

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*

BY

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PRELIMINARY NOTE

THE following recollections were begun merely to help a friend in some technical matters, which were taught with particular clearness in the Berlin Hochschule, at the time when I was a student there. They were intended to occupy only a few sheets of notepaper, but it very soon became evident that most of the technical matters were not merely technical and that in order to treat them thoroughly one had to proceed on to a wider field.

As soon as this wider field was entered, however, the subject became so enormously magnified, that I found myself, quite unawares, dropping into autobiography as the simplest way of making things clear. This will explain the haphazard construction of the notes with heads and tails pretty well mixed up together—and I am leaving them just as they grew, the autobiographical bits along with the rest, even at the risk of appearing egotistic.

I think, too, it is a testimony to the largeness of spirit of that particular teaching, that technical questions at once led you to larger problems, while these larger problems in turn became so much involved in your own personal life that the whole grew to be inseparable.

When for the sake of convenience and brevity I talk of "Hochschule instruction" in the following notes, what is meant is: six years of lessons with Karl Klingler who was for ten years, first as pupil and later as colleague, in close contact with Joachim himself—numerous chamber-music lessons with Arthur Williams, senior and most outstanding pupil of Hausmann, during the same period of six years, and finally, some years of orchestral playing and one summer of quartet lessons under Hausmann, cellist of the Joachim quartet. Also during four years I was constantly a listener at the Joachim quartet concerts and at the "General Proben" (dress rehearsals) in the School Hall which always preceded these concerts.



I. *Handgelenk (Wrist)*

THE wrist is not used independently of other joints, *i.e.* it does not move of its own momentum, but is like the "flag at the end of a flag-stick" used in Morse signalling—the flag-stick being, as a rule, the forearm moved from the elbow joint. This rule holds good throughout, the wrist remaining passive, though flexible, and the hand being moved by other joints.

(a) In all short bowing in the middle of the bow the action comes from the elbow—springing bow being essentially the same motion as smooth bowing except that in this case the hand is "thrown" to and fro by the forearm instead of being merely propelled by it, as in the case of smooth bowing.

In both cases, however, the wrist remains entirely passive.

(b) In crossing the strings the whole arm becomes the flag-stick and this is moved from the shoulder-joint. As before, the wrist remains entirely passive and any raising or depressing of the hand comes as the result of this movement of the shoulder and should be very nearly imperceptible.

In passing from a higher to a lower string (down-bow, up-bow), the hand will tend to drop slightly as the arm is raised.

The opposite action, which one often sees, *i.e.* lifting the hand to gain the lower string, is quite wrong.

This very slight dropping of the hand when crossing downwards (down-bow, up-bow) is still less perceptible when crossing up-bow, down-bow, and although the action, presumably, is the same, the impression to the eye is that the hand is stationary.

Vice versa when crossing up-bow, down-bow, from a lower to a higher string the hand tends to be left behind for an instant by the drop of the arm, so that it appears to be slightly lifted.

In down-bow, up-bow, however, from lower to upper string, this is hardly perceptible.

(c) When going backwards and forwards from one string to another quickly in the middle of the bow, the hand and wrist

should appear practically motionless—although the wrist is all the time entirely flexible.¹

This is the same whether one starts up- or down-bow.

Throughout all this crossing of the strings the symmetrical curve of the right arm between shoulder and hand is never really broken, *i.e.* a sharp angle at the wrist, due either to the raising of the elbow and consequent depression of the wrist, or *vice versa* to depression of the elbow and consequent humping of the wrist, is never noticeable. Altogether the movement of the wrist, up and down and even sideways, is not a large one and, as I found out afterwards, you were apt to be misled on this point in the Hochschule, because of the amount that was said about the wrist (*das Handgelenk*) and the importance attached to this joint. As I now clearly see, if at the time I had realised that the only large and active motion in crossing the strings was that of the shoulder, I should have got on much faster.

As regards the sideways movement it was only lately that I was corrected by Klingler himself for using too much of this at the hilt, in the up-bow. The fault was made in a *legato* passage where a smooth turn of the bow was essential. If one throws forward the hand and fingers as far as possible at the extreme hilt, the down-bow starts with a very depressed wrist and a hard bite at the beginning of the note is apt to be the result.

If that is what is wanted, on the other hand, this action is a good one. In *legato* playing, however, to avoid hard tone and the sharp bite, and also to preserve the normal curve of the wrist at the beginning of the down-bow, Klingler simply said, "Do not use the two inches or so at the very hilt."

This as I found simplifies also another matter: the tendency

¹ In playing very quick detached passages backwards and forwards between two and sometimes even three strings I have seen another method of using the wrist demonstrated with good effect by a great violinist of to-day. This *does* entail using the wrist joint actively, *i.e.* raising, depressing and moving it sideways without reference to the movement of shoulder and elbow. The method (which was not, as far as I know, taught in the Hochschule) is only effective in passages so quick that the very limited movement sideways which the wrist by itself is capable of, is sufficient to produce each note. In cases where the notes are longer, it would at once commit the arm to an ungainly, awkward movement and the symmetrical curve from shoulder to hand would be broken.

to make a bulge in the middle of the bow where it is weakest, when playing something which calls for a maximum full tone. For at the extreme hilt you cannot get that maximum tone and if you try to do so it produces only a scratch. Therefore you lighten the pressure and, in order to preserve an even tone, have either to skate across the middle section of the bow without making use of its full possibilities, or else you must just sacrifice your even tone and relapse into a sonorous bulge.¹

2. *Erster Finger (First Finger)*

A straight first finger on the bow was much insisted upon.

The bow is gripped by the two middle fingers and balanced by the little finger assisted by the third finger.

The pressure of the straight first finger on the stick of the bow was the method of producing tone and was the foundation of all the bowing technique which I was taught in the Hochschule.

I have since heard that Joachim himself laid particular stress on pressure by the *second* finger in the production of tone. In any case the straight first finger was a marked characteristic of his style.

3. *The middle of the bow*

It was noticeable and is worth recording that although the point of the bow was, of course, much used, in the great majority of cases where the option lay between point or middle—the *middle* was used.

This refers not only to passages of detached quavers and semi-quavers but also to many themes, and especially that kind which

¹The above conversation with Klingler tended to confirm me in a conviction which had already begun to grow on me, *i.e.* that one should rely much more than is generally done on the middle section of the bow (that is, the section between those points, at a short distance from each extremity, where the tension of the hair begins appreciably to slacken) for all melodic tone production.

For if one regards these extremities as reserve portions for facilitating the turn of the bow and to be used, of course, for many other purposes besides, but NOT pedantically, as a matter of conscience on all occasions possible—it is surprising what a number of problems at once solve themselves and how quickly the general standard of performance rises.

one often finds in six-eight time. The opening themes of the last movement of Mozart's G Minor Quintet and the first movement of his Jagt Quartet are good examples. Another good one is that of the last movement of Handel's A Major Sonata.

I feel pretty certain that if Joachim had ever, in such of his quartet playing as I heard, played a theme of this nature at the point of the bow I should have experienced that sort of slight shock which fixes a thing in the memory. Somehow it would have seemed out of keeping with the simplicity and quietness of his general style, for not only does bowing at the point entail a more awkward movement of the arm than does that in the middle where the wrist comes more into play, but it often for some reason or another, seems to bring in a kind of affectation of manner which one does not associate either with Joachim's playing or with great music.

Together with this tendency to use the middle oftener than the point of the bow, a characteristic economy in the use of the bow as a whole ought to be mentioned here. That is to say that in many cases where a player of the modern style would almost certainly use a lot of bow Joachim and his pupils tended to be economical and to use what they did with a greater concentration of intention and intensity.

4. *Intensiver Ton (Intense Tone)*

An intense and pure tone, which can be produced without any *vibrato* whatever, was a characteristic of the Joachim Quartet that distinguished it from all modern quartets which I have heard, except those which came under Joachim's direct influence.

(a) In the production of this kind of tone it is essential that the bow should travel slowly and evenly across the string, which the hairs grip firmly though delicately.

(b) This tone can be produced in all grades of strength from *forte* to double *piano*.

(c) It was practised in long, slow bows from end to end of the bow, but in actual music, where such very long notes are not common, was usually produced in the middle section (leaving out about a quarter at either end) where the tension of the hair is slacker and where this tone is therefore easier to produce.

(d) In *pianos* and double *pianos* it was produced *without any vibrato whatever* and in *fortes*, if there was any at all, it was so very little that one could not detect the slightest wobble.

(e) Joachim very generally used this sort of tone in deep and intense passages, such as those which occur so often in Beethoven, and once having heard them played so, the sickly wobble of most modern playing, in such places, becomes very painful.

5. *Vibrato*

Joachim's flexibility of wrist, both right and left, was famous.

Consequently his *vibrato* was very easy and free, and he used it a great deal and with the greatest effect when he wished to.

(a) It was essential, however, in the Hochschule teaching, that the tone should be *already* there, *produced by the bow before the vibrato* came into action. Just as any good piano-teacher would teach a pupil to produce a good tone *first* without any resort to the pedal, so, in the Hochschule, they taught students to produce a good tone by means of the bow alone and to use the *vibrato only on the foundation of this tone* as an embellishment when required.

(b) But even when produced rightly the continual use of the *vibrato* was very much discouraged. A pupil of Joachim, whom I know intimately, and who has a very good *vibrato*, was told by Joachim himself that he would ruin his playing if he were not careful to use it only where it was wanted, just as an artist in painting his picture uses any particular colour with discretion and where it has effect, instead of indiscriminately all over the canvas. (Joachim did not use this simile, but I have interpreted the sense of what he said as I understood it.)

(c) The sudden free use of *vibrato* immediately after the still, intense tone already mentioned and in contrast to it, was an effect often produced with great expressiveness. Or still more striking was the sudden hairpin *crescendo* out of dead stillness culminating in a *sforzando* climax, where every ounce of force, both of bow and of *vibrato*, would be let loose.

