnold (Figure 2.2). All the elements are there: the Attic busts casting shadows on the wall; the model of Bettina's famous Goethe monument, depicting a young Bettina in a Mignon-like pose of adoration before her beloved master; the quartet, led by Joachim, engaged in the musical equivalent of enlightened conversation; and finally the audience, with Bettina herself isolated from the other auditors, head in hand, lost in her own thoughts and feelings. Bettina seems almost a member of the ensemble. The remaining audience is of undetermined size. In this view, the well-realised individual is a constituent of an expansible, organically interrelated whole. Though the performance takes place in Bettina's home, it could as well have taken place in the Singakademie, with its aura of reverential listening, surrounded by the trappings of classical culture.[31]

Priest of the public

The aspect of 'inwardness', so salient in these images and descriptions, was an important element of the nineteenth-century north-German identity,

[30] F. von Raumer (ed.), *Historisches Taschenbuch*, new series, vol. 6 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1845), pp. 205–8 *passim.*

[31] See B. Borchard, 'Quartettabend bei Bettine' in S. Fontaine, W. Grünzweig and M. Brzoska (eds.), *Töne, Farben, Formen: Über Musik und die Bildenden Künste, Festschrift für Elmar Budde* (Laaber Verlag, 1995), pp. 243–56.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

Figure 2.2. Carl Johann Arnold, *Quartettabend bei Bettina von Arnim*, *c.* 1856. Original: Frankfurt am Main, Freies Deutsches Hochstift/Frankfurter Goethe-Museum mit Goethe-Haus.

rooted in native pietistic traditions, and pitted against the supposed materialistic superficiality of French culture. Felix Mendelssohn acknowledged the local *res severa*,[32] while making the case for the establishment of Germany's first conservatory of music in a letter of 9 April 1840 to Leipzig *Kreisdirector* Johann Paul von Falkenstein:[33]

[32] The Leipzig Gewandhaus motto (Seneca), *Res severa est verum gaudium*, translates as 'a serious matter is a thing of joy', or, alternatively, 'a thing of joy is a serious matter'.

[33] The correct date of the letter is 9 April, not 8 April (the date of Mendelssohn's draft), as it appears in most sources. The role of *Kreisdirektor* was that of District Director of the city, subservient to the *Landrat*, the Head of District Authority.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

> For a long time, music has flourished in this country, and precisely that disposition in music which lies closest to every thinking and feeling art-lover's heart, an inclination towards the true and serious, has from time immemorial taken firm root here. Such widespread interest has certainly been neither accidental, nor without important consequences for *Bildung* in general, and through it music has become an important force – not simply for immediate pleasure, but for serving higher spiritual needs.[34]

For those who had been brought up in the milieu of salon *Geselligkeit*, and particularly amongst assimilated German Jews, music-making was a spiritual art that gradually assumed the aspect of religious ritual – not in a formal or dogmatic sense, but in the original sense of 're-ligare': that which fosters a feeling of reconnection to what Paul Tillich called the 'ground of being'.[35] In her celebrated study of the Berlin Salons, Petra Wilhelmy-Dollinger describes the *salonnière* as the 'priestess' of the cult of *Geselligkeit*, adding: 'The closest analogy and prototype for [the] weekly *jour fixe* of her "congregation" were the *jours fixes* of the Jewish and Christian worship service on the Sabbath and Sunday.'[36] For Joachim, who grew to maturity under the strong influence first of the Mendelssohns and later of Bettina von Arnim, this quasi-religious aspect of salon culture was central to his understanding of his role as an artist. In a document entitled *Kleine Sätze für mich* ('Little Sentences for Myself') that Joachim sent to Bettina on 10 August 1853, is written the following: 'Artists should not be servants, but priests of the public.'[37] This epigram later found its way into Brahms's commonplace book,[38] *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*, together with several of Bettina's own – among them: 'Denken ist beten' ('Thinking is prayer').

