

‘FOR ALL ARE BORN TO THE IDEAL’: JOSEPH JOACHIM AND BETTINA VON ARNIM

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ALTHOUGH JOSEPH JOACHIM CAME OF AGE in the milieu of the German Romantic salon, his biographers have largely ignored the critical influence of women on his artistic development. This is a significant omission, as Katharina Uhde’s publications concerning Joachim’s compositions reveal.¹ In his ‘veiled autobiography’, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild*,² the early edition of which appeared while he was still alive, Joachim was at pains to present himself as he would eventually come to be eulogized: as an Evangelical Christian German, a worthy, principled upholder of Classical traditions, and a gatekeeper of the Prussian musical establishment, mentored in his youth by a series of iconic male father figures, including Joseph Böhm, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Liszt.³ In the end, however, this self-portrayal has done him much harm, concealing *inter alia* a warmly sympathetic Hungarian-Jewish nature, a romantic, virtuoso youth, an early, significant vocation as a composer, and an extensive and important British career. Moreover, while the decisive influence of his male mentors is well known, the equally decisive influence of Bettina and Gisela von Arnim, and of his great collaborator Clara Schumann, has until very recently remained virtually unexplored. It is an astonishing exclusion.⁴

Amongst Joachim’s many mentors, Bettina von Arnim’s (1785–1859) sway over the young musician is difficult to overstate. Once an intimate friend of Goethe and Beethoven, Bettina was an ardent music lover and amateur composer with outspoken aesthetic views. A distinctive and powerful personality, a passionate free spirit, intelligent, ebullient, and original, Elisabeth Catharina Ludovica Magdalena Brentano von Arnim (like many great *salonnières* known only by her pet name—Bettina⁵) easily exhausts and transcends the various connotations of the word that is regularly applied

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¹ See: Katharina Bozena Croissant Uhde, ‘Psychologische Musik, Joseph Joachim and a Search for a New Music in the 1850s’ (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2014), and particularly Uhde, *The Music of Joseph Joachim* (Woodbridge, 2018).

² Andreas Moser, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild* (Berlin, 1898). A second edition in two volumes was published in Berlin in 1908–10; citations are taken from this edition. English translation: *Joseph Joachim: A Biography*, trans. Lilla Durham (London, 1901). This biography is still the basis for much of the received knowledge about Joachim, including the first modern biography, Beatrix Borchard’s *Stimme und Geige: Biographie und Interpretationsgeschichte* (Vienna, 2005), intended, as the author states, to be ‘read against’ (‘gegengelesen’) Moser’s account.

³ See Borchard, *Stimme und Geige*, 59. Max Kalbeck remarked: ‘In der Tat hat es nie einen deutschen Künstler gegeben als ihn, den geborenen Juden’, quoted in O. Goldhammer, ‘Liszt, Brahms und Reményi’, *Studia musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 5, Fasc. 1/4 (Budapest, 1963), 89–100 at 99.

⁴ The English edition (1901) of Moser’s biography contains only three references to Bettina von Arnim and two to her daughter Gisela, whose significance for Joachim, personal and artistic, could hardly be greater.

⁵ Or Bettine, as she also spelled her name.

to her: *geistreich*—‘spirited’, in every sense of the English word. Even in her late sixties, Bettina was a lover of gifted young men, reveling in her ability to mould and shape them. Through her mentorship, Joachim was confirmed in the Romantic cult of Beethoven veneration that Bettina helped create, as well as in *Kunstreligion*—the sacralization of art—as practised in the Arnim household. One of the last living ties to early literary Romanticism, Bettina introduced Joachim to the work of important authors, among them Goethe, Tieck, Novalis, Arnim, Brentano, Mörike, Groth, and Storm. She also introduced him to the art of Raphael, Rembrandt, and Dürer.⁶ Together with the Schumanns, Bettina helped influence Joachim away from Franz Liszt, whom she had at first revered, but with whom she quarrelled. As is well known, the eventual split between Joachim and Liszt and the schools of thought that they represented was one of the most consequential events in nineteenth-century music.

WEIMAR, 1852

Though Joachim and Bettina may have met on previous occasions,⁷ their personal association began in September 1852, when Joseph was 21 and Bettina 67. Bettina had arrived for an extended stay in Weimar, in the company of her daughters Armgart and Gisela. During the previous summer, she had suffered a mild stroke and, with mortality beginning to weigh on her mind, she wished to return once again to the place that held such deep significance for her—the site of her youthful encounters with Goethe. Bettina and her daughters were joined there by the 24-year-old Herman Grimm, the son of the renowned philologist Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859), and a familiar of the Arnim household. For Herman, as for Joseph, this autumn encounter would be life-altering. Grimm describes a gathering in the Hotel Elephant on the marketplace, where Bettina had taken possession of the *bel étage*. ‘I remember entering the parlor in the twilight, before the lamps had been brought’, he writes;

A variety of guests were there, to whom I was introduced without seeing them. There was music, and I heard for the first time a violin sonata of Beethoven’s, by Joachim. . . . The delight of meeting once more those with whom I felt so closely united, the softly-stealing, entrancing music, transported me into a new world. Weimar was still the residence of Goethe, and his spirit hovered about us there.⁸

The intimacy and nostalgia of this event in the little Thuringian *Residenz*’s most venerable inn concealed a discordant contemporary reality in the town’s cultural life: a schism between literary tradition and musical innovation—retrospective and progressive artistic dispositions—occasioned by the appointment a decade earlier of Franz Liszt as Kapellmeister im außerordentlichen Dienst (Music Director in Extraordinary Service) to the Grandducal Weimar court. As claimant to Weimar’s

⁶ For modern scholarship concerning Joachim and Clara Schumann see, especially: “Festivals of the Virtuoso Priesthood: Collaborating with Clara Schumann and Joseph Joachim” in: Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann’s Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 195–238; Ute Bär, “Zur gemeinsamen Konzerttätigkeit Clara Schumanns und Joseph Joachims,” in: Peter Ackermann and Herbert Schneider, eds., *Clara Schumann: Komponistin, Interpretin, Unternehmerin* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1999), 35–57; Beatrix Borchard, *Clara Schumann: Musik als Lebensform* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2019); and particularly Klaus Martin Kopitz, (ed.), *Schumann Briefedition*, Serie II (2 vols.), *Briefwechsel Robert und Clara Schumanns mit Joseph Joachim und seiner Familie* (Cologne: Dohr, 2019).

⁷ For example, Bettina and Joachim were both present at the premiere of the Mendelssohn/Tieck production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Royal palace at Potsdam, 14 Oct. 1843.

⁸ Herman Grimm, *Literature* (Boston, 1886), 249. Grimm misstates the year as 1850. Bettina enjoyed listening in darkness, or semi-darkness, as a way of disembodiment—and spiritualizing—the music.

distinguished cultural heritage, the ‘virtuoso’ Liszt was widely regarded with suspicion by the proud, parochial Weimaraner, many of whom viewed him as a usurper;⁹ his presence had provoked considerable friction between the literary old guard, who still lamented the passing of Weimar’s Golden Age, and the parvenu adherents of Liszt’s musical avant garde, who, in increasing numbers, flocked to the Altenburg, Liszt’s hillside residence, across the river Ilm overlooking the palace and the town.

On the anniversary of Goethe’s 101st birthday two years earlier, 28 August 1850, the musical world had turned its attention to Weimar for the premiere of Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, under Liszt’s direction. Amongst the attendees was the young vice-concertmaster from Leipzig, Joseph Joachim, fresh from his first, triumphant, sojourn in Paris. After several days of playing chamber music together, Liszt invited Joachim to join him as concertmaster of the Weimar *Kapelle*. In accepting, Joachim became the first of many gifted colleagues and disciples to join in Liszt’s progressive musical enterprise. Hans von Bülow was soon to join them. Fanny Lewald painted an unforgettable picture of the ambience at the Altenburg, and of Liszt’s fostering care as she experienced it a year thereafter:

At that time, he was surrounded by students and young musicians who have all become masters: the very youthful concertmaster Joseph Joachim, Hans von Bülow, Cossmann, Singer, Winterberger, Voss, and a few others; and, quite aside from the great musical enjoyment provided by the collaboration of these young men, enthusiastically attached to Liszt, it was a joy to see with what love and devotion he observed and led them, how he took pleasure in their ability, how warmheartedly he praised them when they pleased him—I think I can still hear the tone of his voice, with which he called out to them: ‘Bravo, Joachim! Bravo, Hans! Je ne pourrais pas faire mieux!’—and how he then, turning to the listeners, asked: ‘Isn’t that so? You don’t find that everywhere.’¹⁰

Bettina, too, was an admirer of Liszt. Notably infatuated with men of genius, and famous for her veneration of Goethe and Beethoven, she had likewise been gripped by ‘Lisztomania’, and her c.1842 banner ‘Eljen Liszt’ (Hail, Liszt!), graced with cherubs disporting themselves on a musical stave, hung prominently in Liszt’s home (see Pl. 1). On her late visits to Weimar, she too made the arduous climb up to the Altenburg, together with her daughters, encroaching upon the intimacy of Liszt’s musical fraternity. Liszt’s young men were smitten, of course, with the charming Arnim girls: Bülow with Armgart, and Joachim with Gisela. Peter Cornelius also fancied Gisela, but Joachim’s crush would soon develop into a

⁹ See particularly Detlef Altenburg, ‘Franz Liszt and the Legacy of the Classical Era’, *19th-Century Music*, 18 (1994), 46–63. Amongst Liszt’s detractors was Johann Peter Eckermann, renowned as author of the *Gespräche mit Goethe*. [Hans Christian] ‘Andersen recorded a conversation he had with Eckermann: “He told me about Liszt who lives here together with Princess Wittgenstein, and it is an open secret; he [Liszt] does great harm to the theater, refuses to perform Mozart, who is a thing of the past he says, instead Wagner and other composers of that effect” (*H. C. Andersens Dagbog*, IV, 79)’. Quoted in Anna Harwell Celenza, ‘The Poet, the Pianist, and the Patron: Hans Christian Andersen and Franz Liszt in Carl Alexander’s Weimar’, *19th-Century Music*, 26 (2002), 130–54 at 143. Heine: ‘Zu Weimar, dem Musenwittensitz, | Da hört ich viel Klagen erhenben, | Man weinte und jammerte: Goethe sei tot | und Eckermann sei noch am Leben.’

¹⁰ ‘Er hatte damals Schüler und junge Musiker um sich, die alle Meister geworden sind: den ganz jugendlichen Konzertmeister Joseph Joachim, Hans von Bülow, Cofmann, Singer, Winterberger, Voß und noch manche Andere; und es war, ganz abgesehen von dem großen musikalischen Genuß, den das Zusammenwirken dieser, an Liszt mit Begeisterung hängenden jungen Männer gewährte, eine Freude zu sehen, mit welcher Liebe und Hingebung er sie beobachtete und leitete, wie ihr Können ihn freute, wie warmherzig er es ihnen aussprach, wenn sie es ihm zu Dank gemacht.—Ich meine den Ton seiner Stimme noch zu hören, mit dem er ihnen zurief: “Bravo, Joachim! Bravo, Hans! je ne pourrais pas faire mieux!”—und wie er, sich dann zu den Hörern wendend, fragte: “Nicht wahr? das finden Sie nicht überall?”’ Fanny Lewald[-Stahr], *Zwölf Bilder nach dem Leben* (Berlin, 1888), 361–2.



Pl. 1. Bettina von Arnim (1785–1859), Hungarian language banner: ‘Eljen Franz Liszt!’ (‘Long live Franz Liszt!’), c.1842. Klassik Stiftung Weimar Museen/Inv-Nr.: LHz/01884. Reproduced by permission

consuming passion that never really left him, even long after Gisela had married Herman Grimm. We have that passion to thank for his many compositions using the motto G#–E–A (Gis-e-la), and its musical inversion F–A–E, variously interpreted by Joachim to mean ‘Frei Aber Einsam’ (‘Free but lonely’), or, more optimistically perhaps, ‘Für Alle Ewigkeit’ (‘For all eternity’).¹¹

There were musical and social gatherings, and long daily walks through the Ilm Park and into the surrounding landscape—out by daylight, and back by moonlight. Franziska von Bülow, Hans’s mother, describes an excursion to Schloss Tiefurt during which Armgart seated herself at the spinet and sang a song by Bettina’s brother, Clemens Brentano: *Gehör der Welt nicht an, sonst ist’s um Dich gethan*. ‘Do not belong to the world . . .’. ‘Evenings, we are always at Arnims until midnight’, she writes; ‘where Hans and Joachim play, the girls sing—which does not preclude interesting discussions. Grimm is very amusing. Bettina unique.’¹² ‘It is unbelievable, the influence the

¹¹ ‘d. h. nicht mehr: “frei aber einsam”, sondern Dein für alle ewigkeit’; Joachim to Gisela von Arnim, summer 1854. *Joseph Joachims Briefe an Gisela von Arnim, 1852–1859*, ed. Johannes Joachim (Göttingen, 1911), 51. Uhde has pointed out that Joachim’s cipher pieces ‘imitate Schumann’s musical word games while also providing an outlet for [his] obsession with Gisela [von Arnim]’; *The Music of Joseph Joachim*, 6. Elsewhere, Uhde and R. Larry Todd write: ‘Joachim’s own music presents an exterior shell that masks an interior world not exposed to the public at large: through the extensive use of musical ciphers, Joachim encodes an interior narrative meant only for the intimate members of his circle. The idea of inwardness or intimacy is common to both socio-cultural and musical expression as far as it related to Joachim, Bettine, Gisela, and Herman Grimm . . .’. Uhde and Todd, ‘Salon Culture in the Circle of Joseph Joachim, or, Composing Inwardness: C. J. Arnold’s *Quartettabend bei Bettina* Reconsidered’, in Anja Bunzel and Natasha Loges (eds.), *Musical Salon Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2019), 43–64 at 45. See extensive discussions of Joachim’s use of ciphers in Uhde, *The Music of Joseph Joachim, passim*. Amongst Joachim’s many cipher compositions, see especially his *Three Pieces*, Op. 5 (1853), which Liszt called Joachim’s ‘Gisellen’ (Liszt to Joachim, Gotha, 28 Mar. 1854)—particularly *Abendglocken*, in which the ciphers Gis-E-La and F-A-E are used obsessively. Other cipher pieces include his *Hebrew Melody*, Op. 9 (1854), *Still und bewegt* (a sketch for Gisela’s birthday, 30 Aug. 1854), *Variations on an Original Theme*, Op. 10 (1854), *Notturmo* Op. 12 (1858), *Kleist Overture* Op. 13, and *Violin Concerto No. 3* in G major, WoO (1863–4) (for which see Uhde, *The Music of Joseph Joachim*, ‘Mellowed Ciphers’, 161).