It is self-evident that such effects with their expressive use of colour are impossible where the *vibrato* never ceases and, to repeat myself, the Joachim Quartet in contrast to modern quartets did

appear to me comparable to a painter whose sensuous delight in colour has become absorbed in the conception of his picture as a whole so that he chooses each colour with reference to this alone, as distinct from the dilettante, with his limited vision, who, falling in love with some pretty colour, salmon pink, let us say, smothers his canvas in this and so gives us a daub instead of a picture.

But there is a fact about *vibrato* which should not be forgotten : if it becomes a physical habit, it is, like all such habits, difficult to stop and if the player who has become dependent upon it does with an effort manage to stop it, he is apt to find his tone lacking in all quality.

It is also very noticeable that it is the *unemotional*, not the emotional players, who use it most habitually, and that when these reach a point in the music where real emotional stress is required (a passionate *sforzando* or sudden *crescendo*) instead of using it too much they use it far too little.

The explanation seems to be simple enough ; with these players the *vibrato* habit has little or nothing to do with the emotions but *vibrato* used for intense emotional expression calls for a very active and abandoned physical movement. This physical movement, unless the emotion has been felt, will never have been practised. Thus, when the music demands it, there is not only a spiritual but also a physical obstacle to be overcome.

The laying down of set rules was not in the spirit of the Hochschule teaching, yet in this case one might say that a rule was tacitly accepted. To put it colloquially the *vibrato* was not to be used unless it came sincerely from the heart.

The way it is commonly used, therefore, would come under exactly the same heading as the heartless conventional employment of words like "love" and "darling" in society talk, where they have no relation to the heart but are both intended and understood to mean nothing at all.

When I speak of players who use *vibrato* continuously I refer to those who use it always in *cantabile* or slowish playing ; yet it is noticeable with just these players that the hand at once becomes lazy and motionless when the music, and with it the fingers, begins to move more quickly. The *vibrato*, in fact, never seems to be used by them to help emphasis and articulation by means

of the fingers even in places where the music appears to call unmistakably for such articulation. That it can, however, be so used and with much expressiveness, even when the fingers are moving fairly fast, often seems to be overlooked.

Still one more thing ought to be noticed. It seems undeniable that when *vibrato* is employed it is easier to play in tune, or rather to avoid playing very much *out* of tune, than when it is not used. This, presumably, is because when the finger descends accompanied by a movement of the hand it does not commit itself in so uncompromising a manner to one single place on the string as it does when the hand is kept still.

In other words—as it is in motion when coming in contact with the string and continues the sideways swing throughout the note—it covers a larger extent of the string than it would if kept still.

As we know too from the compromises necessary to the tuning of a modern piano, any note may be treated with a certain latitude as regards pitch without its sounding offensively out of tune.

Thus, if the finger comes down on the string slightly too high up or too low down its rocking motion is likely to rectify the mistake up to a point and make it sound passably in tune. Also, if it comes down in the right place, a slight rock will not make it sound out of tune.

Yet although it is well to know this fact about *vibrato* so as to be able to use it as an expedient in difficulties—and especially in double-stopping—I feel pretty certain that a player who relies on it for playing in tune during his practice will never become remarkable for purity of intonation in his performance.

6. *Crossing the Strings*

Another feature of Joachim's playing, exemplified also in many of the fingerings in his editions of violin music and in Hochschule teaching besides, was the frequency with which he crossed the strings and so remained in the lower positions, not only in passage work but also in *cantabile* themes which a player of the modern style would almost certainly play on one string alone if at all possible.

Some may say that this is a mere unimportant detail. Yet I am not at all certain that it is so or that one does not get as good an

insight into the cleavage between the spirits of the old and the new attitudes towards musical performance by examining just these very details as by any other mode of approach.

No rules of any sort were laid down about this matter but one felt that the question of where or where not to cross the strings was treated much in the same way as that of the use or the avoidance of *vibrato*.

The violin was, in fact, treated as an instrument possessing, if rightly handled, a considerable range and variety of tone colour, all of which was to be devoted to the service of the musical sense. The exact opposite, apparently, of the view held to-day that it is an instrument so pre-eminently cut out for the production of sweetness of tone that this alone is to be aimed at and that the sense of the music itself must therefore conform and take a secondary place.

Joachim could produce this kind of tone as well as any one else and very often did so. But no one who listened appreciatively to his playing will ever forget the stillness and grand simplicity of the way he so often played slow themes of Beethoven, allowing himself not one single slide when avoidable or one hint of *vibrato*, but remaining unabashed in the low positions, using fingerings such as would probably be chosen for a child in its first lessons. If Joachim came to life again now I have little doubt but that his playing would, by many, be pronounced "dry and academic" for this one reason alone that he chose to make use of *many* shades of tone and not *only* a sweet, thick one.

For I have lately come to understand that the word "dry" is now generally used to describe any violin-playing in which this quality of tone is not employed throughout. Variety is, in fact, not wanted and the clean bite of that tone which can be got only by avoiding *vibrato* and remaining in the lower positions is apparently a thing altogether too naked and too austere for modern taste.

Thus you find that there are people who will swallow down the truly "dry" and mechanical time-keeping of the typical modern ensemble performance (especially when led by some "world-famous star") with all its soulless disregard of fine points of expression, its indifference to changes of mood and its general dullness, with a greedy delight so long as all this is made to slip down in a thick enough stream of tone-treacle.

Conversely all the imaginative qualities, flexibility of rhythm and delicacy of perception, which may be displayed by an artist of the older school who varies his tone in order to make use of the resources of his instrument to express what he feels as inherent in the music, is entirely thrown away on them and his performance is pronounced "dry."

In fact it is the old story of the child whose palate has been ruined by over-indulgence in sweetmeats and who is thus rendered quite incapable of discriminating between the finer shades of flavour.

But this presumably is not yet the whole story. In a world which has so generally succumbed to the intoxication of Jazz not only should this insensitiveness to purity and variety in sound be expected, but one ought to be well prepared to find an only too clearly pronounced positive appetite for the sensual in sound as in other things.

Thus the desire for music becomes less and less a wish for spiritual communication and degenerates more and more into a mere appetite of the ear.

7. *Tonlosigkeit* (*Tonelessness*)

"Quality" in tone was always insisted upon, however small the quantity.

Thus, when a pupil was told that he was playing "tonelessly" and defended himself by saying that the passage was *piano* or *pianissimo* as the case might be, he always received a sharp reprimand—for the reason that *tone must never be toneless, i.e. it must never be without quality, without character, however small in quantity.*

For instance, a *pianissimo* passage following on a merely *piano* one was seldom played simply *more piano*, with a *smaller* tone, but it was nearly always given a different character as well :

That is to say, very usually, as soon as the *pp* sign occurred, instead of using *less* bow, one played with about double as much as before, drawing the bow lightly and swiftly across the strings at the top end of the finger-board.

Although the very beautiful, hushed quality of tone which is produced thus is used by most good players, especially in playing the more modern music, it seems to me that opportunities for

using it are often neglected in classical works, and *pianissimo* passages are apt to become merely passages played with very small tone, *i.e.* without much character or quality—hence “tonelessly.”

The above quality of tone comes out best on the two lower strings.

On the two upper strings, and perhaps most of all on the A string, the intense, concentrated tone without any *vibrato* and with very little bow was often used in *pp* passages.

A *pp* passage was seldom played without one or other of these two colours.

In single *p* passages also one was continually being called to order for playing “tonelessly.” When playing middle parts and especially second violin in a quartet, you were particularly liable to be found fault with when, for a bar or two, you had the principal part to play after a long stretch of subordinate interest. I realised then, and have ever since realised, that in many ways the second violin part is the most nerve-racking of all to play, because it so often has its solo bits immediately following on those of the first violin and that without time for the player to get warmed up and without an individual tone (like the viola) to help him out.

The first thing one learnt was :

(a) that *piano* does not always mean either the same quality or quantity of tone, *i.e.* should one chance to light on an important phrase in a *piano* section without any change of expression marks this must be played certainly with an increase of tone and probably with a different quality of tone from that which precedes and follows it.

(b) That the tone preceding and following it, although it should be subordinate, must never be characterless, *i.e.* toneless. This kind of tone you have to consider as if it were, so to speak, a neutral-coloured wallpaper against which a picture is exhibited and has to stand out without hindrance from disturbing colours in its neighbourhood.

Yet the neutral background should have its own distinctive character also.

From experience one found that the best way of producing this as a rule was (in *legato* passages), to use rather little bow drawn fairly slowly across the string not too far from the bridge and accompanied by a very articulate use of the fingers.

In passages of detached quavers or semiquavers, or of accompanying syncopations, short bows in the middle of the bow with a crisp tone were almost invariably used. The point of the bow, in such cases, was seldom used and the point-bowing which one so often sees employed, accompanied by a deal of unnecessary and disturbing movement of the body, would, in all cases, have been summarily condemned.

The clear neutral tone described above produces a background against which other more distinctive tone-colours can come out expressively and clearly and, by employing this tone throughout subordinate passages, notes not belonging to the melody do not, in the distracting way so often heard, get mixed up with the main part.

(c) But before all, and above all, the *vibrato*, in these cases, had to be used most sparingly if at all. This was not merely because it gives subordinate passages undue importance, but because the reserve power of the *vibrato* is thus available for the solo bits when these occur and where it is often wanted and tone production *by means of the bow alone* should be the foundation of all tone—a truth so often neglected.

The player who has not recognised this truth and has consequently neglected his bowing will probably expose his weakness most of all in a subordinate part, because in certain places the subordination of his part absolutely forces him to drop his habitual *vibrato* and the tone will at once be found to be merely weak and “toneless.”

In *piano dolce* sections a free use was usually made of the *vibrato*, producing thus the sweetness that the word *dolce* indicates, and this tone is just that which most modern players use through thick and thin.