'Artists should not be servants, but priests of the public' – with time, others would come to see Joachim as he saw himself. 'I always felt as though he were a priest, thrilling his congregation with a sermon revealing the noblest moral beauties of a theme, which could not help but interest all humanity', wrote Leopold Auer.[39] A priest ministers not to a public, however, but to a

[34] E. Kneschke, *Das Conservatorium der Musik in Leipzig: Seine Geschichte, seine Lehrer und Zöglinge. Festgabe zum 25 jährigen Jubiläum am 2. April 1868* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1868), pp. 5–6.

[35] 'The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is *God*.' P. Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 57. Tillich, who was born 75 miles from Berlin in 1886, was a product of Berlin's humanistic educational system.

[36] Wilhelmy-Dollinger, *Der Berliner Salon*, p. 3.

[37] *Versteigerungskatalog 155*, 5 July 1929 (Berlin: Karl Ernst Henrici, 1929), p. 59. See also J. Brahms, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein: Ausspruche von Dichtern, Philosophen und Künstlern*, ed. C. Krebs (Berlin: Verlag des Deutschen Brahmsgesellschaft, 1909), p. 58.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[39] L. Auer, *Violin Playing as I Teach It* (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), p. 6.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

congregation – and ultimately to each individual within that congregation. A priest makes house calls. William Makepeace Thackeray's daughter Lady Ritchie (1837–1919) wrote movingly of how Joachim played solo Bach to a mortally ill Mrs Horsley, who 'wanted to hear him once more'.

In the dim, curtained back room looking across another garden the dying mistress of the house sat propped up with cushions in a chair. Joachim stood with his back to the window, holding his violin, and we waited in silence by the doorway while he played gravely and with exquisite beauty. The sad solemn room was full of the blessing of Bach, coming like a gospel to the sufferer in need of rest.[40]

The majority of Joachim's performances took place in private homes. He played often in the homes of leading artists, poets, politicians and captains of industry – not as a hired entertainer, but always as an invited guest.[41] 'Joachim would never discuss money matters', wrote his friend Edward Speyer.

He never took a fee for playing at private houses. He told me that he once had an invitation to dine with Mr and Mrs Gladstone and, as was his wont, took his violin with him and offered to play after dinner. Gladstone, not knowing what to do in the matter of remuneration, afterwards asked a mutual friend to approach Joachim, the answer being an absolute refusal. Gladstone thereupon invited him to breakfast to meet a number of distinguished men.[42]

The greatest nineteenth-century musicians, from Mendelssohn and Schumann to Meyerbeer, Wagner and Liszt, sought to elevate the intellectual and social role of music to the status of literature and art. Not for nothing did Liszt call his piano concerts 'recitals'. Domestic settings that allowed for familiarity and intimate conversation were the ideal environment in which to advance this goal. Alfred Lord Tennyson's son recalled an evening at home when his father came to make a connection – to posit an equality – between Joachim's art and his own:

My father was fond of asking Joachim to play to him in his own house. One particular evening I remember, at 86, Eaton Square. My father had been expressing his wonder at Joachim's mastery of the violin, – for Joachim had been playing to us and our friends numberless Hungarian dances, – and by way of thanks for the splendid

[40] A. Thackeray Ritchie, *Blackstick Papers* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), p. 61.

[41] Joachim's British friends included, among others, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Edwin Henry Landseer, Sir Frederic Leighton, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, John Everett Millais, George Frederic Watts, Charles Darwin, William Gladstone, Percy Hague Jowett, Hubert Parry, Charles Villiers Stanford and George Grove.

[42] E. Speyer, *My Life and Friends* (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1937), pp. 182–3.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

music I asked him to read one of his poems to Joachim. Accordingly after the guests had gone he took the great musician to smoke with him in his 'den' at the top of the house. There they talked of Goethe, especially praising a poem of Goethe's old age, 'Der West-östliche Divan,' and then my father read 'The Revenge.' On reaching the line

And then the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,

he asked Joachim, 'Could you do that on your violin?'[43]