¹² ‘Die Abende sind wir immer bis Mitternacht bei Arnims, wo Hans und Joachim spielen, die Mädchen singen, was interessante Gespräche nicht ausschließt. Grimm ist sehr amüsant, Bettina ganz einzig . . .’ (21 Oct. 1852); *Briefe von Hans von Bülow*, ed. Marie von Bülow, i (Leipzig, 1899), 477. The letters of Franziska von Bülow published in this collection give a vivid account of the fellowship of those autumn days, including many references to music-making.

association with the three interesting, and so completely different, women has had on the young people', Franziska writes a few days later; 'they seem to me as if sent by God'.¹³

During his Weimar years, Joachim and his colleagues from the *Kapelle* met frequently for chamber music in his rooms or at the Altenburg, and also gave an annual series of public concerts under Liszt's patronage. An undated invitation from Joachim to Bettina survives, which, given its contents and formal language, probably dates from the time of their Weimar encounter: 'I just received my friends' confirmation, madam, for the quartet that I promised you. Therefore, if you and your Fräulein daughters still wish to hear music by Beethoven this morning, you will find our strings and bows ready and willing. In this case, madam, I will allow myself to come get you around 11.'¹⁴ One suspects that it was the 'Fräulein daughters' who were the main attraction here.

Nevertheless, Bettina was ever the centre of attention—an energetic and irresistible instigator who drew others into her orbit, inspired them with her enthusiasms, persuaded them of her opinions, and involved them in her plans. Herman Grimm relates how, one October morning at six o'clock, Bettina knocked on his door and invited him to take a walk through the park to Goethe's garden house. Grimm describes the rustling yellow leaves and solitary, narrow paths, the damp morning mists and shadows, and how, upon finding the garden gate locked, they pressed through an aperture in the hedge and sat behind the cottage on a half-broken bench. 'Bettina said that Goethe once told her he had passed many a night here in the open air', Grimm writes, 'and when he awoke how beautiful the stars appeared twinkling through the branches of the trees. We then strolled through the wet, faded grass about the house until the sun began to shine. . . . She spoke of Goethe without the slightest tinge of sadness. . . . The present, which was hers, still enchanted her.'¹⁵

It is evident from Grimm's garden *mise en scène* how Bettina displayed an enthusiastic interest in mentoring gifted young men and in introducing them to the artistic heroes of her own youth. Grimm writes: 'How is one to describe the power in a being which renders every moment spent with them of the richest significance; the attractive charm which no one can resist; the gift, above all, of entering into the feelings of the young, of influencing and elevating them?'¹⁶

This was something that Bettina was uniquely qualified to do. Like all the great nineteenth-century *salonnières*, Bettina was accustomed to being at the centre of a circle in which her guidance and critical judgement were sought. In the Berlin of that time, Grimm tells us,

Bettina and Alexander von Humboldt were the two distinguished individuals whose private views determined the current of public opinion. It was believed that they knew more than others of the brilliant future in preparation, and that paths lay open to them which were closed to common sight. . . . Both Bettina and von Humboldt had the gift to suddenly kindle a spark in beings by no means extraordinary, which raised them far above their ordinary level.¹⁷

¹³ 'Es ist unglaublich, was der Umgang mit den drei interessanten und so ganz verschiedenen Frauen auf die jungen Leute . . . gewirkt hat, sie kommen mir wie von Gott gesendet vor.' Ibid. 481.

¹⁴ 'Eben erst, gnädige Frau, erhalte ich die Zusage meiner Freunde für das Ihnen versprochene Quartett. Haben Sie, und Ihre Fräulein Töchter also noch Lust, heute Vormittag Beethoven'sche Musik zu hören, so finden Sie unsere Saiten und Bogen für Sie bereit. Ich will mir in diesem Fall erlauben, Sie, gnädige Frau, gegen 11 Uhr abzuholen. In hochachtungsvoller ergebenheit Joseph Joachim'. Undated holograph, Frankfurt, Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurter Goethemuseum, Signatur HS-14525, Nachlass Forbes-Mosse.

¹⁵ Grimm, *Literature*, 249–51.

¹⁶ Ibid. 248.

¹⁷ Ibid. 245.

Both Bettina and Humboldt emerged from the Goethe-worshipping, Neoplatonic *Geselligkeit* (salon sociability) of Rahel Varnhagen's celebrated salon,¹⁸ and Bettina was herself a well-known *salonnière*. Unlike Joachim's male mentors and role models—Schumann, for example—Bettina had a *salonnière's* fully formed concept of her role as facilitator in the edification of others, according to contemporary notions of *Bildung*.¹⁹ This did not include playing the role of muse, as has been ascribed to Bettina's daughter Gisela; rather, she was an educator in a broadly humanistic sense.²⁰ Bettina captured the essence of the *salonnière's* creed in her book *Die Günderröde*,²¹ in an epigraph that later found its way into Brahms's commonplace book, *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein*:

If you are suffused with a higher impression of a person's nature, do not doubt that it is the true one; for all are born to the ideal, and wherever you suspect it in a person, you can make it manifest, for he surely has the capacity for it.

He who denies the ideal in himself cannot understand it in others, even if it were fully expressed. He who perceives the ideal in others causes it to flourish in them, even if the other does not suspect it in himself.²²

Although it lies outside the scope of this essay to unpack this statement in full, the critical notion here is the conceptual differentiation between an imagined ideal self and its manifest expression; the assertion of a perfected image, or 'Bild', of one's true self, towards which one aspires to grow—of which one aspires to become worthy—which lies at the heart of the notion of *Bildung*, of Bettina's conceptualization of the interaction of art and life, and of her role as mentor and guide.

This viewpoint, while commonly held among *salonnières*, was particularly salient in the thinking of the Dutch philosopher Frans Hemsterhuis (1721–90). Bettina had read Hemsterhuis with her grandmother Sophie von La Roche, and his works were amongst the favoured reading of her beloved companion Karoline von Günderröde (1790–1806), whose friendship Bettina memorialized in *Die Günderröde* (from which the quotation is taken). According to Katherine R. Goodman:

Hemsterhuis's perception of the polymorphous nature (*Vielgestaltigkeit*) of life was at the core of his philosophical and aesthetic views. The concept of multiplicity in unity grounded his

¹⁸ Bettina's Goethe-adulation went so far as to induce her to design a Goethe monument, in which she represented herself in a Mignon-like pose of adoration before her beloved master. A large plaster model of the monument, on which she tinkered for several decades, sat in the salon of her Berlin home, In den Zelten 5. The monument, eventually completed in white marble by the sculptor Karl Steinhäuser, was situated in Weimar's Bellevue (Belvedere) Schlosspark in 1853, and later moved to Weimar's Neues Museum. See Uhde and Todd, 'Salon Culture in the Circle of Joseph Joachim', 44–5.

¹⁹ The German language represents the English word 'education' variously as *Erziehung*, *Ausbildung*, or *Bildung*. Each carries a different connotation: *Erziehung* approximates to 'upbringing', *Ausbildung* to 'training'. *Bildung* is perhaps best rendered as 'edification'—ongoing self-improvement through social and cultural engagement. Though a never-ending process, *Bildung* has as its goal the creation of a unique, free, and fully realized individual.

²⁰ As is well known, our contemporary notion of liberal education, as instituted by Humboldt in the Berlin University in 1810, grew directly out of the convictions and practices that Humboldt experienced in Berlin's salons, which were presided over primarily by Jewish women in the Mendelssohn family tradition after Moses Mendelssohn.

²¹ *Sic*. Though Karoline von Günderröde spelled her name with a doubled 'r', Bettina spelled it with a single 'r'.

²² 'Wenn Dich eine höhere Vorstellung durchdringt von einer Menschennatur, so zweifle nicht daß dies die wahre sei, den alle sind geboren zum Ideal, und wo Du es ahnst, da kannst Du es auch in ihm zur Erscheinung bringen, denn er hat gewiß die Anlage dazu.

'Wer das Ideal läugnet in sich, der könnte es auch nicht verstehen in Andern, selbst wenn es vollkommen ausgesprochen wär.—Wer das Ideal erkannte in Andern, dem blüht es auf, selbst wenn jener es nicht in sich ahnt.' Elizabeth von Arnim, *Die Günderröde, Zweiter Theil* (Grünberg and Leipzig, 1840), epigraph.

hopes for the ‘coexistence’, or ‘making coexistent’, of the most numerous and widely diverging ideas and beings. . . . If something is capable of evoking a reaction, according to Hemsterhuis, it is active. Individuals may thus recognize and activate the otherness of nature, as they may recognize and activate the otherness of each individual. The recognition or ‘making coexistent’ of otherness could extend to other areas, for example, to recognition of a variety of religious expression. . . . Diversity in unity is a goal of art, of character, of the state.

Only an active being (*être actif*), one who elicits a reaction and thereby realizes its activity, can become a guiding force in the creation of this world concept. Such beings render other beings coexistent and activate them. Beings become active insofar as they determine themselves through their own will (*velléité*), rather than that of another.²³

Bettina was a radical social reformer, a romantic socialist—a ‘do-gooder’,²⁴ as her daughter Maxe teasingly called her—concerned with the rights of the poor and the oppressed, and one of the century’s few philo-Semitic writers. Her solicitude for Jews contrasted with the strongly anti-Semitic and anti-Mendelssohnian atmosphere of Liszt’s intimate circle (Wagner, Bülow, Cornelius, and others).²⁵ Like Humboldt, Bettina applied the paradigm of *Bildung* to the social and political world beyond the salon walls. A decade earlier, in a period of intense censorship, she had publicly lectured the King of Prussia on the responsibilities of a ‘people’s king’ in a book entitled *Dies Buch gehört dem König* (This Book Belongs to the King).²⁶ At the time of her arrival in Weimar, she had recently published another book directed at the King: *Gespräche mit Dämonen* (Conversations with Dæmons, 1852). In it she revisits the Frankfurt ghetto of 1808, and, in a fictional context, presses for the social and political habilitation of Jews and Hungarians. ‘The Jew also has a right to express his unique characteristics’, she writes.

It is not a question of eradicating these, but rather of rendering them with brighter colours. The education (*Bildung*) of the Jew is dependent on making his inherent beauty manifest; his spirit is reflected, for its own understanding, in the character that is native within him. . . . I would instruct their children. I would give them the education that would allow them to assert their claims on society. I would have them learn riding, fencing, dancing, natural science, philosophy, history—everything that would raise them above the condition in which their spirits are demeaned and disgraced . . . and the first of all the elements of education must be music!²⁷

²³ See Katherine R. Goodman, ‘Through a Different Lens: Bettina Brentano-von Arnim’s Views on Gender’, in Elke Frederiksen and Katherine R. Goodman (eds.), *Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: Gender and Politics* (Detroit, 1995), 115–44 at 134–5.

²⁴ ‘Weltverbeßerer’.

²⁵ ‘In Weimar his great love and respect for Mendelssohn had suffered many a blow, the depth and acuteness of which were greater than Liszt and his followers could understand. Their depreciation of the master who was so dear to him, and what they offered in exchange for it, on the other, made him question whether in the works of Liszt and the new school he could find the satisfaction which he derived from Mendelssohn’s and Schumann’s compositions.’ Moser, *Joseph Joachim: A Biography*, 108.

²⁶ Bettina’s ‘advice’ was not always well received, and she was often viewed as eccentric and even obnoxious. ‘The King misunderstands his position’, she once told Marie von Olfers. ‘He can do an enormous amount . . . I have often told him in letters how a King should conduct himself, and received replies that made my skin crawl . . .’. ‘Der König mißversteht seine Stellung, er kann enorm viel wirken . . . Ich habe ihm oft in Briefen vorgehalten, wie der König sich zu benehmen hat, aber ich bekam Antworten, daß mir die Haut schauerte . . .’. *Marie von Olfers Briefe und Tagebücher 1826–1869*, ed. Margarete von Olfers (Berlin, 1928), 21.