On the other hand, in *piano espressivo* sections, the *vibrato* (if used at all) was used sparingly and not in a way to interfere with the intensity of the tone, *i.e.* there was no movement of the hand big enough to produce perceptible waves of sound and often all that it consisted in was a slight movement of the tip of the finger which helped to intensify the tone and expression.

The bow in the meantime moved slowly with a concentrated pressure of the first finger on the stick and with an even grip of the string.

“Tonlosigkeit” (tonelessness) when applied to *forte* playing generally meant :

(a) Either scratchiness, by which the tone was killed, or else :

(b) A lack of grip on the string by a proper pressure of the straight first finger on the stick of the bow (as already described).

The word therefore referred always more to the quality of the tone than it did to the quantity.

As soon as one had learnt to produce the right quality *by means of the bow alone* there was not much difficulty in producing as much quantity as was required.

In my own case (as I had to change my style of bowing considerably on going to Berlin) one thing that puzzled me a good deal for a long time was the injunction “*not to press*”—and I was only thoroughly enlightened at last when my teacher (Klingler) changed his mode of expression and said instead, “*Do not press in the wrong way—but do press in the right way*”—the right way, according to him, being a pressure from the arm concentrated on the first finger, which acts as a sort of sensitive feeler to transmit just what is necessary of pressure to the string and to prevent all crushing and unnecessary weight.

As the bow is always moving in one direction or the other this pressure should never be directly downwards, but always slightly sideways.

In this way a clear edge to the tone, like a pure and distinct colour, could be got at any moment, and all blurring of lines and unclearness of entries in ensemble playing was thus avoidable.

To get clarity and *strength combined* you were constantly being advised to use *less* rather than *more* bow. How important this is, especially in ensemble playing (and above all in the middle parts) you learnt gradually by experience. In brilliant running passages it was much insisted upon and it is surprising how often attention to this alone leads to success. In nine cases out of ten, in fact, one found that what had seemed to be the fault of the left hand alone was largely that of the bow.

Although the principle is a safe one, that physical strength does not come into the question of bowing any more than it does in golf, experience and observation very soon teach one that there is also an element of untruth in it as applied to either

of these arts. What really distinguishes the good from the indifferent player more than anything else is that necessary strength is used but in the right way and that unnecessary muscular force is *not* applied at all.

That a reserve of strength, *i.e.* a strong and solid right arm, is an asset in violin playing, especially at the point of the bow, and makes the production both of a beautiful and of a big tone, if rightly used, an easier matter, seems undeniable.

(Instance : Adila Fachiri. Yet this very weight of arm under the guidance of a less excellent player might readily lead to roughness and crushing of the tone thereby diminishing instead of increasing it.)

8. *Das Ansetzen*

(Setting on, *i.e.* the placing of the bow on the string)

In quartet playing a great point was made of this "Ansetzen," especially at the entries and more especially at the entries of the inner parts which are always the most difficult to hear.

If the bow is dropped on the string at the moment of entry the actual sound is almost certain to be a little late ; also the tone lacks the clear-cut edge, which is necessary to give it the required prominence and clearness. Nearly all entries, therefore, if they were meant to be heard, were made by laying the bow on the string a fraction of a second before playing.

Entries, on the other hand, which were meant to be inaudible and simply "close in" (*anschliessen*) with some other part, one had, of course, to play just in the opposite way, *i.e.* with as little catch to the string at the start as possible.

9. *Das Artikulieren (Articulation)*

Clean and clear finger work was, of course, always insisted upon, but there were places in which quite special and emphatic "articulation" by means of the fingers alone was required of you.

Such places occur very often in slow movements of Beethoven and the sort of "articulation" by means of high-stepping fingers dropped on the string one by one firmly and clearly

from above, is generally accompanied by a slow moving bow and the concentrated, intense tone without *vibrato*, already alluded to.

Often, to make things still more emphatic, you could lift all the fingers from the string except the actual one which was producing the note, and so, as it were, step carefully and firmly through the passage standing alternately on one foot and then on the other !

In certain places this articulation of the fingers was still further emphasised by a slight *vibrato* of each finger as it came on to the string. This was only at the beginning of each note and did not continue throughout the passage.

The use of the *vibrato* in this way to promote articulation even when the fingers are moving fairly fast, has already been spoken of. This I know might be said to be no *vibrato* at all but merely a looseness and activity of the hand as the fingers come down—a looseness which prevents the fingers from being pressed tightly on the strings in a way which is always wrong.

It matters little what one calls it but a fact worth noticing is that habitual *vibrato*-addicts (*i.e.* players whose *cantabile* playing is never without *vibrato*) are often found conspicuously wanting in places where this sort of articulation seems called for.

This may be partly due to a mental attitude but it has sometimes struck me that another reason for it may be that the *vibrato* cultivated is a thing solely connected with the muscles of the wrist and arm. These muscles can only be used when the fingers are stationary or only moving slowly.

If the vital activity of the finger-point has, however, been neglected the hand naturally becomes sluggish and inactive as soon as the fingers begin to move faster.

I have since found by experience and by watching the playing of great players like Jelly D'Aranyi and Adila Fachiri, that allowing only one finger to rest on the string at a time is not only always of the greatest help in tone production but that it can be employed in many places where brilliance is required and where, at first sight, it might seem impracticable. If the Sevcik method (of allowing the fingers, in brilliant passages, to lie still as much as possible where they fall) is a good one to practise, the exactly opposite one is also useful as an exercise, and where it can be employed, adds very perceptibly to the brilliance of the tone.

10. *Movement of the Body*

The stillness of Joachim's style of playing was a thing which every one noticed. There never were any disturbing or unnecessary movements and yet there was the greatest sense of flexibility. I have since come to the conclusion that this complete absence of rigidity was due to the fact that his body was never really motionless although it seemed to be so ; but that all the movement was in the contrary direction to that of the bowing and so counteracted the universal and disturbing tendency—apparent amongst inferior and not uncommon even amongst good players—of swaying from the waist along the same line as the bow.

I was first made conscious of this much more satisfactory contrary-motion by watching the playing of Ysaye, who employed it in such a pronounced degree, that it often resembled the crumpling up and expansion of a concertina. I feel certain, however, that the balanced stillness of Joachim's style was due to the employment of a certain amount of this motion which, when not exaggerated, merely restores the balance of the body, which is liable to be upset by the motion of the bow arm.

One gets the same impression of a strong balance and flexibility combined in the playing of Adila Fachiri, Jelly D'Aranyi and Karl Klingler.

11. *Stance*

I only saw Joachim playing in a standing position once or twice. His stance was just what I expected it to be—normal, easy and dignified, without any angularities or any self-conscious pose liable to distract the attention of the listener from the music. One gets the same sort of impression from Klingler's beautifully quiet style upon the platform. Klingler had his own methods of teaching a good stance. To get the desired balance of the body you first (*a*) stood up straight with heels together, then (*b*) moved the right foot a few inches forward and slightly sideways, keeping the weight of the body still balanced equally between both feet. Then (*c*) you shifted the weight of the body on to the left foot, thereby relaxing the muscles of the right leg, and finally (*d*) let the body move

round slightly to the left backwards, *i.e.* so that the left shoulder was very slightly behind the right one. This movement still further relaxes the tension on the right leg and the whole right side of the body and it brings the right knee a little forward.

If this stance is properly taken up it greatly facilitates the getting of the left elbow well to the right underneath the violin—which is so essential to good finger technique and helps so much to compensate for the shortness of the fourth finger as compared with the other three.

I have noticed that some fine players seem to prefer balancing the weight of their body between both feet. This certainly has the advantage of preventing the left foot and leg from getting overtired, and there may be other advantages too, but this stance does not result in the same stillness or freedom from tension on the right side as does the other. Besides this there is, with it, a greater tendency to raise the left shoulder and to alter the level of the strings in relation to the bow.

Sometimes also Klingler made one (1) place the violin under the chin in the ordinary way, (2) lower the left arm to the side, holding up the instrument meanwhile with the chin alone, and straightening the shoulders, (3) raise the hand once more to its original position and take hold of the neck of the violin.

If this is rightly done and the stance is right the left hand and neck of the violin should be hardly visible to a person standing directly behind at a little distance nor should he be able to tell by any lift of the left shoulder that you are holding up the instrument.

One felt that the aim throughout was to find a position in which the maximum looseness combined with stillness could be attained to.

This is just the impression one did get from Joachim's style.

The slight left twist of the body alluded to above applies, of course, when sitting just the same as when standing. If one takes the right-side view (such as presented by the first violin row at an orchestral concert) of many even good players, it is very noticeable how many of them carry the right arm backwards from the shoulder in a way that looks awkward and stiff. The impression one gets is that the right arm is too long and that this backward movement has to be resorted to in order to keep the bow straight. Yet Joachim was a big man and his bowing gave one no such impression.

My belief is that the left twist of the body just alluded to is the solution of the difficulty and that without it not even the smallest person, if he is to keep a straight bow, can avoid drawing the arm backwards.

Sometimes when listening to a player, otherwise good, who has, however, a bad style, one may feel that too much importance can be attached to looks when, after all, the sound alone is the thing of paramount importance.

It must, however, be considered whether the player has a right to insist on the listener shutting his eyes. Because there is no doubt that ungainly attitudes and movements do distract the attention from the sound.

But there is more in it than this.

When a keen listener comes to a concert wishing simply to enjoy himself and not for the purpose of criticising, he will, as a matter of course, shut his eyes if irritated by a bad style.

I think it is just then, without the use of his eyes at all, that he will discover in the playing faults directly traceable to a bad style which might easily escape the notice of the wilful critic whose mind can never be thoroughly occupied by the music alone. For this kind of fault, and especially those attributable to unnecessary movements of the body, are just the sort which destroy purity of musical expression, *i.e.* which introduce sounds which one must attribute to physical causes and which would never occur to the imagination on the mere reading of the music from the notes without an instrument.