As the following examples show, Joachim not only played for his circle of friends, he played with them (Figure 2.3). Many nineteenth-century auditors were themselves musical amateurs of considerable attainments, and in those days the boundaries between professional and amateur were not sharply drawn. This had significant consequences for the art, not only providing a ready-made support system for professional performers and composers, but affecting the very nature – the intimacy and depth – of composers' works. Antonie von Kaiserfeld (1847–1933) relates a charming story concerning the first reading of Brahms's String Quintet in F major Op. 88, which demonstrates the important intermediate position that musical amateurs occupied in the fabric of nineteenth-century musical life:

In 1882 we spent our second summer with Brahms in Altaussee; twice a week there was the most beautiful quartet playing. Professor Wagner from Budapest had built a villa for himself with a magnificent music room. For matinées, he often invited as many as 90 people, amongst them a few nobility. Ludwig Strauß, solo violinist to the Queen of England, was the outstanding first violinist; Professor Wagner, the host, the second; the lawyer Dr Alois Majer the excellent violist, and Professor Prehn from Trieste played the cello. Brahms, who already knew the quartet, brought the manuscript of the F major String Quartet [*sic*] and that of the C major Trio; for the latter, he himself played the piano part. But for the F major String Quartet [*sic*] there was no one to play the second viola. Brahms knew that my husband was a very good violinist, and asked him to take over the second viola part. My husband had never played the viola, and therefore demurred. But Brahms declared categorically: 'I give you two days to learn your part!' Before the performance, there was a rehearsal. With a cigar in his mouth, his hands crossed behind his back, the master walked up and down, giving his instructions: 'the conclusion of the second movement ends like sighs.' Saying this, he thumped my husband on the shoulder, looked at me with a malicious smile, and said: 'the married ones will do this the best!!'[44]

[43] H. Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1898), vol. II, p. 233.

[44] A. von Kaiserfeldt, *Aus den Erinnerungen einer 85 Jährigen* (privately printed, 1932), pp. 66–7. The official premiere of the String Quintet in F major Op. 88 occurred on 29 December 1882

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

Figure 2.3. Ferdinand Schmutzer, *Joachim und Exzellenz von Keudell, musizierend.* Etching and drypoint, 1907.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

Like Strauß, Joachim regularly engaged in some form of music-making either for or with amateur players, even those whose skills were far beneath his own. As Henriette Feuerbach[45] wrote in 1856:

Yesterday evening it put me in a melancholy mood when I heard that Joachim is spending the entire summer here, and is making music privately nearly every day with Francis Bunsen, whose playing is quite mediocre and soulless. What would it mean to me, to test the fruits of my many years of effort against a true artist – but who here thinks of poor Frau Feuerbach?[46]

For Henriette Feuerbach, it did not seem out of the question that Europe's greatest violinist should make time to play with her. For her, Joachim was not merely a great performer before the public, but an artist to test her skills against in private – and not just her skills, but, in a very real way, the level of her spiritual development, her 'soul'. Joachim likewise viewed his artistic role as both social and didactic, and he was, in general, not above taking on this task. Like Mendelssohn, Joachim made music for 'fine society'. For him, as for Mendelssohn, the purpose of art, within this context, was as much to educate as to entertain. This conviction, which Mendelssohn saw as having 'important consequences for *Bildung* in general',[47] clearly informed the philosophy and repertoire of the Joachim Quartet Singakademie concerts, which were founded and administered as an adjunct to the educational mission of the Berlin Hochschule, and which explicitly carried the dual objective: 'to serve as a model for students and to provide pleasure for the public'.[48]

Moser's description of Joachim chatting and joking with audience members 'as though at home', and walking to his music stand 'as if he simply wanted to continue the conversation with his dear guests', confirms the impression of informal hospitality that one associates with the Romantic

in Frankfurt. Antonie von Kaiserfeldt was the daughter of the art professor Alfred Ritter von Franck (1808–84), and wife of Moritz von Kaiserfeld, Edler von Blagatinschegg (1811–85), an Austrian nobleman and politician.

45 1812–92, mother of Brahms's friend the painter Anselm Feuerbach (1829–80).

46 H. Uhde-Bernays (ed.), *Henriette Feuerbach: Ihr Leben in ihren Briefen* (Munich: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1926), p. 182.