²⁷ ‘Auch im Juden liegt die Offenbarung seiner Eigentümlichkeiten; es ist nicht die Rede, diese auszurotten, vielmehr sie wiederzugeben in lichterem Farben. Die Bildung des Juden hängt ab davon, seine ursprüngliche Schönheit geltend zu machen, seine Seele spiegelt zum eigenen Verständnis sich in der ihm eingebornen Natur’. ‘ich würde ihnen die Bildung geben, die ihre Ansprüche an Geselligkeit geltend macht, ich würde sie reiten, fechten, tanzen lernen lassen, Naturwissenschaft, Philosophie, Geschichte, alles was sie über den Stand erhebt, in dem ihre Seelen

BETTINA'S BEETHOVEN

As Bettina spoke to Grimm of Goethe, so she surely spoke to Joachim of Beethoven. According to Grimm, 'In her estimation Beethoven held the highest place in the musical world.'²⁸ As a young woman, Bettina knew Beethoven fairly intimately, and she is still sometimes put forward as a candidate for the composer's 'Immortal Beloved'.²⁹ Bettina stands with E. T. A. Hoffmann as one of the founders of the nineteenth-century view of Beethoven.³⁰ The *locus classicus* of Bettina's view, the equivalent of Hoffmann's contemporaneous review of the Fifth Symphony, is a gathering of three intimate letters that Beethoven ostensibly wrote to her in 1810–12 and which Bettina published in the *Athenæum für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Leben* in January 1839. 'Ostensibly', because Bettina's creative method was never to write factual history but to conflate *Dichtung* with *Wahrheit*, poetry with truth, in an effort to portray a 'higher', idealized, reality. For this reason, her legacy continues to endow a cottage industry of scholars who labour to tease fact from fiction in her works, nuggets of hard metal from the rich and fertile earth of her fanciful prose. The first and third of the original letters are lost, and the published versions are considered of dubious authenticity. The third is the source of the oft-repeated tale of Beethoven's meeting with Goethe in the park at Teplitz in which Beethoven is said to have stormed through the midst of the imperial family while Goethe stood deferentially to the side. The second of the letters, however, exists in the original and is genuine. Intriguingly, that letter was discovered wrapped in a Nazi-era newspaper in the bottom of an armoire belonging to a relative of Joachim's, Helene Wittgenstein Salzer. How she obtained it is not known: it was discovered after her death.³¹

The contents of these letters, together with a letter that Bettina wrote to Goethe concerning Beethoven, are very well known and widely available. For present purposes, it does not matter whether they are authentic—only that Bettina declared them to be so, and that they afford us an opportunity to overhear some of what she doubtless impressed upon the young Joachim. In Bettina's letter to Goethe, Beethoven claims to have received divine inspiration—a higher revelation of Being, similar to that embodied in Goethe's poem *Zueignung*, in which the poet receives 'der Dichtung Schleier aus der Hand der Wahrheit'—the veil of poetry from the hand of Truth. The veil that the Goddess Truth gives the poet is woven from the river mists—substantial water become insubstantial atmosphere—a translucent fabric, half real, half ideal, through which the blinding light of truth can safely be viewed. Similarly, Bettina quotes Beethoven as saying 'every real creation of art . . . is one with man only in this, that it bears testimony of the mediation of the divine in him'. 'When I open my eyes I must sigh, for what I see is contrary to my religion', Beethoven purportedly told Bettina,

and I must despise the world which does not know that music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy, the wine which inspires one to new generative processes, and I am

herabgewürdigt, voll Schmach, einen schlechten Eindruck uns machten, und das erste aller Erziehungselemente müßte sein die Musik!' Bettina von Arnim, *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Gustav Konrad, iii/iv (Frechen and Cologne, 1963), 269.

²⁸ Grimm, *Literature*, 248.

²⁹ See e.g. C. Edward Walden, *Beethoven's Immortal Beloved: Solving the Mystery* (Lanham, Md., 2011).

³⁰ See e.g. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley, 1989), 75 ff. ('Beethoven: Myth and Reception'); also Alessandra Comini, *The Changing Image of Beethoven: A Study in Mythmaking* (Santa Fe, 2008), 111 ff. Bettina's ideas reached as far as America. See e.g. Ora Frishberg Saloman, 'Margaret Fuller on Beethoven in America, 1839–1846', *Journal of Musicology*, 10 (1992), 89–105 at 98–9.

³¹ See C. Edward Walden, 'The Authenticity of the 1812 Beethoven Letter to Bettina von Arnim', *Beethoven Journal*, 14/1 (1999), 9–15 at 9 ff.

the Bacchus who presses out this glorious wine for mankind Speak to Goethe about me . . . tell him to hear my symphonies and he will say that I am right in saying that music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend.³²

The words are almost certainly Bettina's. Nevertheless, they had wide circulation, and wide influence. Though Beethoven's early biographers, including Thayer, were misled by Bettina's 'correspondence', some, like the American writer Margaret Fuller, remained suspicious: 'As for Bettina, it was evident to every discerning reader that the great man never talked so; the whole narration is overflowed with Bettina rose-colour. Schindler grimly says, the good Bettina makes him appear a *Word-Hero*; and we cannot but for a moment share his contempt, as we admire the granite laconism of Beethoven's real style, which is, beyond any other, the short hand of Genius.'³³

Of all Joachim's mentors, his Viennese violin teacher Joseph Böhm notwithstanding, Bettina had the most intimate relationship with Beethoven; to what extent it was feigned or real is not germane to our discussion of Joachim's understanding. Bettina claimed special knowledge of Beethoven—that he had loved her—and that, deeply hurt by her marriage to Arnim, he had sent her a sonnet, the 'original' of which she gave to Joachim for Christmas, 1854, along with (an inauthentic) copy of a letter by Mozart. Both were in Joachim's possession at his death:

In deep humility, I wish to congratulate you;
 Bowing deeply, I raise my hat from my head.
 Though my thoughts hover far away
 Still I must lead them in their beaten paths.
 Though I do not wish greatly to stare at fate
 It will, nonetheless, never uplift me—
 I forfeited long ago my trifling earthly life;
 I will always feel the claws of faithfulness in my heart.
 But why do I weep and be miserable?
 Happy art thou, and may thy life be happy!
 I shall suffer until the future brings me more bitter suffering;
 Still, one consolation should I be given as reward,
 By the grace of the gods, may I see thee happy,
 And my bitter, deep pain be beyond reach.³⁴

³² 'Wenn ich die Augen aufschlage, so muß ich seufzen, denn was ich sehe, ist gegen meine Religion, und die Welt muß ich verachten, die nicht ahnt, daß Musik höhere Offenbarung ist als alle Weisheit und Philosophie, sie ist der Wein, der zu neuen Erzeugungen begeistert, und ich bin der Bacchus, der für die Menschen diesen herrlichen Wein keltert und sie geistestrunken Macht. . .'; 'Sprechen Sie dem Goethe von mir, sagen Sie ihm, er soll meine Symphonien hören, da wird er mir recht geben, daß Musik der einzige unverkörpernte Eingang in eine höhere Welt des Wissens ist, die wohl den Menschen umfaßt, daß er aber nicht sie zu fassen vermag.' Bettina von Arnim, *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*, ed. Jonas Fränkel, ii (Jena, 1906), 124, 126.

³³ Quoted in Saloman, 'Margaret Fuller', 99.

³⁴ 'In tiefer Demuth will ich gratulieren | Tief neigund von dem Haupt den Hut mir heben | Wenn die Gedanken sich auch in weiter Ferne schweben | Muss ich sie doch gebahnte Wege führen | Will ich auch nicht das Schicksal gross anstieren | So wird es nimmer dennoch mich erheben | Verwirkt ist längst mein schaales Erdenleben, | Der Treue Kralle werd ich stets im Busen spüren. | Doch was wein ich und binn elende | Froh bist du und froh sey dein Leben | Ich dulde bis mir Zukinft herbres sende | Doch einen Trost sollt mir zum lohne geben, | Der Götter Huld

In the accompanying letter, we hear Bettina's authentic voice as she spoke to Joachim about Beethoven (and Mozart):

I send you both, for in both are preserved the most noble precepts of composition. Do you know the fugue at the end of the Magic Flute, and the chorus of the two men—they are for me amongst the most meaningful and precious—as this manuscript and its contents is the most precious and important of Beethoven—therein lies the poetic school (*Dichterschule*) of composition, just as in the letter of Mozart, which both contain great, sacred laws. Whoever feels it, also possesses it. The way Beethoven strikes, regardless of whether he is comprehended, and calls out, regardless of whether convention (*Sitte*) sanctions his declamation, thus, nevertheless, lies in this strike and outcry the germ of full-flowering symphonies—likewise, the Mozart letter contains everything that would humble the musician before him who daily and hourly drinks of the pure chalice of his own divine nature, so as not to languish. Preserve both all your life as the best gift from me, and think how I feel when I hear both.³⁵

A DEEPENING IDENTIFICATION WITH BEETHOVEN

Joachim began his musical life in the intimate circle of Beethoven's friends, and Beethoven's music played a major role in his education and early career. When he was only 8 years old, 'Pepi' Joachim joined in the music-making at the home of Beethoven's *Duzfreund* Franz (Ferenc) von Brunsvik.³⁶ The brief time he spent in these surroundings was the beginning of his devotion to the art of string quartet playing, of which he was in his time the greatest exponent. It also kindled his lifelong interest in the quartets of Beethoven, whose name the child heard spoken with 'holy awe'.³⁷ Shortly thereafter he settled in Vienna, where he resided and studied violin with Beethoven's colleague Joseph Böhm. For Joachim, this direct personal and musical connection to Beethoven held an abiding significance, if it did not necessarily produce a deep understanding. 'I cannot think back upon it without emotion', he told Moser,

how Böhm recounted the course of a rehearsal with Beethoven of one of his last quartets, around the year 1820. How the stone-deaf man sat and stared with wide-open mouth, and could only deduce which passages they were playing from the gestures of the players' bowing. How, from time to time, he grabbed the arm of one or the other of them and sang for him, with horrible expression in impossible intervals, reading in the faces of the quartet players whether they had understood him or not. . . . But Böhm was always honest enough to admit

class ich dich glücklich sehe, | Und ferne ist mein herbes tiefes wehe.' See, *inter alia*, Walden, *Beethoven's Immortal Beloved*, 63–6; 'Beethoven', *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, 51 (19 Dec. 1861), 942.

³⁵ 'Ich schicke Dir beides, weil in Beidem die edelsten Lehren der Composition bewahrt sind. Kennst Du in der Zauberflöte die Fuge am Ende und den Chor der beiden Männer, sie sind mir von dem Bedeutendsten und Liebsten—so wie mir diese Handschrift und ihr Inhalt das Liebste und bedeutendste des Beethoven ist—es liegt darin die Dichterschule der Composition eben sowohl wie im Brief des Mozart, die beide große, heilige Gesetze in sich bewahrt halten. Wer es fühlt, der hat es eben. So wie Beethoven zuschlägt, nicht ob er gefaßt werde, und ausruft, nicht ob die Sitte seine Declamation sanctionirt, so liegt dennoch in diesem Schlag und Ausruf der Keim vollblühender Symphonien—eben so liegt im Mozart-Brief alles was den Musiker demüthigen wird vor ihm, der seine eigene Gott-Natur im reinen Kelch täglich und stündlich selbst in sich trinkt, um nicht zu verschmachten. Bewahr beides, als beste Gabe von mir, Dein Leben lang und denke so wie ich empfinde, wenn ich beide höre.' *Briefe von und an Joseph Joachim*, ed. Johannes Joachim and Andreas Moser, i (Berlin, 1911), 239–40.

³⁶ According to Mária Hornyák, the Brunsviks played 'above all works of the Viennese classic composers: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Carl Czerny, Hummel and Spohr. But they also liked to play works by Cherubini, Onslow, Bernard and Andreas Romberg, and, among the Romantics they liked primarily Chopin and Mendelssohn.' The Brunsviks' music library, consisting of 560 pieces—solo, chamber music, orchestral and operatic works—was taken over by the Musikhochschule Franz Liszt in 1937–8. See Mária Hornyák, 'Ferenc Brunsvik, ein Freund von Beethoven', *Studia musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 32, fasc. 1/4 (1990), 225–33 at 231.

³⁷ Moser, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild*, i. 10.

sincerely that neither he nor his colleagues—Schuppanzigh not excepted—had comprehended Beethoven’s genius during his lifetime to the extent that it was known after his death, when the composer could no longer torment them with his often completely unfulfillable demands, but instead, having entered into immortality, holds watch over the performance of his works as an invisible spirit.³⁸

During his formative years in Leipzig, Joachim often played Beethoven’s Kreutzer sonata with Mendelssohn, and as a young adult he played Beethoven string quartets with Ferdinand David and other members of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Beethoven’s music, and specifically the violin concerto, played a major role in Joachim’s English career; his performance of the concerto, at age 12, with Mendelssohn and the orchestra of the London Philharmonic Society, is legendary. Thereafter, Joseph was invited to perform with Thomas Massa Alsager’s Beethoven Quartett Society, which introduced Beethoven’s string quartets to London society in exemplary performances, and whose motto, ‘Honour to Beethoven’, stood at the head of each of the beautifully produced programmes.

Unquestionably, no nineteenth-century performer was in a better position than Joachim to understand and appreciate Beethoven’s works. But though this inimitable groundwork had been laid, there is scant evidence that during those years Joachim identified with Beethoven’s works any more than he did with the compositions of others, either as a performer or as an aspiring composer. Indeed, while there is copious evidence that Joseph had long been searching for a deeper artistry, Uhde has shown that he was still composing and performing virtuoso fantasies of his own confection up until the time that he was drawn into the Arnim orbit.