It may be said, however, that in playing, as in life generally, it is only through physical habits that direct expression is ever possible. As each person, then, has his own individual way of walking, talking, smiling, etc., so has he his individual way of handling an instrument.

Yet in playing, just as in life, there are physical attributes that do, and others that do not, express the individuality and to this is added, in playing, another consideration. In life you have to express yourself to your neighbour. In playing there is yourself, your neighbour *and* the composer to consider.

Here again, however, the objection may be raised that each individual has a right to form his own conception as to the meaning

of the composer and that too much importance is often attached to a traditional style. But should this also be granted there still will always remain the dumb notes on the paper and what seems incontestably true is that to allow the body to introduce elements which would never occur in your purely spiritual conception of the meaning of these notes must always be wrong. This is not true expression at all but a mere sham, and the listener who has only his spiritual conception of the music before him will always be the one most sensitive to such physical disturbances.

Thus, although he may pass over many inessential faults, he will be, if the most just on that account, also in other ways, the most severe critic.

12. *Interpretation*

Interpretation was a word seldom heard in the Hochschule.

The reason for this was probably that the thing itself was so essentially the centre-point round which all the instruction, technical as well as musical, revolved as a matter of course, and the idea of it was so omnipresent and taken for granted as the most important thing, that it did not require to be much talked of.

The kind of "interpretation" (so-called) of that school of thought that believes in "putting in the soul" (supposing there is any left) after a faultless mechanical technique has been acquired was assuredly not the interpretation taught in the Joachim School. This kind of "interpretation," which one can imagine a certain class of teacher recommending to his pupil at the end of his student days as a sort of extra rub of polish to be applied just before he appears in public, can only serve to remind the player at the eleventh hour that the music has after all some sort of significance. And all that he can possibly do at this eleventh hour is to try to master an art which he should have been studying ever since the day on which he first took an instrument into his hand—an impossible task which could only result in his having to undo and relearn a great deal of his already acquired technique.

In the Hochschule, on the other hand, one was more likely to hear a demonstration of the basic laws of interpretation at a student's

first lesson than at his last . . . by which time he would be supposed to have learnt them, if indeed he was ever going to learn them at all.

One felt it was tacitly assumed that any student that came to the Hochschule was interested in music for its own sake and from the very beginning (under any of the masters who really counted in the school) he started to learn the technique, which was to help him to play good music, and that was not a technique for its own sake or for the sake of display.

But the word interpretation has an important sound and people often seem to like using it in what appears to me rather a muddled sense, meaning apparently some fine quality which is the opposite of technical.

Hence a player is described as having "a large technique but no interpretation," or conversely, "no technique but good interpretation."

Yet as soon as one begins to study an instrument seriously with a view to making music sound as one thinks it ought to sound, technical and interpretative problems get so mixed up together that it is often hardly possible to separate them. For the sake of clearness, therefore, I will try to define as exactly as possible the one sense in which each of these words, Interpretation and Technique, are used in these notes.

Interpretation : (1) the act of decoding from the paper on which they stand dumb a combination of musical signs, many of which have a variety of meanings ; (2) the act of making these decoded signs intelligible to other people.

Technique : the translation of these decoded signs as well as those which are not ambiguous, from the imagination into actual sounds, by means of a particular instrument.

The fact, therefore, that interpretation does not only mean decoding the signs for your own benefit but also translating them for the benefit of others, brings the meaning of the word at once into the technical sphere.

Or to put it still more clearly the act of interpretation, which means both decoding and also translating, automatically creates and opens up a wide field in the sphere of technique which would otherwise, without a doubt, be neglected.

Conversely, the fact that this large field of technique is certain to be

overlooked and neglected where there is no interest in the music for its own sake, brings technique at once into the sphere of interpretation.

In simpler language the two things overlap quite inextricably so that it is no more likely that a player with "no technique" will be a good interpreter (although he may show potential ability in the direction of interpretation) than it is that another will possess a comprehensive technique without taking an interest in the music for its own sake.

As a test of this assertion let any player get up a piece of music just to that point at which he can play the notes fluently. Then let him lay aside his instrument for half an hour and study the piece all over again from the paper alone, merely imagining to himself what it should sound like. When after this he tries to play it again I shall be much surprised if he does not find that a large new field of technical study has just opened up before him.

If the words interpretation and technique *are* often used to denote simply (1) evidence of an intelligent outlook, (2) a brilliant physical agility, this does not alter the fact that to use these words in such a limited sense is loose if not incorrect.

I prefer, therefore, to make this section under the heading of "Interpretation" only a short one, and I insert it at this place solely to define the sense in which I use the word. A section on technique I shall not attempt at all and feel that it will be much more productive of results to proceed into that large field which is overlapped by each of these words.

Because, however, these notes were originally undertaken (as has already been explained) with the view of merely clearing up some purely technical (*i.e.* physical) points in playing these physical matters have naturally been dealt with first. Conversely it is likely that the few purely interpretative questions will tend to appear towards the end. No doubt one could be very much more explicit in this matter and it would be possible to divide and subdivide the subject into many sections under many and various headings. If one did so, much of the technical study which was carried on in the Hochschule might be named the "technique of expressiveness" as distinguished from the technique of mere agility which is commonly the only thing visualised when the word technique is used.

This technique of expressiveness would include (1) the recognition of all the various kinds of tone-colours, accents, etc., etc., and the multiple variations of these as they occur in actual music and (2) the muscular ability to produce these when required.

The first of these one can compare merely to the knowledge every painter has of the colours in his paint-box. This knowledge, which to all painters is an elementary necessity, seems in music, however, to have required the most inspired musicians to drive it into their pupils.

The second requirement, which is one peculiar to the art of musical performance, *i.e.* the muscular ability to produce any particular colour or shade of expression when required, will, of course, not be studied if the first has not been recognised.

Thus one finds so much left to mere chance and to the mood of the moment that it is not surprising that, even given talented and imaginative players, a great deal does not come off as they intend it to. One recognises, therefore, that much that falls flat and is inexpressive is due to muscular inability, that the muscles have, therefore, to be trained under the supervision of a constant and conscious awareness of the emotional side of the music which is being played.

With the duller kind of players there would, of course, be much more than this to be said, and probably, in this case, an upheaval in their attitude to life in general would be required to make much difference to their playing.

13. *Preliminary Studies*

A point worth remembering is that, in addition to the studies of Kreutzer, Rode and Fiorello, the concertos of Viotti, Kreutzer, Rode and Spohr were very widely used in the school, some of them certainly for their own sake but a good many as preliminary studies before tackling the greater music, Mozart, Beethoven, etc., for the reason that the kind of technique needed to play these smaller concertos is of the same nature as that required for Mozart and Beethoven, while imposing, of course, a far lighter tax on the understanding of the player.

They were, therefore, very much used for this purpose and the bigger concertos were reserved for later study.

Mozart, in particular, was looked upon as the very most advanced test and as requiring the most mature and perfect technique ; and it was only towards the end of your student time that you expected to get a chance of trying what you could make of him.

Compare this to the ordinary dilettante attitude in which an "easy" work of Mozart is so commonly tackled with the levity and confidence of a child reciting a nursery rhyme !

14. *Langweiligkeit (Wearisomeness)*

Students were continually being told that they were playing such and such a passage or section of their piece in a "wearisome (langweilige) or boring" manner.

This was not thrown at their heads as abuse, however, but it was clearly pointed out and demonstrated why the performance was boring ; and, roughly speaking, it always resolved itself into this :

That the phrases did not have natural climaxes, but were played in a flat and *unnatural* way, without point or shape.

I think the best way to make this clear in writing is to recall the experiences (which we must all have had) :

- (1) Of listening to a schoolchild reciting a piece of poetry which it doesn't understand ;
- (2) Of listening to a guide in an historical building reciting off reams of facts learnt off by heart like a parrot or a piece of machinery, or
- (3) An actor on the stage doing the same thing with his part.

In all three cases the weakness of the performance is patent to any listener and the cause of it just as clear, *i.e.* that although the mechanical elocution may be all there, correct enough, yet the mind and intelligence is so much out of action that the sense is barely intelligible.

In the first case it is the result of want of understanding in the performer ; in the second, of paralysis of the understanding and interest through constant repetition ; and in the third it is either the

result of one or both of these or of nerves or of all three circumstances combined.

The curious thing is that this failure to make clear sense, which is so obvious to every one through the medium of another art, *e.g.* speech, passes often quite undetected and unobserved in music; so that it would almost appear that in music special training is required in most cases to make plain what is only too blatantly obvious once it has been heard.

It would appear from the playing of the younger generation of players that most modern schools leave out this side of musical study altogether and I have many times heard players with world-wide reputations do things in this line for which a Hochschule student in his first year would have got a sharp reprimand and for which, in his last, he would have been given up as a hopeless case.

Here, in Edinburgh, we have the inestimable advantage of the presence of a Tovey, whose performances both on the piano and orchestra one might expect to become an object-lesson in this way to all who ever heard them, so that, as by the miraculous Dragon's blood in Siegfried, the perceptions would once and for all become clarified and able to distinguish, instantly and ever after, between consecutive sounds which convey sense and reason and those which do not.

Yet I have noticed not only that there are people who listen to a representative Tovey performance with apparent appreciation of his "interpretation," and on the top of this to some other performance in which interpretation is not worried about at all, with equal "appreciation," but that people who are unquestionably musical often do not seem to notice faults of playing of a kind which directly interfere with the phrasing and sense (hence "interpretation") when these occur on an instrument which they do not themselves play.

From this one must infer that the power to listen to sounds as they occur in the atmosphere quite without any connection with the physical way in which they are produced is one which is difficult to acquire and that every one is liable to have a deaf side. Also that the openness of the perceptions and interest in musical sounds for their own sake is apt to be lessened rather than increased by the playing of any particular instrument. Yet nearly all potential

musicians do play some kind of instrument before they begin to do any serious listening.

