

Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris, March 17, 1850

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[English translation below]



— Joachim, le violoniste-lion du moment, fait, comme on dit vulgairement, la chouette à deux associations de musique de chambre, partie intime de l’art, genre dé icieux dans lequel le jeune virtuose excelle, car il y élève le trio, le quatuor, le quintette à la hauteur de la symphonie, par un jeu large et puissant, par l’ampleur du son qu’il tire de l’instrument. Nous analyserons un de ces jours la manière de ce jeune et grand artiste, en qui se trouve l’accord d’un beau talent et d’un bon caractère.

— Henri BLANCHARD

— Joachim, the violinist-lion of the moment, is, as they say colloquially, playing the owl¹ with two chamber music associations, an intimate province of the art, a delightful genre in which the young virtuoso excels, as he elevates the trio, the quartet, the quintet to the level of the symphony, through his broad and powerful playing, through the richness of sound he draws from the instrument. One of these days, we will analyze the style of this young and great artist, in whom there is a harmonious blend of beautiful talent and a good character.

— Henri BLANCHARD

¹ The expression “to play the owl” comes from old French parlor and gambling games like *trictrac*, billiards, or the card game *écarté*. In those games, when one player took on multiple opponents who teamed up or rotated against them, that lone player was said to “*faire la chouette*” (literally “to do/play the owl”). By extension, in 18th- and 19th-century French, it became a common idiom for handling multiple parties alone. For example, the famous French letter-writer Madame du Deffand wrote in 1769, “*Je fais la chouette à trois personnes*” to mean she was single-handedly keeping up a lively correspondence with three different people at the same time.

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