Joachim’s early reviews, as might be expected, express astonishment that a person so young could play the violin so well. Critics mention his immaculate technique, the perfection of his intonation, the strength and depth of his tone, the classicism of his style, and the ingeniousness of his cadenzas. Nevertheless, early criticisms of Joachim’s playing occasionally mention a certain Apollonian reserve—a lack of ‘fire’. A London critic in 1849 observed: ‘the last touch is wanting to [his performance of Spohr’s Violin Concerto no. 8 in A Minor, Op. 47, *in modo di scena cantante*], that fire and individuality which, when they do come, come all the brighter and keener for having been awhile deferred’.³⁹ In June 1850, after a musical evening with Joachim, Clara Schumann confided in her diary:

As enamoured as everyone is of him, we can’t warm up to him. His playing is accomplished, everything beautiful, the finest pianissimo, the greatest bravura, complete mastery of the

³⁸ ‘Ich kann nicht ohne Ergriffenheit daran zurückdenken ... wie mir Böhm den Verlauf einer Probe mit Beethoven zu einem seiner letzten Quartette, um das Jahr 1820 herum, schilderte. Wie der stocktaube Mann mit stieren Augen und weitgeöffnetem Munde dabei saß und nur aus den Bewegungen der streichenden Spieler entnehmen konnte, welche Stelle sie eben vorhatten. Wie er manchmal dem einen oder andern in den Arm fiel und ihm eine Phrase mit schrecklichem Ausdruck in unmöglichen Intervallen vorsang und dann, von den Gesichtern der Quartettisten ablesend, ob sie ihn verstanden hatten oder nicht ... Böhm war aber immer ehrlich genug, offen einzugestehen, daß weder er noch einer seiner Genossen—auch Schuppanzigh nicht ausgenommen—Beethovens Genius zu seinen Lebzeiten in dem Umfang erfaßt hätte, wie es nach seinem Tode der Fall war, als er sie nicht mehr mit seinen oft ganz unerfüllbaren Forderungen quälen konnte, sondern, zur Unsterblichkeit eingegangen, nur noch als unsichtbarer Geist über der Ausführung seiner Werke Wache hielt.’ Moser, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild*, ii. 288–90.

³⁹ *The Athenaeum*, 1124 (12 May 1849), 498.

instrument, but that which grips one, that which makes one go hot and cold, is missing—there is neither spirit nor fire in him, and that is bad, for no fine artistic future awaits him. Technically, he is entirely proficient—the other, who knows if that will come?!⁴⁰

While a May 1852 review refers to Joachim as ‘the enthusiastic worshipper of Beethoven’s genius, who interpreted, with kindred feeling, the enormous difficulties’ of Beethoven’s Op. 131 quartet,⁴¹ one searches Joachim’s letters in vain for evidence of a deep emotional connection to Beethoven’s works before his entry into the Arnim circle. Joachim’s published letters include only five references to Beethoven prior to September 1852, all of which are of a matter-of-fact nature (‘I am playing the Beethoven Concerto in Bremen, which I have not looked at for an eternity, and which I look forward to hearing.’⁴²). All the more extraordinary, then, is one of his earliest love letters to Gisela, containing the first iteration of the Gis-e-la motif that was to inform so many of his compositions:

In the night from the 6th to the 7th of December 1852.



What are we to make of this conflation? Here, amongst young Joseph's ardent romantic conceits, we surely hear Bettina's influence: the aspiration for transfiguration to a 'higher' existence, certainly, but also the memorializing impulse—the desire to create an 'eternal monument' to his joy. In this letter, at least, Gisela is to become his muse, as Bettina had already become his mentor; Gisela and Beethoven are to represent the ideals towards which he aspires, the epistrophe of his every thought.

Four days later, on 13 December, Joachim made his Berlin début, playing Beethoven's Violin Concerto with the orchestra of the Stern'schen Gesangverein. His inspired performance on that occasion drew many comments on the depth of his musicianship and the modesty of his appearance,⁴⁴ and prompted one of the most fanciful reviews of his long performing career. Writing in the *Nationalzeitung*, Otto Gumprecht imagined Joachim's identification with the composer to be such that as he played he became physically transformed into the very image of Beethoven: 'the stocky, carelessly clothed figure with the tousled hair standing on end, the high forehead, on which sublime thoughts had left their luminous mark, with the deep-set eyes, from which the boldest spirit and the warmest love of humanity peered forth; with the lips, about which pain had drawn its sharpest lines and folds'. With the last stroke of the bow, Gumprecht claimed, this vision vanished, and before him once again stood Joachim, 'who had played the entire concerto by heart, and who was released with a storm of applause such as this hall had probably never heard'. 'After the concert, it occurred to me that the greatest wonders of bravura had passed me by', Gumprecht wrote, 'but, during the performance, I had hardly noticed them, for here the virtuoso had completely merged with the artist' . . .⁴⁵

ALL GOOD THINGS. . .

At Christmastide,⁴⁶ Bettina invited Joachim and Bülow to spend several days with her family at their baronial estate at Wiepersdorf. In a letter to Baroness Claudine von Arnim, she exults in her conquest:

I have never seen the ocean—but a surging sea of music has overwhelmed me a thousandfold with its waves, and with each wave I have resurfaced healthier than before . . . for I am happy in this ocean-storm of music, and I desire only this from Fate, that you too may enjoy this foretaste of muse-heaven. . . . And my longing has been partially satisfied, for the messengers of this

ich in Weimar schrieb: Gisela und Beethoven—die ich nie aus meiner Seele stoßen werde so lange ich Kraft habe zu existieren.') Ibid. 135.

⁴⁴ 'His external appearance, the awkward, embarrassed way of presenting himself; the half-shy, half-sulky, and yet so winning physiognomy, all show that the outward world hardly touches him; that it is his art alone which engrosses him entirely. Even his success—and of course he excited a storm of approval, which from the audience of these concerts, the most intelligent in Berlin, is saying a great deal—he received with indifference.' *Süddeutsche Musik Zeitung* (review quoted in *The Musical World*, 31/8 (Saturday, 19 Feb., 1853), 110).

⁴⁵ 'Ich erkannte sie wol, diese gedrungene, nachlässig gekleidete Gestalt mit ihren wirren emporstehenden Haaren, der hohen Stirn, auf der die erhabensten Gedanken ihre leuchtenden Spuren hinterlassen, mit ihren tief liegenden Augen, aus denen der kühnste Geist und die wärmste Menschenliebe hervorschauten, mit den Lippen, um die der Schmerz seine schärfsten Linien und Falten gezogen.' 'Nach dem Concert fiel mir ein, daß zugleich die größten Wunder der Bravour an mir vorübergegangen . . . aber während des Spiels hatte ich dessen kaum acht, denn der Virtuos geht hier durchaus im Künstler auf, jener wird von diesem gedeckt.' 'Vor mir stand wieder Herr Joachim, der das ganze Concert auswendig gespielt hatte, und mit einem Beifallssturm wie ihn dieser Saal wol noch nie gehört, entlassen wurde.' Otto Gumprecht, *Neue Musikalische Charakterbilder* (Leipzig, 1876), 276–8. For a further discussion of this style of Beethoven reception, see Abigail Fine, 'Beethoven's Mask and the Physiognomy of Late Style', *19th-Century Music*, 43 (2020), 143–69.

⁴⁶ Whether, at this point, Bettina was aware that the blue-eyed blonde Joachim was Jewish is not known. Her description of him here as 'a Hungarian' makes one suspect that she was not.

muse-religion ... are prepared to accompany us to Wiepersdorf if we insist on it, and to stay for two days and make music until the walls throb. The fiddler, a boy of 20 years, is the first Hero and Diomedes⁴⁷ amongst violinists; a healthy-to-the-core enthusiasm surges up and pours forth from him, which refreshes and arouses new life-spirits, and springtime, full of swelling charm, exhaling its fragrance, pours forth from his playing; the nightingales stop their song when they hear it, for they are insatiable to hear him, and all are comforted—drunk with immortality ... This one is named Joachim, a Hungarian, works wonders on the violin, is a God-boy of simplicity, and worshipped by all who have ears to hear.— ... The second is the son of Frau von Bülow ... pupil of Liszt, and plays with Joachim the most beautiful things by Beethoven ...⁴⁸

‘Worshipped by all who have ears to hear’—in the language of this letter we encounter Bettina’s unorthodox and extended notion of the nature of ‘religion’, which united a wide range of aesthetic experience with a characteristic *Schwärmerei*⁴⁹ over people of genius. (Later in life, the devout Amy Fay admonished Bettina to consider her greying hair and her age, and to ‘read the Bible’, to which Bettina vehemently replied: ‘What, Bible! I am not at all a Christian. I’m a Greek!’).⁵⁰ Hers was an inclusive, restorative faith, to which all receptive spirits—even nightingales—belonged. For her, artists were its seers and priests, who spoke an oracle not of this world.⁵¹ For Joachim, raised in orthodox Judaism, this unconstrained understanding of religious experience surely came as a revelation, and could well have felt liberating.

The visit to Wiepersdorf did not happen. The company stayed in Weimar until 29 December, after which they departed for Leipzig. For Christmas, Bettina presented Joseph and Hans each with a crystal glass, inscribed with three names—Bettina, Armgart, and Gisela—accompanied by a verse, invoking the yearned-for permanence of ‘all good things’:

⁴⁷ The warrior in Homer’s *Iliad*, who by virtue of his prowess was offered immortality and was worshipped as a god.

⁴⁸ ‘Das Meer hab ich nie gesehen—aber ein wogendes Meer von Musik hat mich hier tausendfach in seinen Wellen begraben und mit jeder Welle bin ich gesunder wieder aufgetaucht ... denn ich bin glücklich in diesem Meeresbrausen von Musik, und nur dies einzige vom Schicksal verlange ich, daß Ihr auch einen Vorschmack des Musenhimmels davon haben möchtet. ... Und meine Sehnsucht ist teilweise erhört, denn die Boten dieser Musenreligion, Geiger und *Trommler (Klavier)* sind bereit, uns nach Wiepersdorf zu begleiten, wenn wirs verlangen, und dort zwei Tage zu weilen und Musik zu machen, daß die Wände dröhnen. Der Geiger, ein Bub von 20 Jahren, der erste Held und Diomedes unter den Geigern, eine kern-gesunde aufrauschende Begeisterung strömt aus ihm hervor und erfrischt und ruft neue Lebensgeister hervor und der Frühling voll schwellendem Reiz Duft hauchend strömt aus seinem Spiel, die Nachtigallen schweigen dazu, denn unersättlich sind sie ihn zu hören und allen wirds wohl—unsterblichkeitstrunken. ... Dieser Eine heißt *Joachim*, ist ein *Ungar*, tut Wunder auf der Violine, ist ein Götterknabe von Einfachheit und angebetet von allen, die Ohren haben zu hören ... der zweite ist der Sohn der Frau von Bülow ... Schüler des *Liszt* und spielt mit *Joachim* die schönsten Sachen von *Beethoven*.’ *Bettina von Arnim, Werke und Briefe*, ed. Joachim Müller, v (Frechen and Cologne, 1961), 463.

⁴⁹ Rapturous enthusiasm.

⁵⁰ ‘Was Beibel! Ich bin gar kein Christ, ich bin e Griech!’ Feodor Wehl, *Zeit und Menschen*, ii (Altona, 1889), 223. In a diary entry of 9 July 1854, Karl Varnhagen von Ense writes: ‘She said that there had never been a Christ such as the Church teaches; his existence was a fable, his teachings had already existed amongst the Indians and Egyptians, and that the actual Christendom had brought the world more harm than good ...’. ‘Sie meinte, es habe nie einen solchen Christus, wie ihn die Kirche lehrt, gegeben, sein Dasein sei eine Fabel, seine Lehre sei schon bei Indern und Aegyptern gewesen, und das thatsächliche Christenthum habe der Welt mehr Schaden als Heil gebracht ...’. *Tagebücher von K. A. Varnhagen von Ense*, ed. Ludmilla Assing, xi (Hamburg, 1869), 137.

⁵¹ ‘I understand the spirit better from Hölderlin’s views than from St. Clair’s instruction’, Bettina wrote. ‘To me, his words are as oracles which, as priest of the god, he calls out in frenzy, and certainly the ways of the world must seem insane to him, for he comprehends them not.’ ‘ich hab besser durch diese Anschauungen des Hölderlin den Geist gefaßt, als durch das wie mich St. Clair darüber belehrte. ... Mir sind seine Sprüche wie Orakelsprüche, die er als der Priester des Gottes im Wahnsinn ausruft, und gewiß ist alles Weltleben ihm gegenüber wahnsinnig, denn es begreift ihn nicht.’ Bettina von Arnim, *Die Günderröde* (Leipzig, 1904), 368–9.

In the midst of winter, a summer like,
 Whose thirst the frost does not with water slake,
 The fleeting rime bathes a crystal in light—
 Three names it draws, with festoon bright.
 How should they fade away
 When all good things should stay.
 . . . Bettine⁵²

The German saying is ‘aller guten Dinge sind drei’—‘all good things are three’. The English saying, of course, is ‘three’s a crowd’. Joseph’s infatuation with Gisela notwithstanding, Bettina’s interest in him was not to be gainsaid. In Joseph, Bettina found not only a receptive subject for her educational ministrations, but a brilliant young artist with the potential to represent to the world her original and passionate view of Beethoven.