If, on the other hand, the process were reversed and the earliest musical instructions were entirely devoted to the ear, so that later on when physical difficulties had to be tackled, the power of, so to speak, "disembodied" listening (*i.e.* of listening not only to sounds produced by any sort of instrument, but also to those produced by oneself—in exactly the same detached spirit) could be referred back to as the foundation for all else; then, certainly, most of the obstacles in the way of good "interpretation" would disappear at once and the performances of a great interpretative artist (no matter what his instrument might be) could then work on the mind without obstruction and would do all that "instruction" from the outside can ever do for any one.

Things being as they are, however, it is difficult to see how "interpretation" in music could ever flourish in general as a study unless taught separately to each kind of instrumentalist with detailed reference to the special technique of each separate kind of instrument.

This is exactly the kind of training that stringed instruments did get at the Hochschule and is why the Hochschule teaching is so especially applicable to the string quartet.

Therefore, instead of giving merely the general idea of what was meant by "langweiliges," *i.e.*, "boring" playing, it is possible to amplify this by a number of specific details directly connected with bowing and tone-production on the violin or cello (a number of which have already been mentioned), as well as by others of a more general nature regarding phrasing and emphasis.

One technical matter in connection with bowing, which bears very directly on the question of "boring" phrasing and emphasis, and which has already once been mentioned, is the universal tendency to "bulge" in the middle of the bow where the stick and the tension of the hair is weakest.

The reason of this tendency is plain enough that the arm as it extends itself is glad of more support and therefore leans more heavily on the string just where the bow is weakest.

When, however, it gets past the point where the forearm is at right angles to the upper arm, the weight of the arm begins to lighten just where the bow begins to get stronger and occasions a

falling away of the tone, which only makes the bulge in the middle more obvious.

This weakness, which for some reason or other is even more prevalent amongst cellists than it is amongst violinists, was entirely absent from the playing of Joachim and Hausmann and it was one of the faults which was at once pounced upon in the Hochschule.

In long, slow bows from hilt to point and back again without any *vibrato* at all you had to practise producing an even tone throughout. This obviously means less pressure where it is easy to make it, *i.e.* in the middle of the bow—and much more, where it is more difficult, *i.e.* at the point. In other words, the volume of tone at the point must correspond to that produced in the middle.

This is a case in point where strength of arm is definitely an advantage, because if the maximum volume of tone producible in the middle can be balanced by that produced at the point it is obviously to the good.

From the foundation of this even tone you were then free to produce hairpin *crescendos* and *decrescendos*, where you wanted them, and the fact that you were not continually producing involuntary and unintentional ones made these intentional ones far more effective and telling.

How monotonous phrasing can become if this technical weakness is not very carefully avoided can most easily be seen if you take a phrase where the same pattern is repeated two or more times as in the following :

The image contains three musical staves illustrating phrasing patterns. The first staff shows four measures with dynamic markings (<_1>, <_2>, <_3>, <_4>) and a crescendo. The second staff shows a phrase with 'Even tone', 'Climax(1) or Climax(2)', and 'Even tone' sections. The third staff shows a phrase with 'Even tone', 'Climax', and 'Even tone' sections.

I do not think it is possible in a phrase of only a few bars length, like these which have been quoted, to feel more than one climax each time you play it, but there may be differences of opinion as to *where* the climax occurs, and one time you may feel it in one way and another time in another.

Thus, in the second copy of the first example, I have marked two places where the climax might occur and you might play it one time the one way and another time the other with an equally natural effect, whereas the expression marks in the first copy would always sound dull and monotonous.

It was this sort of variety of emphasis in phrasing which you noticed in Joachim's playing, so that one never felt (as with so many players) that one knew beforehand just how he was going to play any given phrase, but it was as if the music were occurring to him just then for the first time (as it must originally have occurred to the composer) and he were playing it just as he happened to feel inclined at that moment.

Again, in order to make this point quite clear, it is a good thing to have recourse to words, because when translated like this it is at once obvious to any one.

Take, for instance, the following sentence :

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
"I was walking along the road on the way to the town				
(6)	(7)			
yesterday afternoon."				

I have marked seven words on which the emphasis might fall quite reasonably and naturally, but the sense of the sentence is materially altered according to *which* word receives the emphasis, and *whichever* one receives it, all the rest must be passed over with as little emphasis as possible if the sense is to be made really clear : *i.e.* the *more* words that are emphasised in a sentence the *less* emphatic does the sentence as a whole become and *vice versa*.

Accordingly, when the emphasis comes on No. 1 "I," the meaning is that "I was walking," etc. (*i.e.* "not some one else"); when on No. 2 ("was") some contradiction of the fact that "I was walking" is implied; when on No. 3 ("walking") the fact that "I" was not "driving," "running," etc., is stressed; when

on No. 4 ("road") it is made clear that "I" was not upon the hillside, etc. ; and so on with the remaining three.

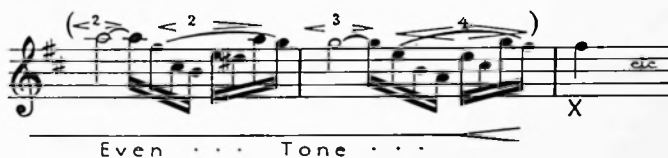
If, however, any one should pronounce the same sentence in the following manner :

" I was walking along the road on the way to the town yesterday
 <> <> <> <> <> <> <> <>
 afternoon,"
 <> <>

he would be put down at once as a quite unspeakably boring person.

If all this appears childishly obvious when applied to words the excuse for putting it down so crudely is simply this : that in music this fault is committed right and left not only by the less experienced but by advanced and very often distinguished players on stringed instruments without a word of criticism making itself heard, or without the players themselves or their audiences being aware (as it would appear) that any fault has been committed.

Were this not the case the following passages from Bach's famous "Air," played nearly always with the "bulges" set out below, would, I am sure, by this time have become notorious as an illustration of this fault whether played solo on the G string or by stringed orchestras in its original key :



It seems clear in this phrase that the climax, or at least the first resting-place, is on the last F# but if already four bulges (as above) have occurred, there is no longer any sense of there being a resting-place here at all. An additional difficulty in this phrase is that the change of position comes in each sequence in the same place, in the first on the C \natural and in the second on the B, and the tendency to make an extra pressure with the bow when the position is changed is universal and can only be prevented by very careful practice and listening.

In the Hochschule one was encouraged in passages of this sort

to study how the bowing could be varied in order to avoid monotony (I shall refer to this later) but in this particular case it is not easy to see how this could be done.

The resting-place, or goal, of the phrase also comes on a note (F#) which has to be sustained for three quaver beats and so starts quietly. Therefore the only way to make it clear that this is indeed the goal is to make the four last notes of the last sequence, or at any rate the *two* last ones, slightly more emphatic than all the rest of the semiquavers and to pass over the first sequence with absolutely no emphasis whatever.



It was in phrases such as the above that you were encouraged to change and vary the bowing because :

(1) The slur is there quite obviously only to indicate that the passage is *legato* and how it is to be phrased.

(2) Because if the bowing as above is rigidly adhered to sequences being played exactly alike are apt to sound monotonous.

(3) And because if so bowed the bow has to pass just three times as quickly over the string when the crotchet is being played as during the next three crotchet beats of semiquavers and thus the tendency to make a bulge, hence a boring stress on the crotchet, is very great, although it is not, of course, impossible to avoid this. The necessity of "getting rid" of the bow in passages of this sort is so very often the cause of monotonous emphasis that it is a thing that needs very special study and in the Hochschule a great deal of attention was paid to it and there were a number of ways of either avoiding or getting over the difficulty.



The already quoted phrase would probably have been bowed more or less as marked above, but might vary slightly at each performance except in the one point, *i.e.* that the sequences would be very unlikely to be bowed both alike.

In the next quotation there is the same difficulty of getting rid of the bow in the beginning of the last bar but one and a boring false emphasis is almost sure to result at this point unless the bowing is changed.



The way in which one usually hears the first violins of string orchestras play these two last bars with a big stress and a long quickly-drawn bow on the first two quavers of the penultimate bar and another slighter bulge on the last one would have been at once checked in the Hochschule and probably it would have been bowed and phrased something like this instead :



The actual difference in the bowing is trifling, but the stress on the beginning of the last bar but one, which always sounds as if it were made simply because the bow has to be got rid of, and not because the player feels it thus, is in this way avoided.



In the above, Example 7, although the bowing was not changed yet the general manipulation of the bow, the amount used and so on, was especially carefully studied from the point of view we have

just been considering, *i.e.* the avoidance of monotony of emphasis and phrasing. In this respect there are two obvious pitfalls, *viz.* :

- (1) The five couples of semiquavers at the beginning, followed by
- (2) Two bars of exactly the same pattern and a third, which is almost exactly the same.

A characteristic of Joachim's style was what is sometimes called a "long line" in phrasing. That is to say the climax of his phrases tended to come at the latest possible point and up to that point he had the power of sustaining the interest and of keeping up a steady even tone without bulges or any false emphasis of any kind.

Thus, in the last quotation, the first couple of semiquavers might be played with a long bow and expressive emphasis. The next four, on the other hand, would be passed over entirely without stress—played with little bow in about the upper third of the bow with concentrated tone and no *vibrato*.

The two syncopated crotchets (A C \sharp) in the next bars marked *f dim.* would then have to be played in contrast with plenty of *vibrato* to bring out the *forte* (which, however, cannot conceivably be intended to be more than a melodic *forte*) but with care not to use too much bow so that the couples of semiquavers that follow them may be passed over without any awkward and undue stress. The climax, or resting-place, might then at last be reached on the G \sharp following the three G naturals.

Although this G \sharp is itself a *piano* note it feels like a natural resting place, if not a dramatic climax. An earlier point (*i.e.* the beginning of the previous bar marked X) might, however, conceivably be preferred as the place for the climax,¹ or extra stress.