47 Kneschke, *Das Conservatorium der Musik in Leipzig.*

48 'At the suggestion of the Director, an annual series of public quartet concerts shall be given, organised by the instrumental class of the music school, which shall be carefully prepared and performed by the teachers of the same, and which shall serve as a model for students, and to provide pleasure for the public. The students of the music school's quartet classes shall receive free entry to these public quartet concerts. The proceeds from these concerts, after the payment of costs and of honoraria to the Director and the teachers, shall accrue to the Hochschule for its purposes; the Director has the right to make suggestions for their use.' *Acta des Königlichen Geheimen Civil-Cabinets betr: Die Hochschule für Musik zu Berlin*, quoted in Borchard, *Stimme und Geige*, p. 530.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

salon – in Fanny Hensel's words, that 'remarkable cross between private and public' space. Further, consistent with salon *Geselligkeit*, a certain *Cultus* prevailed at these concerts, as at Tieck's readings, which involved 'a certain solemnity and devotion, that tolerated not the slightest interruption', so that exemplary performances of canonic works – performances intended to serve the cause of *Bildung* – might be grasped in full, and so 'produce a deeper insight into the true art of living', 'and a freer outlook toward an infinite world'.[49]

Joachim viewed his audience as a congregation of friends. He viewed himself as a priest of art. As with Bettina, even when he addressed himself to the unnamed public, his being was still only bounded by the circle of those whom he knew, whose sympathetic understanding he took for granted, and whom he believed to be partners in his efforts, maintaining the high ground with equally noble aims, united with him in the highest endeavour.

Joachim's audience: three representative men

The term is used here in the Emersonian sense: not of average men, but of great men, representative of an ideal;[50] men of genius who, outside their fields of endeavour, were lovers of music as the essence of the old Attic conceit: the indissoluble unity of the beautiful and the good. Three representative men who exemplified the *Bildungsideal* of their time, and who, as it happens, were prominent and faithful patrons of the Joachim Quartet concerts.

Field Marshal Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (1800–91) – one of the pre-eminent military strategists of the nineteenth century and, together with Bismarck, one of the founders of modern Germany – was a man of exemplary classical *Bildung*. A lover of music and poetry, he had a fine command of Goethe's works, and could recite whole scenes from *Faust* by heart. He and Joachim were introduced in 1871, in the immediate aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war.

Joachim spoke of Moltke at all times with enormous admiration and respect. The general was a man of definite, if conservative, musical ideas.[51]

[49] Raumer, *Historisches Taschenbuch*, p. 208.

[50] Emerson was, of course, steeped in German Idealism. Joachim, in turn, was one of the first Germans to read Emerson, whose works he came to know and admire through his friend Herman Grimm.

[51] His favourite composers were Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann. He also displayed a fondness for the music of Friedrich Kiel (1821–85). Through Joachim, Moltke became one of the founding honorary patrons of the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn, of which Joachim was honorary president.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

His tastes did not extend to Brahms, whom he found too complex, and, as for Wagner, he preferred the Reichstag debates, 'for there one can at least move to bring a thing to an end'.[52] 'He disliked all virtuosity', wrote his biographer Max Jäns.

He had no sympathy for technical pyrotechnics; a melodic Adagio, a beautiful cantilena would always enthrall him. It was one of his greatest pleasures whenever Professor Joachim would arrive in the evening to play his violin for him. Then, he would sit by the hour in the corner of his sofa, almost without moving; and the master never tired of playing for this quiet listener, for he knew and felt that he was completely and intimately understood.[53]

Friedrich Dressler, who often played the piano for Moltke, recalled occasions when 'Joachim played and Frau Joachim sang, and De Ahna and Hausmann joined in . . . Sometimes there was recitation, and whole scenes from "Manfred" were declaimed by Richard Kahle. The Field Marshal listened to that actor with pleasure, and he was often invited. He never left without having recited Heine's "Seegespenst."'[54] 'I never heard Joachim play more magnificently than at these little parties', wrote Dressler. 'He felt how much the Field Marshal appreciated his art, and it inspired him. The longer he played – and he played more on one evening at the General Staff Department than in three concerts – the more genial he became. For his last piece he always played Schumann's "Abendlied", which Moltke used to call "Our Musical Tattoo".'[55] In the years following their first acquaintance, Moltke became a regular patron of the Joachim Quartet concerts; indeed, it was said that Berliners 'never felt that a Singakademie concert could begin unless Moltke was in his place'.[56]