We hear echoes of that impassioned understanding for the first time in a letter of 7 April 1853 that Joachim wrote to Woldemar Bargiel, accompanying the autograph score of his *Hamlet* overture, which he had dedicated to the members of the Weimar *Kapelle*:

Beethoven is here the eternal model (*Vorbild*); he was more than any other deeply acquainted with the human soul. He is the musical Shakespeare. . . . His themes live with his spiritual life as his only friends; they accompany him everywhere as trusted companions, and are, unbidden, imbued with the whole warmth of his rich emotional life. Thus, the diversity, the liveliness of the shapes that captivate us so wonderfully in his developments (development [*Durchführung*]: an ugly word; it should be called feeling through [*Durchfühlung*]!) that breathes from his works as if long familiar to us.⁵³

In the following month, Joachim again played the Beethoven concerto, in what would prove to be a defining event in his career.⁵⁴ The occasion was the 31st Lower Rhine Music Festival, held in Düsseldorf 15–17 May 1853, under the direction of Robert Schumann. At 22, Joseph was no longer a child prodigy, and the expectations he had to satisfy were daunting. Writing in 1897, Wilhelm von Wasielewski recalled:

He already enjoyed a widespread reputation in the musical world commensurate with his high artistic standing. It is therefore understandable that the musicians of the Rheinland, who had not yet had an opportunity to hear him, were extraordinarily curious about his accomplishments, but not in a wholly impartial way. Namely, it was supposed that his reputation was in part artificially created through partisanship, and to some extent exaggerated. His first appearance in the Rheinland was therefore awaited with a certain prejudice, seemingly as an opportunity for sizing him up in the most hypercritical way. Even the decent concertmaster

⁵² ‘Mitten im Winter der einem Sommer gleicht | Und dem der Frost, das Wasser nicht reicht | Sonnt angeflogen der Reif an einem Christale | Drei Namen zeichnet er mit hellem Schale | Wie sollen die verklungen | Bei allen guten Dingen | . . . Bettine’. Frankfurt, Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurter Goethemuseum, Signatur Hs-15690, Nachlass Forbes-Mosse.

⁵³ ‘Beethoven ist da ewiges Vorbild; er war mehr als irgend ein anderer, tiefer Kenner der menschlichen Seele. Er ist der musikalische Shakespeare. . . . Seine Themen leben als seine einzigen Freunde sein ganzes Seelenleben mit; sie begleiten ihn als Vertraute überall hin, und so prägt sich ihnen unwillkürlich die ganze Wärme seines reichen Empfindens ein. Daher die Mannigfaltigkeit, die Lebendigkeit der Gestaltungen, die uns so wunderbar an seine Durchführungen (Durchführung: ein häßlich Wort; es sollte Durchfühlung heißen!) fesselt, die uns so altegeant aus seinen Werken entgegenathmet!’ Joachim, *Briefe* i. 46–7.

⁵⁴ See Robert W. Eshbach, *The 31st Lower Rhine Music Festival*, https://josephjoachim.com/2014/09/22/the-31st-lower-rhine-music-festival/#_ednref13.

Hartmann from Cologne, who led the festival orchestra, was to some extent disfavouredly influenced by this attitude.⁵⁵

Joachim's performance of the Beethoven Concerto that day was not simply a triumph of virtuosity—it seems to have been a further milestone in the depth and maturity of his musicianship. 'During the *Larghetto*, poetically animated by the soloist, many became misty-eyed with emotion, and even the worthy concertmaster Hartmann was so overcome that bright tears ran down his cheeks', wrote Wasielewski.⁵⁶ Clara Schumann, who performed in the same concert, afterwards recalled:

Joachim was the glory of the evening. Though the rest of us also got applause to be sure . . . Joachim won the victory over us all with the Beethoven concerto—but he also played with a perfection, and with such deep poetry, with such soul in each little note, really ideal, that I have never heard such violin playing, and I can truly say that I have never received such an unforgettable impression from a virtuoso. And how the great work was accompanied—with what perfection! It was as if a holy devotion possessed the whole orchestra.⁵⁷

Carl Reineke, who had known and performed with Joachim since they made their concurrent Leipzig Gewandhaus débuts in November 1843, was present on the occasion, and recalled the event many years later:

What a different person, how much greater he had become in the meantime. Once an acolyte of virtuosity, now a priest of art. He played the Beethoven violin concerto, hitherto unapproached by any interpretation, and recognized in its full greatness only from that moment on, since Joachim made it his own. Like a youthful hero, nobly, but modestly, he appeared on the podium. . . . It is an idle thing to describe such consummate playing. But even today, after fifty-six years, I remember clearly that I stole through the loneliest walks of the court gardens to relive this artistic event inwardly.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ 'Er genoß bereits einen seinem hohen künstlerischen Range entsprechenden ausgebreiteten Ruf in der musikalischen Welt. Begreiflicherweise waren daher die rheinischen Musiker, welche noch keine Gelegenheit gehabt hatten, ihn zu hören, auf seine Leistungen außerordentlich gespannt, jedoch in nicht ganz unbefangenen Sinne. Man vermeinte nämlich, Joachims Ruf sei zum Teil ein durch Parteiwesen künstlich gemachter und einigermaßen übertrieben. Mit einem gewissen Vorurteil erwartete man daher sein erstes Auftreten in den Rheinlanden, allem Anschein nach, um ihm möglichst scharf auf die Finger zu sehen. Auch der biedere Kölner Konzertmeister Hartmann, welcher bei dem Feste als Vorgeiger fungirte, war dadurch einigermaßen im ungünstigen Sinne beeinflusst worden.' Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, *Aus siebzig Jahren: Lebenserinnerungen* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1897), 80.

⁵⁶ 'Während des vom Solospieler poesievoll besetzten *Larghetto*s aber wurde vor innerer Bewegung gar manches Auge feucht, und auch des braven Konzertmeisters Hartmann bemächtigte sich eine solche Ergriffenheit, daß ihm die hellen Thränen von den Wangen herabträufelten.' *Ibid.* 81.

⁵⁷ Joachim war die Krone des Abends. Haben wir andern auch wohl Beifall gehabt, wurde auch mir von seiten des Orchesters nach Roberts Konzert ein Lorbeerkrantz und großer Beifall von Publikums Seite, so errang doch Joachim mit dem Beethovenschen Konzert den Sieg über uns alle—er spielte aber auch mit einer Vollendung und einer so tiefen Poesie, so ganz Seele in jedem Tönchen, wirklich idealisch, daß ich nie solch Violinspiel gehört, und ich kann wohl sagen, nie von einem Virtuosen solch einen unvergesslichen Eindruck empfangen habe. Und wie wurde das genial Werk begleitet, mit welcher Vollendung! Es war, als beherrsche das ganze Orchester eine heilige Andacht.' Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben*, ii. 278. To Hermann Härtel, she wrote [19 May]: Joachim played the Beethoven concerto with a perfection such as I have hardly heard from a violinist, with such genius, so nobly, so simply and yet moving to the core! He also received an ovation such as I have never yet experienced; was deluged with flowers, and then played the Chaconne of Bach as an encore.' Joachim spielte das Beethoven'sche Concert mit einer Vollendung, wie ich kaum jemals einen Geiger gehört, so genial, so nobel, so einfach und doch bis in's Innerste ergreifend! er fand aber auch einen Beifall, wie ich noch nie einen erlebt habe, wurde mit Blumen überschüttet, und spielte dann noch die Ciaconne von Bach.' '... daß Gott mir ein Talent geschenkt': *Clara Schumanns Briefe an Hermann Härtel und Richard und Helene Schöne*, ed. Monica Steegmann (Zurich, 1997), 105.

⁵⁸ 'Welch ein anderer, größerer war er inzwischen geworden. Einst Gefolgsmann der Virtuosität, jetzt Priester der Kunst. Er spielte das Beethovensche Violinkonzert, das bis dahin von keiner Interpretation erreichte, welches erst von dem Augenblicke an, da Joachim es sich zu eigen machte, in seiner ganzen Größe erkannt worden ist. Wie ein jugendlicher Held, vornehm, aber anspruchslos, erschien er auf dem Podium. . . . Es ist ein müßiges Beginnen, so ein vollendetes Spiel mit Worten zu beschreiben. Aber noch heute, nach sechsundfünfzig Jahren, erinnere ich mich deutlich, daß ich nach diesem Vortrage mich in die einsamsten Gänge des Hofgartens schlich, um ungestört dieses

These accounts and others reveal that, from the time of his first acquaintance with the Arnim women, Joachim experienced a conspicuous personal and artistic transformation from virtuoso performer and composer of virtuoso works⁵⁹ to interpreter of an artistic canon centred on Beethoven. What struck contemporary observers about Joachim's playing was the pronounced deepening of qualities that Karen Leistra-Jones has associated with the developing ideal of authenticity⁶⁰—the profound personal identification of performer with composer; faithfulness, not just to the letter, but to the spirit of the art work, and a disinclination towards personal display that was universally read as evidence of honesty, integrity, and a concern for spiritual truth. These values are of course inseparable from a belief in the composer as mediator and interpreter of a 'higher world of knowledge', and in the art work as the universal and lasting embodiment of that reality as viewed, in Spinoza's term, *sub specie aeternitatis* ('from the aspect of eternity'), not subject to the vagaries of fashion or notions of artistic 'progress'.⁶¹ Such a belief inevitably results in the creation of an elevating myth, such as we see in Bettina's veneration for Goethe, Beethoven, Hölderlin, and even Liszt, before she perceived him as having feet of clay. From the early 1850s on, Joachim's moral authority, as well as his universally acknowledged identity as a 'priest of art' and the 'composer's voice', would be rooted in, and dependent on, the nineteenth-century Beethoven cult that Bettina had helped to create.⁶²

These virtues of musicianship and character were, to some extent, innate in Joachim; however, from 1853 onwards they came to define his artistry as a violinist and composer, as well as his consciously crafted public persona. That they became a deeply held creed and not merely a public image is evident from his extensive correspondence, as well as an 1858 letter that Gisela wrote to Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Joseph Joachim, a fiery musician quite steeped in Bethoven [*sic*], would take your heart forever with the first stroke of his violin bow. He plays Bethoven as if he had lived him. No one else can do it like that. There is a strength, a power and yet so deep a warmth in his tone that it is as if one were wounded by a true hero, right in the heart, and instantly healed by the heavenly oil of the best Samaritan, with a gentle warmth. He does not speak cleverly and wittily, but his silent gesture makes one love him—if he only enters a room, one feels that he is great and good, and that wherever he goes he is penetrated with the deepest [concerns].⁶³

künstlerische Ereignis noch einmal in meinem Innern zu durchleben.' Carl Reinecke, *Erlebnisse und Bekenntnisse*, ed. Doris Mundus (Leipzig, 2005), 261–2.

⁵⁹ See esp. ch. 1, 'Virtuosity Uncoiled: Two Fantasies Rediscovered', in Uhde, *The Music of Joseph Joachim*.

⁶⁰ See Karen Leistra-Jones, 'Staging Authenticity: Joachim, Brahms, and the Politics of *Werktreue* Performance', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 66 (2013), 397–436.

⁶¹ Did Bettina read Spinoza? Katherine Goodman finds it plausible. (Frederiksen and Goodman, *Bettina Brentano von Arnim*, 134–5.) We know from Feodor Wehl (13 Aug. 1854) that Joachim read Spinoza while living under Bettina's roof. It is dangerous to try to prove the provenance of ideas; nevertheless, one can say with confidence that the notion of the timelessness of truth was coin of the realm in the extended Arnim circle.

⁶² Bülow's famous formulation, the 'three B's' of music, was a conscious attempt to annex this quasi-religious persuasion on behalf of his friend Brahms, as were Joachim's numerous efforts on behalf of Brahms's works.

⁶³ Joseph Joachim ein feuriger Musiker ganz durch drungen von Bethoven,—würde Ihr Herz mit dem ersten Bogenstrich seiner Violine für immer einnehmen, er spielt Bethoven so als hätte er ihn durchlebt, es kann es niemand in gleicher Weise. Es liegt eine Kraft eine Gewalt und doch eine so innige Wärme in seinem Ton, das es einem ist als bekäme man von einem rechten Helden so eine Wunde mitten ins Herz, und zugleich heilte es das himmlische Öl des besten Samariters mit sanfter Gluth zusammen. Er spricht nicht gewandt und geistreich, aber seine stumme Bewegung reißt zur Liebe hin—wenn er nur ins Zimmer tritt fühlt man er ist groß und gut und wo er geht und steht vom Tifsten durchdrungen.' Gisela von Arnim to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Berlin, 9 Dec. 1858, in *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 25/4 (1977), 435–6; The holograph can be found in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

As Beethoven's works became the touchstone for generations of composers, so Joachim's way of interpreting them became the model for generations of violinists. According to Eugène Ysaÿe, the mature Joachim played Beethoven's Violin Concerto

so well that he now seems part of it. It was he . . . who showed it to the world as a masterpiece. Without his ideal interpretation the work might have been lost among those compositions which are placed on one side and forgotten. He revived it, transfigured it, increased its measure. It was a consecration, a sort of Bayreuth on a reduced scale, in which tradition was perpetuated and made beautiful and strong . . . Joachim's interpretation was as a mirror in which the power of Beethoven was reflected.⁶⁴

DOMESTIC DISPUTES

Joachim's six-year association with Bettina played a critical role in his personal, as well as artistic, maturation. As one might expect, he felt a strong sense of social inferiority to the Arnims, exacerbated by the adolescent insecurity of first love. Nevertheless, in a letter to Bettina's daughter Armgart from May 1854 he was able to turn Bettina's argument about the ideal and its manifestation to his own defence: 'You called me "less noble" than you had thought: if, by this expression, you mean a lack of experience and clarity in me (I am obliged to admit) you are correct—but if the essence of nobility concerns the spontaneous harmony of action with our spiritual condition, then you do me a grave injustice.'⁶⁵

Here and there, we also have hints of friction between Joachim and Bettina. In a letter to Gisela, Joseph writes with alarm:

Recently, your mother frightened me with the sudden exclamation: 'You seem, my boy, to believe you are completely beyond Beethoven', as if one would feel nothing at such a thing coming from her mouth! Since then, I can no longer think that anything I might say would have the slightest worth for her. And yet, one should not take her too literally—such a thing is momentary, but with me, impressions remain all too easily.⁶⁶

When Joseph was not visiting in the Arnim's home, he and Bettina carried on an extensive correspondence. The Wiepersdorf library, including Bettina's letters and unpublished manuscripts, was auctioned off in 1929. Many of the items found their way into the Freies Deutsches Hochstift in Frankfurt or the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. However, a priceless, confessional, collection of twenty-seven letters from Joachim to Bettina—from 1853 to 1856, 110 pages in all, in which he signs himself 'Jussuph', 'Joseph Joachim', 'Benjamin',⁶⁷ and 'Benjamin J. Joachim'—was sold, disappeared, and has not resurfaced. All that remains are excerpts from the Henrici auction catalog

⁶⁴ Quoted in Robin Stowell, *Beethoven: Violin Concerto* (Cambridge, 1998), 36.