Above the text I have put expression marks to indicate another way of phrasing this theme, which I should have considered exaggerated in the opposite direction (*i.e.* of monotony of phrasing and multiplicity of stressed points) had I not lately heard it played almost exactly so by a player with a world-wide reputation.

¹ I have frequently used the word climax (because it is the one generally employed in discussing phrasing) in cases where the words goal, resting-place or merely stress would be more expressive and suitable.

15. *Pünkte* (dots)

These were interpreted in a variety of ways according to the general character of the piece in which they occurred.

(1) In quick *forte* passages they were nearly always simply taken to mean that the passage was a detached one, *not slurred*, and the bowing used was a firm and smooth stroke, generally in the middle of the bow.

This middle-bowing was very much used as the foundation of all quick detached playing and accordingly a lot of time was devoted to getting it firm, solid and flexible. For this kind of passage-playing the point of the bow was much less used.

Otherwise dots indicated either :

(1) Licks or Strokes (*i.e.* semi-*legato* movements that pass on in the same direction after contact is over) or

(2) Sprightly Hops with modifications of the two according to the character of the music being performed.

Thus the performer could never escape from the necessity of using his intelligence, *i.e.* of "interpreting" the signs before him.

One may say that the attitude towards *all* musical signs was this : that as a comparatively small number are at the disposal of the composer it is impossible for him to put down in black and white all that he wants to say so that a great number of them must necessarily have more than one meaning. Thus :



the above passage at A in a slow movement would never have been played either with (1) hopping, or else (2) dry staccato bowing, but with what they called a "getragene Bogen-Strich" (a carried bowing), that is to say each note would be played with a smooth "stroke," the bow just leaving the string between each and being carried onwards without any stop.

Then at B the up-bows would "lick" the string instead of hitting it and the arm would carry the bow on after leaving the

string and then return it to the original place to be ready for the next note.

In a fast movement, on the other hand, the above passage at A might of course be played either with

- (1) Light hopping bowing, or
- (2) Hard staccato bowing.

This perhaps rather crude and obvious instance of how one sign may have various meanings will be seen to lead to much less obvious instances presently.

In a fast movement a passage of dotted quavers or semiquavers in the *piano* might have been played either (1) with smooth bowing or (2) with springing bow (*spiccato*) or with a mixture of both. But a long perpetual motion movement such as the Bach E Major prelude (solo sonatas), whether marked with dots or without them, would seldom have been played with springing bow throughout. A feat of that kind was looked upon as a mechanical *tour de force* and mere display of dexterity without musical and interpretative value. The fact, then, that you learned springing bow from a foundation of smooth bowing, *i.e.* that it was always insisted on that the movement in both bowings was the same except for a "throwing" motion of the arm in springing bowing, which produced the spring, made it easy and natural for you to change from one bowing to the other in a long piece like the above mentioned.

From this it will be clear that dots (like all other musical signs) had to be interpreted and that although they were always taken due notice of they were not looked upon as automatically determining what bowing you were to use, but this had to be determined separately in each individual case.

16. *Sforzandos*

The subject of the *sforzando*, like everything else, was treated in an interesting and imaginative spirit.

Thus you realised that the sign *sfz* might represent a variety of things—purely emotional or else of a more external nature like gestures or incidents such as occur on the stage.

In the realm of pure emotion alone there would then be the

wide difference between fierce and angry emphasis, whether in the *forte* or *piano*, and tender stress ("innerliche Betonung"), and the many shades of expression betwixt these two—all of them represented by the one sign *sfz*.

All this means thought and technical practice too, both of bow and finger.

As already mentioned the *vibrato* was made great use of in *sforzandos* and the fact that it was often switched off entirely in other places made the added weight that it imparted on such occasions all the more effective.

But from the ordinary standpoint the *sfz* sign is one which merely indicates a particular kind of dig made by bow and arm on the string—a dry and hard action which suggests to the mind of the listener nothing much beyond rosin and horse-hair.

17. *Der Auftakt*

(the "up-beat," i.e. one note or more on the unaccented beat of a bar at the beginning of a phrase and leading up to the first beat of the next bar).

Joachim's style of playing entries on an *Auftakt* after rests of some length is a thing I well remember.

Such entries always entail a certain nervous strain, especially when they occur in piano and violin sonatas and the security of the piano intonation and tone have to be emulated.

They often make one think of some naked, shivering thing hesitating before entering cold water or, in more efficient performances, the hearer feels slightly irritated by their neat and rather hard preciseness. In quartets it is not so bad and the nerve-racking rests occur less often, but with Joachim it was always a case of just floating in apparently without any anxiety and without drawing undue attention to his own part. It gave one the impression that he was himself hardly conscious of his own individual entry so absorbed were his thoughts in what was being said round about him. So that when he did eventually come in it was merely because these thoughts had taken more definite shape and so become audible.

This is how I understand the injunction of Hausmann and others that one should "play" the rests.

18. *Repeats*

Just as the Joachim style of playing was flexible and imaginative so was the spirit of the Hochschule instruction flexible and not expressed, nor expressible, in hard and fast rules. Therefore in the matter of repeats, as in other matters, there were no rules laid down. But, because the spirit of the music was always the leading principle, a law about repeats, as about everything else, seemed to develop of its own accord.

In a general way I think the matter might be expressed as follows, *viz.* that just as in nature nothing ever seems to repeat itself exactly and there is something recognisable as individuality in, at any rate, every one of the human beings that people the earth (so at least the finger-print experts assure us), so in music and conversation exact repeats do not occur naturally, and when they are introduced arbitrarily, or because the player's or speaker's interest has become dormant and his mind is therefore working mechanically, then there is something obviously wrong.

One feels this in the case of long repeats but still more vividly where a theme, after its statement by one instrument, is repeated immediately by another. Some people may contend that the tone-colour of the new instrument is enough difference in itself. To my mind, however, a mere colour would always be too superficial a thing to express the intrinsic nature of a repeat, *i.e.* its subtle difference from the original statement which is the only reason for its occurring at all. This difference would vary according to how the first statement was made, but each time would spring directly out of this first statement.

All this, which sounds abstruse and involved when expressed as above, is crystal clear if one takes a sentence with some quite practical object in view as an example. For instance, "I am going out to sit under that tree."

There might be a variety of reasons for repeating these words: (1) The other person has not heard you rightly. (2) There is some opposition to your intended move.

In the first instance then you would speak throughout with greater emphasis so as to be clearly understood, in the second you would lay a stress on the word "am." In no case, however, would

you repeat the sentence without some reason and hence without some inflection of the voice different from the first time. Only a half-wit would do this.

Exactly the same is the case if it is another person who repeats the sentence. "You (I) are (am) going out to sit under that tree," would only be repeated by another person either (1) in the spirit of comment or question, *i.e.* "You are going to do that, are you?" or (2) in the spirit of opposition. The subtle inflections of voice necessary to convey these two different meanings would be different from each other just as they would be different from those employed by the first speaker in his original statement, and the mere difference of tone colour, or pitch of voice, would not be sufficient to convey the meaning.

In like manner repetitions of themes occur continually in instrumental music. In piano and violin sonatas they are particularly prominent and the piano usually makes the original statement while the violin has the repeat. In the ordinary performance the relation between the two sounds purely superficial, *i.e.* it consists entirely in the fact that the notes are exactly or nearly the same. But if one hums them over in one's head, without making any actual sound, some subtle difference always occurs of itself. It often seems to me that the repeat in the violin part is like a thoughtful response or else a questioning comment on what has been stated by the piano. This of itself leads one to play it with inflections different from those in the piano statement and emphasis often in different places.

In repeats of long sections such as those that occur in first movements, a new factor comes in. Because by the time you return to the beginning so much has occurred that you have quite lost touch with the first subject and with the original key. The repeat in this case seems then to have the character more of a reminder than anything else and it is natural to play it with less emphasis than the original statement.

It is just this very impression that one gets from many well-rehearsed and good performances to which no exception can be taken further than that they somehow fail to stir and interest you.

The whole, in fact, seems to be played in the way that it feels right and natural to play a long repeat: that is to say you are not given the first statement at all but only the reminder—the comment.

In certain compositions I have experienced a strong sensation as if the wind had suddenly been taken out of one's sails at the point when the repeat occurs. In such a case one starts it all over again lamely and without conviction and one wonders whether the feeling is entirely one's own fault or whether possibly the repeat has occurred mechanically just to conform with the convention.

As an instance I cite the first movement of Schubert's A Minor quartet in which the repeat always strikes me as being a mere interruption in the narration of an interesting story, a ballad—just the sort of interruption that irritates a child when it is keen to get on with the story and hear what happens next. With this in mind I was glad to notice at one of his classes that Professor Tovey, without hesitation or comment, struck out the repeat, and I do not think that this was on account of the length of the movement, which is no longer than many other first movements even with the repeat left in.

I have said and say again that, in the Hochschule, no hard and fast rules were laid down on this subject of repeats, but you just became aware of it as one of the many things which would solve itself so long as the player kept sufficiently interested and wide awake and did not let his intelligence get hide-bound by rules and conventions or blunted by habit.

19. *Repetitions*

When one considers what a number of times in practice and rehearsal the same ground has to be gone over towards the making of any good musical performance another aspect of the question of repeats, dealt with in the preceding section, at once presents itself. This aspect is one which is forced on the attention of the average actor from the very beginning of his career but, although just as important in playing as in acting, it is doubtful whether nine out of ten average musicians devote any serious attention to it.

It may be stated thus : how is a performance, which is in reality the product of innumerable repetitions during private practice, to sound like the spontaneous expression of the player's feelings at that very moment at which he is playing ?

To my mind it is the power to make the listener feel that this is the case, and nothing but this power that distinguishes the artist from the mere performer.