The prominent physician and physicist Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–94), noted for his work on the perception of sound, was another representative figure from Joachim's audience. A notice of his death in 1894 relates:

He found his chief relaxation in hearing the highest order of music, and his massive head and broad brow might almost always be seen in one of the front rows of the *Singakademie*, at the famous string quartet concerts of Profs. Joachim and de Ahna, to which he listened with the highest enjoyment. Instances might be indefinitely multiplied in which a love for music has gone hand-in-hand with eminent scientific ability, but with Prof. von Helmholtz it was a *passion*; perhaps because his investigations had led him to look upon music as a science, even more

[52] F. A. Dressler, *Moltke in seiner Häuslichkeit*, 2nd edn (Berlin: F. Fontane, 1904), p. 47.
[53] M. Jäns, *Feldmarschall Moltke*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Ernst Hofmann & Co., 1900), vol. II, pp. 435–6.
[54] Dressler, *Moltke*, pp. 53–4. [55] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[56] 'Moltke', *The Outlook* [New York], 86/2, (11 May 1907), p. 76.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015

than as an art. He could analyse every chord, and pass an unerring judgment on every harmonic progression. If he could have found time to devote himself to such work, he might have been among the first of musical critics, as his friend the late Dr. Billroth, the distinguished Professor of Surgery at the University of Vienna, actually was for some years, until the demands upon his time forced him to give up this mode of recreation.[57]

Helmholtz's memorial service was held in the Singakademie, attended by the Emperor and the Empress. In his honour, the choir of the Königliche Hochschule für Musik sang a chorale, and Joachim performed Schumann's 'Abendlied'.[58]

Like many in Joachim's audience, Helmholtz was himself an amateur performer, and deeply susceptible to musical impressions. One evening, after making music with Joachim, he wrote: 'Beethoven's opus 130, monstrously grandiose and serious, but deeply sad, has only today become totally transparent for me. Every bar of the adagio was played perfectly; it is like a tearful dream of lost ideals, and perhaps the archetype of Tristan dying for love, the impalpable wave of an infinite melody.'[59]

A concluding story may make palpable the sense of intimate personal relations as well as the shared experience of sacralised listening that prevailed amongst the audience, and between the audience and performers, at the Joachim Quartet concerts. A third member of Joachim's distinguished, *gebildete*, Singakademie audience, the artist Adolph Menzel (1815–1905), attended the Joachim Quartet concerts from the very beginning until his death on 9 February 1905 – a thirty-six-year span. Edith Stargardt-Wolff recalled:

A concert of the Joachim Quartet was planned for the same evening. Joachim's three partners had already seated themselves at their stands when Joachim appeared, mounting the ramp, and, with deepest seriousness, spoke these simple words: 'Before we begin our programme, we wish to play, in memory of the man whose seat is empty today for the first time, the *Cavatina* from Beethoven's Opus 130, which he particularly loved. – Those present arose, and stood while they listened to the magnificent movement, which may never have been played or listened to with greater warmth of feeling than in that hour.'[60]

[57] 'From the German Capital', *Book News: A Monthly Survey of General Literature* 13 (September 1894–August 1895), pp. 72–3.

[58] L. Koenigsberger, *Hermann von Helmholtz* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), p. 437.

[59] Quoted in M. Meulders, *Helmholtz: From Enlightenment to Neuroscience*, ed. and trans. L. Garey (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), pp. 157–8.

[60] Stargardt-Wolff, *Wegbereiter*, p. 149.

Downloaded from Cambridge Books Online by IP 132.177.236.156 on Wed Sep 02 20:13:11 BST 2015.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107337404.003
Cambridge Books Online © Cambridge University Press, 2015