⁶⁵ 'Sie nannten mich "weniger edel" als Sie gedacht: wenn Sie mit dem Ausdruck einen Mangel an Erfahrung und Klarheit in mir bezeichnen wollten (ich bin das zu bekennen schuldig) so hatten Sie recht—wenn aber das Wesen des Adels in der rücksichtlosen Harmonie des Handelns mit unserm seelischen zustande beschafft so thaten Sie mir großer Unrecht.' Frankfurt, Freies Deutsches Hochstift, Frankfurter Goethemuseum, Signatur HS-14526, Nachlass Forbes-Mosse.

⁶⁶ [20 Apr. 1856] 'Neulich erschreckte mich Deine Mutter mit dem plötzlichen zuruf: "Über den Beethoven aber glaubst Du Kerlchen ganz hinaus zu sein" als ob man bei so etwas aus ihrem Munde gar nichts empfände! Ich kann mir seiddem gar nicht mehr denken, daß noch irgend etwas was ich ihr sage den geringsten Werth für sie haben sollte. Und doch darf man's mit ihr nicht genau nehmen—so etwas ist momentan, bei mir aber haften Eindrücke nur zu leicht.' *Joseph Joachims Briefe an Gisela von Arnim*, 92.

⁶⁷ Here, the Jewish reference is explicit: the biblical Benjamin was the last-born of Jacob's thirteen children, as Joseph Joachim was the last-born of his parents' seven. Benjamin was the brother of the biblical Joseph.

No. 155 of 5 July 1929. The sale included, among other things, a music manuscript for violin and piano dated Hanover, 23 March 1853 and eight pages of aphorisms from 10 August 1853—‘*Kleine Sätze für Mich*’ (‘Little Sentences for Me’)—some of which also found their way into Brahms’s *Schatzkästlein*.⁶⁸ Written in this time of spiritual, amorous, and artistic crisis, the maxims show Bettina’s influence and the self-searching, quasi-religious ethos characteristic of the Berlin salon: ‘Artists must not be servants, but priests of the public’, he writes. ‘Only he is a true artist for whom life intervenes to exalt, for whom art is not a jewel that can be worn or removed at will.’ And an intriguing admonition: ‘We must beware that the spirit of a beloved genius does not become the flame by which we poor butterflies, fluttering about, perish.’⁶⁹

In an undated letter, Joachim writes to Bettina with the familiar ‘*Du*’:

I can no longer endure this dreadful loneliness, which has inhabited me more and more since our separation, which nothing can pull me out of. . . . It was a dreary time; do not ask me now what caused it. Perhaps later I will tell you about it unbidden . . . —and who knows whether you will even want to hear me—it was very impolite, ill-mannered, I know full well; but should I dissemble with a false nature towards the one being from whom it would really hurt me not to be recognized, for whom I wish to be free and open, completely myself, or nothing at all—just out of the demands of politeness? You would not be Bettine if you replied with other than ‘no’. I know it—you will belong to me again, write to me again: and shall I say to you what makes me so certainly joyful: the little green branch that sits before me in your Christmas glass. . . .⁷⁰

All good things may be three, but Bettina’s passion for her God-boy also caused occasional familial friction with her daughter Gisela. In September 1853 Gisela wrote to her sister Maxe:

Mother appeared with a letter, in which Joachim expressed the desire to come here, despite the fact that I had tried to dissuade him. I begged Mother to refrain under any circumstance—the consequence will be nighttime strolls in the moonlight, the craziest excitement, which, if I am there, will be intensified by the utmost jealousy, because Mother likes to speak alone with her friends.—Mother did not let herself be dissuaded, so I asked her if I could go two days early to visit you in Bonn and she agreed rather good-naturedly, since she had prevailed in letting him come, which I was so much against—I believe I am doing something good with this, because it will prevent Mother from sitting here with Joachim for a month and when he comes here on the 6th or 7th from the music festival,⁷¹ which will be

⁶⁸ Published as *The Brahms Notebooks: The Little Treasure Chest of the Young Kreisler*, ed. Carl Krebs, trans. Agnes Eisenberger (Hillsdale, NY, 2003).

⁶⁹ ‘Künstler sollen nicht *Diener*, sondern *Priester* des Publikums sein.’—‘Nur der ist echter Künstler, bei dem das Leben verherrlichend eingreift, dem die Kunst kein Geschmeide ist, das er nach Belieben um- und abhängt—‘Wir müssen uns hüten, dass der Geist eines geliebten Genius nicht für uns zur Flamme werde, an der wir armen Schmetterlinge im Umflattern untergehe(n).’ Karl Ernst Henrici, *Versteigerungskatalog 155*, Berlin: am 5 July 1929, 59. The similarity of these ‘*kleine Sätze*’ to those which appear in Brahms’s *Schatzkästlein*, and their proximity to aphorisms by Bettina, may be of use in dating the entries in Brahms’s book.

⁷⁰ ‘Nicht länger kann ich sie ertragen, diese fürchterliche Einsamkeit, in die ich mich seit unserer Trennung immer mehr hineingelebt, aus der mich nichts heraus zu reißen vermochte! . . . Es war eine trübe Zeit; frage mich jetzt nicht, was sie veranlasst hat. Vielleicht später einmal erzähle ich Dir’s ungefragt. . . und wer weiss, ob Du mich überhaupt noch hören magst, es war recht unhöflich, ungesittet, ich weiss es wohl; aber sollte ich den einzigen Wesen gegenüber, von denen ich nicht erkannt zu sein mir recht weh thun würde, denen ich frei und offen, ganz ich selbst, oder gar nicht sein will, auch ein geborgtes Wesen vorheucheln, um einer Höflichkeitsforderung zu genügen. Du wärst nicht Bettine, wolltest Du mit keinem “Nein” darauf antworten. Ich weiss es, Du wirst mir wieder angehören, mir wieder schreiben; und soll ich Dir es sagen, was mich dessen so freudig gewiss macht: das grüne Aestchen, das in Eurem WeihnachtsGlase vor mir steht. . . .’ Henrici, *Versteigerungskatalog 155*, 59.

⁷¹ The Karlsruhe Music Festival, 3–5 Oct.

ending then, he will stay for 2 days and then take Mother and Armgart to Bonn; ... Mother would have J[Joachim] alone, and therefore not feel that it is exactly necessary for her to feel such a great friendship for him—since he is just too simple to share so many of her interests.⁷²

Joachim was just returning from the October music festival in Karlsruhe, a jovial gathering of the Weimar school, at which he played his own Concerto in G Minor, Op. 3 under Liszt's direction.⁷³ Later that month, there occurred another convivial gathering, this one in Düsseldorf with the Schumanns, after which Joseph's relationship with Liszt would begin to come under stress.

THE BREAK WITH LISZT

Joachim had known the Schumanns tangentially since he was a child, but they grew close only at the time of the 31st Lower Rhine Music Festival in May 1853, cited above.⁷⁴ Joachim met Brahms shortly thereafter, and that summer the two became fast friends as housemates in Göttingen. On Joachim's recommendation, Brahms first visited the Schumanns on 30 September in Düsseldorf, and in late October they were joined by Joseph, Bettina and Gisela, Albert Dietrich, and the artist Jean-Joseph-Bonaventure Laurens. This autumn meeting is one of the most famous events in the history of the era; it was then that Gisela, dressed in traditional costume, presented Joachim with the score to the FAE sonata, jointly composed by Schumann, Dietrich, and Brahms. On 28 October, in a provocative act, Schumann introduced his new-found friend Brahms to the musical world in the pages of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, concluding his article ('Neue Bahnen') with the words 'There is at all times a secret league of kindred spirits. Close the circle tightly, you who belong to it, that the truth of art may shine ever brighter, spreading joy and blessings to all'⁷⁵—and indeed, their autumn company had closed a tight circle, forming amongst themselves a kind of anti-Liszt coterie.

⁷² 'Liszt hat uns nach Carlsruh eingeladen, ich schlug es zurück; gleich darauf erschien die Mutter mit einem Brief, worin Joachim den Wunsch aussprach, hierher zu kommen, trotzdem ich ihm davon abraten lassen. Ich bat die Mutter unter jeder Bedingung es zu unterlassen, die Folge davon wird Nachspazierung im Mondschein sein, die tollste Aufregung, die sich, wenn ich da bin, durch die höchste Eifersucht steigert, weil Mutter gern allein mit ihren Freunden spricht.—Die Mutter ließ sich es sich nicht ausreden, ich bat sie daher, daß ich die zwei Tage früher zu Dir nach Bonn gehen dürfte, und sie gab es ziemlich freundlich zu, da sie sein Kommen, gegen das ich so sehr war, durchgesetzt.—Ich glaube, ich tue dadurch etwas Gutes, denn es wird die Mutter verhindern, mit Joachim hier einen Monat sitzen zu bleiben, und er wird dann, wenn er am 6ten oder 7ten her kömmt vom Musikfest, das dann endet,—2 Tage bleiben und Mutter und Armgart nach Bonn bringen; ich mache dann der Mutter hier keinen Kummer und ihm auch nicht, denn ich würde so zurückhaltend sein, daß ich kein Wort mit ihm spreche,—drittens muß ich dir ehrlich sagen, ist meine Gesundheit zu schlecht, um Sturm auszuhalten. . . ; viertens wird die Mutter J allein haben, und also fühlen, daß es nicht grade nötig für sie ist, eine so große Freundschaft für ihn zu fühlen,—da er doch zu einfach ist, um so viele Interessen von ihr zu teilen.' Eva Mey, *Ich gleiche einem Stern um Mitternacht: Die Schriftstellerin Gisela von Arnim Tochter Bettinas und Gattin Herman Grimms* (Stuttgart, 2004), 76–7.

⁷³ Not the 'Hungarian' Concerto, Op. 11, as Alan Walker claims. The 'Hungarian', dedicated to Brahms, was written in 1857 and published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1861. See Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt, ii: The Weimar Years, 1848–1861* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), 288.

⁷⁴ See Robert W. Eshbach, 'Schumann as Mentor: Joseph Joachim's "Blick auf Schumann"', *Die Tonkunst*, 4 (2010), 352–66.

⁷⁵ 'Es waltet in jeder Zeit ein geheimes Bündnis verwandter Geister. Schließt, die Ihr zusammengehört, den Kreis fester, daß die Wahrheit der Kunst immer klarer leuchte, überall Freude und Segen verbreitend.' *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 18 (28 Oct. 1853), 185–6. See Norbert Meurs, *Neue Bahnen? Aspekte der Brahms-Rezeption 1853–1868* (Cologne, 1996), esp. 29 ff. 'Der Akzent liegt somit eindeutig auf dem Aspekt des Wahren, der Kust als Offenbarung.'

Bettina's presence at this October gathering is usually passed over without special notice (Borchard does not mention it in her biography, for example). Yet one is hard-pressed to imagine any get-together in which Bettina would have been a retiring presence, and she surely took energetic part in the discussions concerning Liszt. At that time, Bettina seems to have abandoned her enthusiasm for Liszt, perhaps responding to Clara's warmly dismissive view of his musicianship, his histrionics, his *Effekthascherei*, his mutability in the face of 'eternal', 'sacred' art—in short, his willingness, as he himself once admitted, to 'string the piano differently for the public than for connoisseurs, in order to make an impression'.⁷⁶

Returning to Weimar that November, Bettina picked a quarrel with Liszt. Peter Cornelius reported incredulously of these two illustrious persons that they fell to arguing over the merits of Goethe vs Schiller. Bettina called Liszt 'Jesuitical'.⁷⁷ When she saw him next, a year later, she immediately greeted him with the words 'and are you still the same old Jesuit?' and their argument resumed where it had left off. According to Cornelius, Bettina said: 'You call yourself my friend, but you are not.' Liszt shot back 'Umgekehrt!'—'On the contrary.' As she left, Bettina said to him: 'I will not see you again! I will not see you again today, not tomorrow—never again!'⁷⁸ Bettina's decisive break with Liszt was something that Joachim, in awe of her and obsessively in love with her daughter, could not easily ignore.

Personal loyalties and affections surely played a significant part in Joachim's ultimate defection from the Weimar circle. More significantly, perhaps, the Schumanns' fellowship and Bettina's mentorship raised for him an underlying artistic/philosophical issue that caused him to re-evaluate his devotion to Liszt and his disciples: whether one believed in art works as timeless revelations of transcendent, universal truth, seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, or whether one considered them to be temporally and situationally bound—subject to the dialectical forces of progress.

Schumann's well-known grievance against Liszt seems to have arisen from just such an argument—an early, bitter dispute over the Leipzig legacy and the future of German music in the wake of Mendelssohn's death.⁷⁹ In 1854, three weeks before his attempted suicide, Schumann wrote to Richard Pohl, who, under the pseudonym 'Hoplit', was one of the principal propagandists for the 'progressive' cause:

Since we have become close through long acquaintance, I will gladly get straight to the point and tell the truth, as my conscience compels me. I had no idea that you were 'Hoplit'. For I do not particularly harmonize with his and his party's Liszt–Wagnerian enthusiasm. Those whom they take to be musicians of the future I consider musicians of the present, and those whom they take as musicians of the past (Bach, Handel, Beethoven) seem to me the best

⁷⁶ 'Als die Zuhörer ihre Verwunderung darüber laut werden liessen, erwiderte er ohne Scheu, dem Publikum gegenüber müsse man andere Saiten aufziehen als den Kunstgenossen, um Eindruck zu erzielen.' Unpublished transcript of a memoir by Ernst Rudorff (excerpt), Brahms-Institut Lübeck ABH 6.3.106. See transcription and partial translation: <https://josephjoachim.com/2019/01/15/ernst-rudorff-on-joachim-and-liszt-2/>.