If, as is likely, there is a variety of reasons for its not being recognised amongst average musicians as it is amongst actors of the same standard, one, at least, of these reasons is that the technical equipment of the musician is so much more complicated than that of the actor that it is only too apt to absorb the whole attention of the performer, and the striving after mere euphony may have the effect of making this euphony into an obsession which blots out other considerations. Add to this the unnaturally strained atmosphere of the concert hall haunted by the nightmare demon of nerves and one can understand without difficulty that a player who is well aware that the vital spark can never be wholly alive until he abandons all considerations except that of his own individual reactions to the music at the very moment at which he is playing—one can understand, I say, that even such a player may still not be able to screw up his courage to the point of this final abandonment. For a sudden new light on a musical phrase may, and often does upset carefully practised fingerings and bowings, etc., in a way which may not only damage smoothness of effect but lead to actual breakdown—and to risk this in public performance either a superabundant self-confidence or an overmastering inspiration must be there.

The power of playing a thing perfectly familiar to him, "as if he were playing it for the first time," was a feature of Joachim's playing which excited much comment and which none could miss who had ears to hear.

I have been told by one who knew him well and often heard his quartet in private performances that he invariably made a point of having the brightest possible light arranged to shine on his music, "even when," as my informant remarked, "he probably knew the whole thing off by heart."

What then, one wonders, would have been his attitude towards the modern habit of performing chamber music without the notes? As he himself, without a doubt, was as capable of this feat as those who nowadays perform it one naturally concludes from the mere fact of his not having done so—even if no internal evidence pointed in the same direction—that he did not wish so to perform it.

But I feel that there is also plenty of such internal evidence. Any one old enough to have heard a Joachim Quartet concert in the Berlin Sing Akademie during the first years of the century will remember the informal atmosphere the "Gemüthlichkeit," which distinguished the gathering. A cheerful homeliness, friendliness, comfort both of body and mind, freedom from nerves and strain—all this and more is expressed by that unique German word "Gemüthlichkeit."

Press representatives were, without a doubt, present at these concerts as at any other but one did not feel their presence, and when the four grey-bearded men appeared on the platform making their way slowly to their desks between rows of people who occupied the platform seats, with individual members amongst whom they often exchanged friendly greetings in passing, one felt at once in the atmosphere of a real "chamber" concert, however large the hall and the audience might be.

One knew that the quartet was surrounded by personal friends and one felt that it was to these that they came to play and that with a long and firmly-established reputation they could afford to disregard other elements.

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.

So much was this the case that even when one came as a student of the violin itself it was surprising how little attention one paid to the actual violin-playing. The whole performance gave one the impression of a sort of public "Musizieren" (music-making, playing for pleasure) free from the strain and nerves of an ordinary concert and I have only had the same sort of impression since on the occasions of Professor Tovey's Sunday night piano recitals.

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.

To say that Joachim often played a thing "as if he were doing so for the first time" does not absolutely describe my own personal impression of his performance.

To me it seemed more like some one renewing the acquaintance

of an old friend—a thing which always calls up deeper human feelings than does the meeting with an entire stranger. Or it was as if he were throwing open a chest full of precious possessions which have been carefully laid aside and half-forgotten and was now experiencing keen pleasure both in discovering new qualities in them himself and in displaying them to his friends.

One even wonders whether it is possible that he allowed, or actually encouraged, himself to forget, partially, what he was about to play, just in order that this rediscovery might be the more pleasurable and his interpretation hence the fresher and the more vital.

If the consummate mastery of technique and nerve together with the vast experience which makes such a performance possible is beyond the reach of most, still it is, I feel, the one goal worth aiming at for any artist.

If it is then really possible to reach this goal in ensemble chamber music when playing by heart I have yet to hear it accomplished.

For the aim of such of those playing-by-heart organisations as I have heard seems to me to be as exact an opposite to this other aim (which I have tried to describe) as one could well imagine.

Is it not just this—such an absolute familiarity with notes and with every prearranged mode of bowing, fingering, phrasing, etc., that such an event as a new light at the last moment is inconceivable and so quite ruled out of count?

If this spontaneous style of Joachim's, with its great variety of phrasing, had the effect of misleading admirers who attempted to imitate him into making conscious differences between one performance and another of the same thing the fault was that of the admirers, not of the style.

It is true, however, that a very exact prearrangement of bowings and fingerings, in cases where the technical difficulties were not great, was not encouraged in the Hochschule. Such prearrangement and unnecessary exactitude, it was felt, only served to hamper this spontaneous development of impulse at the last moment.

Throughout everything and all the time one felt that it was the replica, the reproduction, which was being guarded against as perhaps the very *lowest* crime in art—just as to-day it is this very replica, this reproduction in the hundredth and thousandth degree,

with all that attention to minutiae and polish in unessentials, made possible only by the closest and repeated inspection, which is generally regarded as the *highest* virtue of all.

I think it was not less with the aim of minimising as far as might be the necessary evil of repetition in practice with its subversive effect on spontaneity than in order simply to save time that some of the best teachers of that period tried to foster conscious good habits and methods of practice in their pupils.

From Arthur Williams above all others one got help and guidance in this matter.

Thus the habit, universal amongst players until they have thought about it, of correcting themselves when something goes wrong midway in a passage and then proceeding with it had to be entirely eliminated from one's practice. If a stumble did occur one went on *without* correction to the end, making the best of it, and then tackled the bad bit by itself carefully and consciously.¹

The number of unnecessary repetitions and (because of their faultiness particularly irritating repetitions) which are thus avoidable is quite incalculable and one realises that the bad habit of interruption and correction, instead of helping matters in any way, is, on the contrary, just accustoming one's mind and one's muscles to do the very thing which every player desires to avoid, *i.e.* to stumble.

¹I have used the word "consciously" above with set purpose. When a passage has been thoroughly got up it will run off the fingers automatically although the consciousness is riveted on some quite other matter. I have actually seen a great pianist reading with attention and concentration a book, propped up before him on the desk, while his fingers all the while were running over difficult passages out of something he was about to play in public. This was as a test in order to find out whether or not there had been a sufficient amount of muscular training of the fingers.

But if one relies too soon on this physical memory a great deal of stumbling is sure to be the result and a much quicker way of gaining the desired end, *i.e.* automatic precision, is to master the passage "by head," that is to say with full mental consciousness, before you do so "by heart" and then, as a test, to play it through not only "by" heart but "with" heart—forgetting, as far as possible, all the previous work.

In this way you keep the ideas of *practice* and *play* separated in your mind—whereas in most people's so-called practice, or in any case, most children's practice, the two are, generally, so muddled together that an immense amount of time is wasted in what is neither real practice nor real play.

In this connection Arthur Williams also taught a method of practice which all who tried it found effective. It was based on the principle that the end of a difficult passage, whether itself difficult or not, always suffered from the cumulative effect of nerves and anxiety as one proceeded.

Therefore you started by making sure of the last note and then, gradually adding note by note, each time playing to the end of the passage, paused there a moment and then began again—so slowly receding until at length the beginning was reached.

By this time, if the practice had been thorough, the whole passage would be going smoothly.

20. *Schools*

There are some people who express unqualified distrust of what are known as “schools”—that is in the sense of schools of thought—methods of doing anything or styles which can be handed on from one person to another.

As a mere point of view this one is easily understood and easy to sympathise with. Some big personality attracts admirers and followers. His style becomes that on which they model their own. Finally this style, which was originally the unconscious outcome of a strong personality, may become, in the hands of the many less endowed followers, a mere rootless thing—a dead copy with no longer any real value.

One can seldom, however, form a just opinion about anything without considering it from more than one point of view and obviously, in this case, if you accepted this particular one as the only possible view it would be very misleading and, if pursued to a logical conclusion, would be as much as to say not only that good influence, good environment and good teaching are all useless and can never bear healthy fruit but that the reverse of all these can never do any harm.

If a big personality in a community tends, in certain cases, by its dominating power to cramp original development in others, where it encounters sufficient life and vigour in its surroundings it acts, on the contrary, as a definitely stimulating force which actually generates *new* life and *new* vigour in these.

It is only in this sense that I can understand that enigmatic, paradoxical statement in the New Testament, "To him that hath shall be given . . . and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

In a vigorous community that which is expressed makes always more impression than the manner in which it happens to be expressed. In the case of an artist, therefore, his individual style will survive and be carried on by others in a healthy condition only in so far as this is essential to what he has communicated to them.

It was just this state of things that seemed actually to exist in the Joachim environment. My own personal impressions here noted down were, for instance, gained not only from Joachim's own playing but from the teaching of three other people all widely dissimilar both in character and playing from each other as also (notwithstanding that they were his disciples) from Joachim himself.

To understand how this could be, and actually was, the case one need only call to mind that quality in the Joachim style (unless one is to call it something still deeper than style?), which of all its qualities was the most striking, and which has so often been mentioned, *i.e.* its spontaneity—the impression made that nothing was prearranged, that all of it was feeling and thought experienced at the very moment of playing.

This is something which it is impossible to imitate slavishly for the good reason that no one thinks and feels in exactly the same manner, but it is possible to train the minds of pupils into this attitude towards what they themselves are playing and this is just what one felt was being aimed at.

It is, therefore, not surprising that one should have found so many strong and dissimilar individualities belonging to the Joachim school.

For this sort of training is the very opposite of the teaching that aims at making pupils imitate and play according to pattern.

That the deep impressiveness of the great music in Joachim's hands made many people feel that to play it in an essentially different manner was tantamount to misunderstanding it, does not alter what I have said; nor, I think, does the fact that there are certain physical attributes common to the playing of all pupils of the Joachim school.

Many of these to which I have already drawn sufficient attention seem essential to a particular feeling for the music, and in any case

there is nothing in them to cramp the development of a wide range of individual personality wherever such personality exists.

I do not believe that there is any true originality which is not like something else and is not traceable to something which has gone before it.

For if it is true that we are all different it is at least as true that we are all alike.

Widely different, therefore, from that freakish triviality which is often held up as the truly original, vital originality has its roots in the past and carries on its development in the future. If this were not so education would be a myth and progress a thing not even to be dreamed of.