⁷⁷ As an insult, this means the same in German as it does in English: clever, but dissembling—casuistic—mutable in one's approach to truth.

⁷⁸ 'Bettina sagte unter anderem: Du nennst Dich meinen Freund, bist es aber nicht. Liszt antwortete: umgekehrt!—Kurz beim Abschied sagte sie zu ihm: Ich seh' Dich nicht mehr! Ich seh' Dich heut' nicht mehr, morgen nicht mehr, niemals mehr!' Peter Cornelius, *Literarische Werke*, ed. Carl Maria Cornelius, i (Leipzig, 1904), 181.

⁷⁹ Their dispute—an argument over Liszt's clumsy comparison of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer—came to an actual physical confrontation between the two men, and led to a rupture in their friendship that was never fully healed. Liszt tried his best to placate Schumann, but the incident was insulting in a way that neither Robert nor Clara Schumann could ever forgive. See Eshbach, 'Schumann as Mentor'. See also Robert W. Eshbach, 'A very agitated evening', <https://josephjoachim.com/2014/09/26/a-very-agitated-evening/>.

musicians of the future. I can never regard spiritual beauty in its most beautiful form as ‘a superseded standpoint’ [‘einen überwundenen Standpunkt’]. Does R. Wagner possess this [beauty]? And what of Liszt’s genial achievements—where are they hiding? In his desk, perhaps? Does he perhaps wish to wait for the future because he fears he is not understood now? I cannot harmonize with this Lisztian enthusiasm.⁸⁰

What Schumann was objecting to here (his use of the term ‘superseded standpoint’ is telling) was specifically the Hegelian notion of teleological progress as applied to music. At the time of their early quarrel, Liszt had implied that Mendelssohn’s compositions were already ‘rococo’ and had dismissed Schumann’s piano quintet as ‘Leipzigerisch’ (by which he meant pedantic and outmoded). Schumann’s unstated fear, in his hour of great personal and psychic distress, was surely that his own legacy—his music and his writings—would soon also be viewed as expressions of a ‘superseded standpoint’.

For Joachim, this internecine strife had agonizing personal implications which arose out of divided loyalties to friends and mentors on both sides of the argument. That he turned to Bettina in his perplexity and followed her guidance in his ultimate turn against Liszt is made explicit in the authorized work written by Andreas Moser:

It must have been a great relief to Joachim to find in Bettina von Arnim a kindred spirit to whom he could confide his conscientious scruples, and with whom he could talk earnestly, and openly discuss his artistic creed. To her he admitted his inability to adopt Liszt’s views, as quite irreconcilable with his own ideals, and also the impossibility of finding satisfaction in morbid and fantastic art, which unnaturally strove to illustrate subjects quite beyond the range of instrumental music. . . . Bettina von Arnim so encouraged Joachim in his views that he gradually mastered his conflicting feelings.⁸¹

Liszt was well aware of the influence that the Schumann circle, including Bettina, had on Joachim’s loyalty. He acknowledged as much in a pathetic letter to Joachim, just weeks before Schumann’s death (Weimar, 10 July 1856):

These few words should recall to you my true, heartfelt, and deeply respectful friendship, dearest Joachim. If others of your close friends should seek to call this friendship into question, then let their efforts be in vain—let us remain faithful and true, as befits a pair of fellows like us. . . . Now, *Saprament*, if you do not still know that you are dear to me, then the Devil take your fiddle!⁸²

Both Joachim and Bettina were present in the events surrounding Schumann’s final illness. They were amongst the few to visit Schumann at the sanatorium in Eendenich, when even Clara was kept away. Bettina’s vigorously voiced disapproval of Schumann’s care was a cause of distress to Clara, and is today seen by many as unwarranted meddling.⁸³ Joachim was deeply affected by Schumann’s illness and death. As he wrote to his parents:

⁸⁰ Quoted in R. Larry Todd (ed.), *Schumann and his World* (Princeton, 2014), 259–63 (my translation based upon the translation by John Michael Cooper). Original letter in the Morgan Library, New York, Mary Flagler Cary Collection, MFC S3925.P748.

⁸¹ Moser, *Joseph Joachim: A Biography*, 107.

⁸² ‘Diese paar Worte sollen dir nur meine wahre, innige und verehrungsvolle Freundschaft wieder in’s Gedächtniss rufen Liebster Joachim. Sollten auch andere Deiner Dir Näherstehenden bemüht gewesen sein diese Freundschaft dir zu verargwohnen, so laß Ihre Mühe eine vergebene gewesen sein—und bleiben wir uns stets getreu und wahrhaftig wie es so ein paar Kerle unsrer Sorte geziemt! . . . Nun Saprament wenn du noch nicht weißt daß Du mir Lieb bist so hole der Kukuck deine Geige!’ Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Goethe- und Schiller- Archiv, GSA 59/ 70, 1.

⁸³ See Bernard R. Appel, *Robert Schumann in Eendenich* (Mainz, 2006), 276–7, 290 n. 969; Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben*, ii. 375–6.

Of course, Schumann's condition in recent years has been such that, even as a friend, one wished for a release from the gloomy world that tormented the master; nevertheless, with his death it has become doubly palpable for me how much I have lost of pure benevolence, of encouraging sympathy for my artistic activities. You have no idea how loving, how gentle, how intelligent Sch. was—as a man and as a musician—in his interactions with honestly striving people of good will. Also, how in his never-resting diligence he was a true role model, whose whole significance is written in my heart for life.⁸⁴

In the immediate aftermath of Schumann's death, the grieving Joachim went to visit Bettina in Berlin, staying with her for more than a month.

The following year, Joachim decisively broke with Liszt. 'Even in the time of my greatest enthusiasm for Liszt', he told Ernst Rudorff, 'I never heard him play in such a way that, in the innermost corner of my being, the voice of conscience did not object.'⁸⁵ In the company of Bettina and the Schumanns, Joseph came to accept their view of Liszt as a poseur—a purveyor of empty effects. This view extended especially to his assessment of Liszt as a composer. His famous *Absagebrief*, the letter to Liszt in which he permanently divorced himself from the Weimar circle, is usually read merely as an expression of his well-known distaste for Liszt's music—which it is in part. What is overlooked, however, is the basis of his argument, which is essentially the same as Schumann's in the letter to Pohl; an argument that Bettina reinforced, as he himself declared. In his letter, Joachim speaks of the forced relinquishment of cherished *Vorbilder*—canonic models—foremost among which would have been for him the music of Beethoven and Bach. He writes:

I am completely unresponsive to your music; it contradicts everything which from my early youth I have taken as mental nourishment from the spirit of our great masters. Were it possible to imagine that I could ever be robbed of, that I should ever have to relinquish, that which I have learned to love and honour in their creations, that which I feel to be music, your sounds would not fill for me any of the vast and annihilating desolation.⁸⁶

In November, 1857, not long after Joachim's letter to Liszt, Clara Schumann wrote to Woldemar Bargiel:

I had beautiful days in Dresden with Joachim, who played more beautifully, more wonderfully than ever. His tones often sounded celestial! Indeed, I never hear the man without feeling uplifted. . . . Liszt's meeting with him shows clearly that the two of them cannot get along for one more minute (artistically, that goes without saying), I mean personally. . . . Once, when

⁸⁴ 'Schumanns Zustand war freilich in den letzten Jahren so gewesen, daß man eine Erlösung aus der trüben Welt die den Meister quälte, selbst als Freund wünschte, dennoch ward mir mit dem Tode erst doppelt fühlbar wie viel ich an reinem Wohlwollen an fördernder Theilnahme für mein künstlerisches thun verloren! Sie haben keine Idee wie liebevoll, wie mild, wie geistig Sch. als Mensch wie als Musiker gegen Reinstrebende Gutes Wollende im Umgang war. Auch darin wie im nimmer ruhenden Fleiß ein wahres Vorbild, deßen ganze Bedeutung mir für meine Lebens-Zeit ins Herz geschrieben ist.' Unpublished MS, London, British Library, Joachim Correspondence, bequest of Agnes Keep, Add. MS 42718.

⁸⁵ 'Joachim hatte mir gegenüber einmal die Aeussderung getan: "Auch in der Zeit meiner höchsten Schwärmeri für Liszt habe ich ihn niemals so spielen hören, dass nicht im geheimsten Winkel meines Inneren die Stimme der Gewissens Einspruch dagegen erhoben hätte".' Lübeck, *Brahms Institut Lübeck*, Teilnachlass Joseph Joachim / Sammlung Hofmann Sign: Joa : D2 : 4 Inv. Nr. ABH 6.3.106.

⁸⁶ 'Ich bin Deiner Musik gänzlich unzugänglich; sie widerspricht Allem, was mein Fassungsvermögen aus dem Geist unserer Großen seit früher Jugend als Nahrung sog. Wäre es denkbar, daß mir je geraubt würde, daß ich je dem entsagen müßt', was ich aus ihren Schöpfungen lieben und verehren lernte, was ich als Musik empfinde, Deine Klänge würden mir nichts von der ungeheuren, vernichtenden Öde ausfüllen.' Joachim and Moser, *Briefe von und an Joseph Joachim*, i. 442.

Schneider played glorious things on the organ, the most beautiful pieces of Bach, and Joachim exclaimed ‘what divine music’, Liszt replied: ‘Hm, bones!’ Joachim to that: ‘Listen here, I prefer that to gelatin.’ Liszt disappeared quickly thereafter.⁸⁷

DOMESTIC DEVOTIONS

In the years of his twenties Joseph visited the Arnims often in Berlin, frequently staying for weeks or months at a time,⁸⁸ and playing nearly every evening for Bettina and her guests. Bettina’s daughter Maxe recalled c.1857: ‘Her favourite was music, which she offered to her faithful friends, who well knew what a gift she gave them in so doing.’⁸⁹ Joachim, who often came over from Hanover, [Count Albert von] Flemming with his cello, the highly gifted pianist Ernst Rudorff, a grandson of the old *Geheimrat* Pistor . . . among others. Occasionally, a quartet was formed. Then, Mother sat near the door in her dark room, and listened to the music in the parlor, while her thoughts reverted fifty years to the time when she had been close to Beethoven himself.⁹⁰ (See [Pl. 2](#).)

Carl Johann Arnold’s c.1854–6 watercolour ‘Quartettabend bei Bettina’ is a famous and much-interpreted representation of such a gathering at Bettina’s Berlin home, In den Zelten 5.⁹¹ (See [Pl. 3](#).) It depicts the dimly lamp-lit, Pompeïian-red salon, with Bettina, head bowed, deep in reminiscence, as Joachim and colleagues perform a quartet beside her monumental apotheosis of Goethe, the physical pendant to her Goethe-book,⁹² which, altar-like, she had placed centrally in the room, and upon which she had portrayed herself as a tiny votary Psyche at the master’s feet.⁹³ The rhyming placement and formation of the musicians before the model’s rectangular, Schinkel-inspired plinth implies ineluctably that the quartet, too, represents a kind of votary monument of Bettina’s making. Clearly, this image has nothing to do with the ‘Music of the Future’. Rather, it depicts an introverted, retrospective attitude—the

⁸⁷ ‘In Dresden hatte ich schöne Tage mit Joachim, der schöner, wunderbarer denn je spielte. Sphärenhaft klangen oft seine Töne! Ich höre den Menschen doch nie, ohne daß ich mich wahrhaft erhoben fühle. . . . Liszt’s Zusammentreffen mit ihm zeigte klar, daß die Beiden durchaus auch keine Minute mehr zusammenpassen, (künstlerisch versteht sich das von selbst) ich meine persönlich. . . . Einmal, als uns Schneider herrliche Sachen auf der Orgel vorspielte, lauter der schönsten Bach’schen Sachen, und Joachim ausrief, “welch göttliche Musik”, erwiderte Liszt “Hm, Knochen!” Joachim darauf “Hör mal, das ist mir lieber als Gallerte.” Liszt verschwand schnell darauf . . .’. Litzmann, *Clara Schumann. Ein Künstlerleben*, iii 3 (1856–1896) (Leipzig, 1908), 26.

⁸⁸ Extended stays occurred during the summers of 1854 and 1856. The diaries of Karl August Varnhagen von Ense (1785–1858) are a particularly rich source of anecdotes about Joachim’s participation in Bettina’s salons during these years.

⁸⁹ ‘One of my aunt’s most charming recollections were the evenings in Bettina von Arnim’s Goethe Hall. The moon shone full upon the statue modelled by Bettina von Arnim herself of Goethe, and Joachim played Beethoven’s music for them on his violin.’ Bertha Freiin von Bülow-Wendhausen, *The Life of the Baroness Von Marenholtz-Bülow by her Niece Baroness von Bülow* (New York, 1901), 201.

⁹⁰ ‘Ihr Liebstes war die Musik, die ihr die treuen Freunde boten, die wohl wußten, welche Wohltat sie ihr damit erwiesen: Joachim, der oft von Hannover herüberkam, Flemming mit seinem Cello, der hochbegabte Pianist Ernst Rudorff, ein Enkel des alten Geheimrat Pistor, dessen Tochter Betty den Schüler und Freund des Onkels Savigny, Professor Rudorff, geheiratet hatte, u.a. Zuweilen kam auch ein Quartett zustande. Dann saß die Mutter nahe der Tür in ihrem dunklen Zimmer und lauschte den Tönen im Saal, während ihre Gedanken um fünfzig Jahre zurückkehrten zu der Zeit, da sie Beethoven selbst nahegestanden hatte.’ *Maxe von Arnim. Tochter Bettinas / Gräfin von Oriola. 1818–1894*, ed. Johannes Werner (Leipzig, 1937), 219. Count Albert von Flemming later married Bettina’s daughter Armgart.

⁹¹ See e.g. Borchard, ‘Quartettabend bei Bettina’, 247; Uhde, *Psychologische Musik*, 265 ff.; Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 93.

⁹² *Goethe’s Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*—‘Seinem Denkmal’.

⁹³ See Uhde, *Psychologische Musik*, 267. Borchard has pointed out that Bettina’s proximity to the players in this picture—making her seem almost a member of the ensemble—was probably the artist’s invention, since, by Maxe’s account, Bettina liked to listen in private in the next room. Borchard, ‘Quartettabend bei Bettina’, 247.



Pl. 2. Carl Johann Arnold (1829–1916), Bettina von Arnim née Brentano. Lebrecht Music & Arts/Alamy Stock Photo. Reproduced by permission



PL. 3. Carl Johann Arnold, *Quartet Evening at the Home of Bettina von Arnim in Berlin*, c.1854–6. Photo: Lutz Braun. bpk Bildagentur/Freies Deutsches Hochstift—Frankfurter Goethe-Museum/Art Resource, NY. Reproduced by permission

ritualized re-enactment of an idealized, exalted past. The nostalgia is all on Bettina's part, however. Joachim, shown here in his early 20s, is energetic and erect of posture, and seems oddly out of place—a young man enlisted to officiate in an old woman's museum, enacting a fresh performance like Pip playing for Miss Havisham. He faces the brightly lit memorial, with his back to the viewer, bringing Beethoven to Goethe as Bettina once had.

As with Grimm's first encounter with Joachim at Weimar's Hotel Elephant, lighting seems to have been important to Bettina on these occasions, creating a disembodied, 'spiritual', effect. As Marie von Olfers wrote in August 1854: 'we were recently again

at Arnims and heard Joachim; even Juttchen, who doesn't easily show enthusiasm for Bach, was carried away by the Chaconne. Bettina took all light out of the room, so that the tones really seemed to come from the spirit-world. He also played an aria of Bach, and his own compositions.⁹⁴

Feodor Wehl writes of an evening at Bettina's at which Joachim—'an unusual virtuoso who studies, reads Spinoza, has an appreciation for everything, with a word, is an entire *Mensch*'—played a Beethoven sonata with Woldemar Bargiel 'with fire, power, distinctiveness, tenderness, and refinement'. He goes on to describe Bettina's room: the dark red walls decorated with antique plaster busts that, beautifully lighted, seemed to be enlivened by the magnificent music and to gaze happily towards one another. The musicians played unseen behind the Goethe monument. Wehl wrote: 'the entrancing tones of Beethoven penetrated the [darkened] room, victorious and mighty and grand'.⁹⁵

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth asserts: 'There is One great society alone on earth: The noble Living and the noble Dead.'⁹⁶ Wehl here describes such an imagined community: the icons of an idealized past—literally models—brought to life through musical performance in timeless reunion with the present; séances of art-religion in the context of intimate sociability; the experience of shared spirituality in a private space; interior devotion; the communion of art, validating and admitting access to the guiding, ideal self.⁹⁷ 'Gehör der Welt nicht an', wrote Brentano (see above, p. 00). Do not belong to the world. The world is a place of compromise and corruption; the salon a sanctuary for seekers after Truth, a place to 'drink from the pure chalice of one's own divine nature, so as not to languish'.⁹⁸ As Gisela confessed to Emerson about her friendship with Grimm and Joachim, 'we three stand alone, but

⁹⁴ 'Neulich waren wir wieder bei Arnims und hörten Joachim; selbst Juttchen, die doch schwer zu enthusiastisieren für Bach, war hingerissen von der Chaconne. Bettina nahm alles Licht aus dem Zimmer, so daß die Töne wirklich wie aus dem Geisterreich kamen. Er spielte noch eine Arie von Bach und seine eigenen Kompositionen.' On a subsequent evening, Joachim and colleagues played Beethoven quartets. Olfers (ed.), *Marie von Olfers: Briefe und Tagebücher 1826–1869*, ed. Margarete von Olfers (Berlin, 1928), 133–4.

⁹⁵ 'Er ist jedenfalls ein ungewöhnlicher Virtuose, der studiert, Spinoza liest, für alles Sinn hat, mit einem Worte, ein ganzer Mensch ist. Nach dem Thee spielte er; es war eine lange, großartige Beethoven'sche Sonate, die er mit Feuer, Kraft, Eigenthümlichkeit, Zartheit und Feinheit vortrug. Nun müssen Sie sich dazu Bettinen's Zimmer denken! Es war der mittlere Saal, der den Balkon hat, der nach dem Thiergarten hinaus geht. Die dunkelrothen Wände sind mit antiken Gipsbüsten dekorirt, die schön angeleuchtet, sich bei der prächtigen Musik zu beleben und freudig nach einander umzusehen schienen. In der Mitte des Saales steht das große Modell zum Goethedenkmal. Da nun Joachim und Bariel [*sic*] grade hinter diesem spielten und auch die Lampen da hinten hatten, so war das übrige Zimmer ziemlich in Dämmerung gehüllt, in der das Monument wie ein großer, ich möchte sagen, weißer Schatten hervorragte, hinter dem die hinreißenden Beethoven'schen Töne, ohne daß man die Spieler sah, siegreich und mächtig und gewaltig hervordrang. Sie glauben nicht wie bezaubernd und phantastisch das war!' 13 Aug. 1854. Wehl, *Zeit und Menschen*, ii, 65–6.

⁹⁶ *The Prelude* 11.393–4.

⁹⁷ This interior devotion, this *Andacht*, belongs quite properly to the circle of Goethe, and was well expressed by Goethe's friend Karl Philipp Moritz, who was perhaps the first to posit the concept of artistic autonomy—of the artwork as a whole complete in itself, divorced from utility and occasional concerns. The 'merely useful object', Moritz wrote, requires us to fulfil its function. Conversely, 'as long as the beautiful draws our attention completely to itself, it shifts it away from ourselves for a while, and makes us seem to lose ourselves in the beautiful object; just this losing, this forgetting of the self, is the highest degree of the pure and unselfish pleasure that beauty grants us. At that moment we give up our individual, limited existence in favor of a kind of higher existence.' Quoted in Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago and London, 1989), 5.

⁹⁸ See above, p. 000.

very happily united in this German world which we indeed love but to which we do not quite belong, also because our concept of *art* is different from that of many other people'.⁹⁹

During these years, Bettina also tried to make use of Joachim's abilities as a composer. Amongst her many activities and interests, Bettina was a composer of songs. In her youth, she sang in the convent choir in Fritslar, and subsequently studied piano and music theory in Offenbach under Philipp Carl Hoffmann (1789–1842). She later took sporadic lessons in singing, piano, and composition with a succession of teachers. Bettina published her first songs under the pen name of 'Beans Beor' (Latin for 'blessing I am blessed'—built on her initials B. B. and cognate with Achim von Arnim's 'Amans Amor', 'loving I am loved'—names they called one another in the early days of their marriage). In 1842, she published a set of seven songs in a courageous show of support for the Prussian royal music director Gaspare Spontini, who had fallen out of favour with the King (Breitkopf & Härtel, *Dédié à Spontini, Directeur général de la musique et premier maître de chapelle de S.M. le Roi de Prusse. etc. etc.*). Her songs are mostly simple strophic lieder after the Berlin school; she was proud of their spontaneous, 'untaught', nature, but simultaneously felt insecure in her abilities and endeavoured to engage a number of young composers to help complete them, amongst them Peter Cornelius, Woldemar Bargiel, and Joachim. Gisela also attempted to enlist Joachim's help with her mother's songs, urging him to complete them in a natural and unlearned style appropriate to her mother's inspiration. One song in particular, the *Lied des Schülers* (Song of the Student), after a poem by Achim von Arnim, became the inspiration for Joachim's Violin Concerto in G major WoO, which, though written at a considerably earlier date, was ultimately published in 1889 and dedicated to Gisela (by then Gisela Grimm), who had died on 4 April of that year.¹⁰⁰

PRIEST OF THE PUBLIC

In 1863 Joachim married the singer Amalie Schneeweiss, and the couple settled in Berlin in 1868. In August 1869 he founded Berlin's Hochschule für ausübende Tonkunst, fulfilling a project that Mendelssohn had left undone. In the same year, together with Ernst Schiever, Heinrich De Ahna, and Wilhelm Müller, he established the Berlin Joachim Quartet as an adjunct to the Hochschule, with the express purpose of giving exemplary performances of the classics—most especially Beethoven. During the ensuing thirty-eight years, the quartet's annual eight-concert series in the Singakademie—a kind of public salon—became the spiritual home of an important faction of Berlin's musical, artistic, and political élite. The quasi-religious atmosphere of the Joachim Quartet's concerts was exceptional, even for late nineteenth-century Berlin, where the 'Religion of Art', rooted in the writings of Novalis and Tieck, Schleiermacher and Hegel, could still claim a devoted following (Brahms spoke sarcas-

⁹⁹ 'wir drei stehn allein—aber sehr glücklich vereint, in dieser deutschen Welt die wir zwar lieben aber der wir nicht ganz gehören, auch mit darum, weil wir uns under *der Kunst*, etwas andres vorstellen, als viele Andre.—' Gisela von Arnim to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Berlin, 9 Dec. 1858, in *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 25/4 (1977), 431.

¹⁰⁰ In the past three decades, authoritative work on Bettina's songs has been done by Renate Moering and Ann Willison [Lemke]. See also, especially, Uhde's chapter 'Ciphers in Disguise', about Gisela and Joseph's occupation with the songs, and about Bettina's song *Lied des Schülers* (after Achim von Arnim) and its thematic use in Joachim's Concerto No. 3 in G major, WoO. Uhde, *The Music of Joseph Joachim*, 382–402.

tically of Joachim's 'chaste sanctuary').¹⁰¹ '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 nearby by name, one nevertheless felt united with them through regular encounters at this place which was consecrated to the noblest art.'¹⁰² '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 their task and one felt a reverent and almost religious spirit in their whole performance.'¹⁰³ 'He who arrived, jaded from indifferent occupations or wearying work, was here refreshed', wrote Andreas 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!"'¹⁰⁴

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, in their later years, indeed represented a kind of ritual ingathering of the faithful who came to experience elevation and renewal; a community that under Joachim's leadership shared a way of thinking about the role of music in private life and in intimately gathered society that Gisela once claimed as an Arnim family trait, and that has since largely been lost to the world.

Within the Schumann–von Arnim circle Joachim had come to regard certain canonic works as a kind of scripture: timeless expressions of a 'higher' sort—embodiments of musical truth that could not be superseded or replaced—works whose spirit it became his vocation to realize, interpret, and perpetuate. This is the burden of the little verse that, later in life, he wrote in the *Stammbuch* of Agathe von Siebold Schütte, and the proposition to which he, as a mature artist, devoted his life's work:

Only the meaningless passes away.
That which is and was once deeply alive
Has the power to be for eternity.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Florence May, *The Life of Johannes Brahms*, 2nd edn. (London, n. d.), ii. 625–6.

¹⁰² 'Die weihevollle Stimmung jener Quartett-abende in der Singakademie läßt sich mit Worten kaum beschreiben. Andachtsvoll, wie die Gemeinde einer Kirche, lauschte das Publikum dem Spiel der Vier. Kannte man auch seinen Nachbarn und die Umsitzenden nicht mit Namen, so fühlte man sich doch mit ihnen zu einer Gemeinschaft verbunden durch die regelmäßige Begegnung an dieser, edelster Kunst geweihten Stätte.' Edith Stargardt-Wolff, *Wegbereiter großer Musiker* (Berlin, 1954), 149.

¹⁰³ M[arion] [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, 1939), 46.

¹⁰⁴ 'Wer abgesspannt von gleichgültigen Geschäften, von ermüdender Arbeit kam, ward hier erquickt; wer leichtfertig und gedankenlos dahingelebt hatte, ward hier ergreifend gemahnt. Wer Trübes erlebt, wer Liebes verloren hatte, empfing Trost und Linderung; der Trauernde lächelte, der Zürnende ward ruhig, und der Ungläubige bekannte: "Ich glaube wieder!"' Moser, *Joseph Joachim: Ein Lebensbild*, ii. 205.

¹⁰⁵ 'Nur das Bedeutungslose fährt dahin. | Was einmal tief lebendig ist und war | das hat Kraft zu sein für immerdar. Göttingen, Herbst 1894.' Emil Michelmann, *Agathe von Siebold: Johannes Brahms' Jugendliebe* (Göttingen, 1930), 318.

ABSTRACT

Although Joseph Joachim came of age in the milieu of the German Romantic salon, his biographers have largely ignored the critical influence of women on his artistic development. Amongst Joachim's many mentors, Bettina von Arnim's sway over the young musician is difficult to overstate. Once an intimate friend of Goethe and Beethoven, Bettina was an ardent music lover and amateur composer with outspoken aesthetic views. Through her mentorship, Joseph was confirmed in the Romantic cult of Beethoven veneration that Bettina helped create, as well as in *Kunstreligion*—the sacralization of art—as practiced in the Arnim household. Significantly, Bettina also helped influence Joachim away from Franz Liszt, whom she had at first revered, but with whom she quarreled. Using many hitherto unpublished sources, this article explores the influence that Bettina had on the young Joachim, and through him on conflicts and attitudes toward music current in the long nineteenth century.