I believe also that genuine admiration is always, and cannot help being, original. However much the admirer seems to model himself in accordance with the thing or person admired he cannot help, so long as the admiration remains real, being to this extent original, and the more absorbing the admiration is the more original he will be.

No better example of this truth could be found than in the adoration of Boswell for Johnson, the intensity of which brings out his own utterly different personality and manner of thought in a way which probably nothing else could have done.

Through contact with Hausmann, Klingler and Arthur Williams, I had, as already so often mentioned, personal experience of the way in which the Joachim influence could bring out the originality of others.

There are in this country many people who have had more intimate experience than I have of the teaching of Arthur Williams, the last named of these three. Yet none of them, I am sure, will contradict me when I say that the great and exacting severity of his teaching was all of it directed towards three things: (1) getting the pupil to hear the sounds which he himself was producing; (2) making the pupil realise what those sounds were, which he really did, after thorough study of the text, wish to produce; and (3) teaching him to produce these and not other sounds, unhampered, as far as possible, by physical and executive disability.

As a matter of course he handed on to his pupils the noble conception of the great music which he himself believed in and so

gave them a chance of taking it in so far as in them lay. At that he left it.

His almost uncanny instinct for spotting the cause of and remedy for awkwardness in style and in physical movements which did not follow natural laws, manifested itself in the way in which, during his own last years, he succeeded without help in mastering a perfect golf swing.

However cramping this training may have been in the initial stages (and all training is bound to be so at the beginning) the final demand which he made on every pupil in ultimate performance was self-expression and only self-expression—the giving away of himself in his playing—the performance of the music as he himself felt it *at the very moment of playing*. His aim, in short, seemed to be to give the pupil, so to speak, the freedom of his own powers.

The same attitude characterised all that which I have bulked, for the sake of brevity, under the one term “Hochschule teaching”; but I here mention Arthur Williams in particular as being the one who was perhaps the most uncompromisingly explicit in this attitude towards his work as a teacher.

It is difficult to see what exception could be taken to a “school” possessing this character. For the truth is that the very foundation on which it was built was a protest against imitation—against the pattern—against the replica in any shape or form.

21. *Das Athmen* (BREATHING) (*Joints. Punctuation*)

Any Tovey student will be familiar with the injunction to “breathe”—as also to attend to “joints” and to “punctuation.”

I do not remember the last two similes being used in the Hochschule. That of “breathing” (*das Athmen*), however, was in continual use and as it brings in the idea of singing, with all that this implies, it is the most important and all-embracing of the three. For although breathing is one of the difficulties of singing, the fact of its being an absolute necessity is, from a musical point of view, the greatest help to a singer, and it is one that many instrumentalists have not got.

For no teacher of singing, however primitive, can leave out the problem of the breath and few people are so unintelligent that they cannot hear when this is taken in quite a wrong place.

For there are the words also to help the singer and a breath taken in the middle of a sentence throws out the sense too badly to pass unnoticed by most people. It follows, therefore, that the singer almost immediately has to make a study of the places where he can take breath—and with the words to help him he has a good chance of finding the best places.

The same problem of breathing exists for the wind-player except that for him there are no words to help.

The pianist on the other hand has nothing either physical or mental to guide him, and as for the string player, he has only got his bow.

This last, however, leads one astray far oftener than it gives help in this matter because phrases are so apt to be cut conveniently short or else lengthened, according to the length of the bow, and emphasis is so liable to occur just where the bow is weakest whether it happens to be the right place or the wrong one.

But you can never be led astray by imagining yourself a singer with breathing and words to consider, and it has always seemed to me that the arts of acting and dancing should also be brought in as a guide to the instrumentalist. That is to say the singer who has also to act and to dance on occasion is the artist who necessarily has the most guidance as to the purely musical side of his vocation.

For if :

(1) Breathing in singing is a study in itself the fact that it is absolutely necessary to breathe somewhere makes it likely that the singer will look for the best places to take breath.

(2) If the speaking of poetry is a study in itself the fact that two sentences run into one makes nonsense will probably lead to the singer taking breath between sentences, hence between phrases.

(3) If action and gesture are a study in themselves the fact that the opera singer has to consider these in relation to what he is singing is likely to make his phrasing more reasonable than it would otherwise be and the same thing applies to dancing when it occurs.

Hence any art (and in this case music), the more it is brought into relation with real life by combining with other arts the better art it becomes.

One feels that any good performance of an opera, and perhaps most of all of a Mozart opera, ought to bring this point home vividly to any one, especially so if the playing of the overture which precedes it has been of the dry and precise type which has become so much the fashion.

For suddenly the kind of phrases which have sounded stiff and dull in the purely instrumental section spring into life and vigour when the play and the singing start and they have to take their place as part of the whole in harmony with sentence, action and gesture and with the dramatic changes of mood as depicted on the stage. In fact one feels now for the first time perfectly clear in one's mind as to what has been lacking in the overture, *i.e.* not necessarily any high flight and effort of the imagination but simply a human, vigorous and wide-awake interest in life itself, not merely of the dramatic, emotional kind, but normal, everyday life with the gestures and movements which are natural to this.

After hearing such a performance it is difficult to understand how any one can return, and return with apparent complacency, to the prevalent plodding and prim style of playing Mozart's instrumental music. One would think, on the contrary, that any normal person would exclaim at once with a sigh of relief, "Now at last I see the mistake of all this."

The restfulness (*Ruhe*) of Joachim's playing was continually being commented upon in Berlin and no one hearing him could help being struck by this quality in all his performances, whether of slow or fast music. Liveliness, spirit, subtlety, speed, nothing seemed to make any difference to this sense of rest and balance and all feeling of nervous tension and rush as of the yet more common over-concentration and conscientious plodding onward were entirely absent. Thus one could always settle down quietly and without strain to listen to him in what might almost be described as a plastic mood.

At the time one simply accepted it as a part of "Joachim," as a serenity natural to a great old man. But gradually something farther struck you and, looking back from this distance of time,

I feel that this poise and balance had also something more tangible and definable at its root.

The fact that Hausmann's younger energy, intensity and entirely different character did not in the least upset the poise of the quartet, goes to prove that one must look further for the cause of it and my own belief is that when Joachim's own energies were younger one would have been struck by the same essential quality in his playing.

It was indeed just this quality that, to my mind, was the germ of all that which made the Hochschule influences at that time so unique. I shall have to return to this most fundamental matter later on, but mention it in the meantime only because I believe it was largely the result of Joachim taking "breath" not only more often but also much more frankly and quietly, in the manner of a great singer, than most instrumental players do. One never got the impression, therefore, of breathless gasping or a hurried pant and the whole performance gave one the feeling of being in a well-ventilated spacious hall as compared with a crowded and stuffy one.

To all this it may be objected that the players of those instruments which do not actually need breath to make them sound, should not consider breathing at all; that they should on the contrary take full advantage of their emancipation from this thralldom of the "breath" and not in any way think it necessary to imitate the voice.

To this I can only answer :

(1) That the voice is the only musical instrument not man-made and is therefore certainly the first instrument. So that the pre-historic man who in some primeval forest cut a reed and blew notes on it for the first time or twanged a cord drawn taut across a piece of wood, could not have avoided comparing the sounds thus produced to those made by his own voice.

Nor can we avoid it nowadays any more than he could then whatever instrument we may play.

A full orchestra always remains a combination of a great many "voices"—some of them the voices of queer creatures, perhaps, not always human ones—but still the voices of living, not of mechanical, things and it may well be that due attention to this

matter of the "breath" alone (whether the actual physical breath or the psychological one) might prove the veritable salvation of music, keeping it eternally a concern of what is human and living, instead of letting it become a victim to the unholy spirit of mechanism which seems on the point of swallowing up everything.

Then, in looking upon music always as something "sung," you do not run the same risk of "over punctuation," which you do when considering it merely as a combination of spoken sentences with commas, semi-colons, dashes and all the rest of it. For one of the distinctions of good singing is the ability, when required, to sing a long passage in one breath, and keeping this in mind a good singer is not very likely to get into the habit of overdoing the commas and the lesser divisions of the sentences and so wasting his precious breath. On the other hand, when the long passage is at an end he can reward himself with a deep unhurried breath quite unconcerned about the loss of time so that the sense of conscientious plodding or of soulless mechanism is never present.

This is just what one did feel about Joachim's playing : when the occasion called for it you would get the long-lined sentence with no pedantic overdoing of the commas but at the end of this the deep contented breath would always restore the feeling of leisure, restfulness and balance.

The failure to take breath is always more noticeable in the older so-called classical music (that is, anything up to Beethoven, in Mozart and Beethoven, to my mind, most of all), than it is in what is more modern and of more liquid texture as, for instance, Schumann or Brahms, and I have noticed that many players who let themselves go with freedom and warmth so that the breaths come of themselves in the works of these more modern composers draw themselves in at once and become rigid and mechanical on approaching the older music. And one cannot escape the impression that this is deliberately done in the belief that it is "classically" correct to do so.

If this is noticeable in solos it becomes much more pronounced in ensemble work where the difficulty of playing together with some one else, always tends, in itself, to produce rigidity.

It was this mechanical conception of "the classics" that one escaped from (at that time) in Berlin so that later on, when Berlin

Hochschule, Joachim, Hausmann and all had receded into the distance and one found oneself once more associating with people who had never been under their influence and with whom the mechanical was the normal conception, you felt a temptation to commit any sort of extravagant exaggeration rather than fall again a victim to the unholy sway—a quite irresistible temptation, like that of the sleepless man who threw his boot at the grandfather clock in a frenzied belief that in the destruction of its internal mechanism lay the only hope of stopping the infernal tick.

The fact is that the intervals for “breathing” (if they are made in the right places) can be prolonged well beyond what is necessary without really disturbing the sense of rhythm, whereas time put off in wrong places upsets it very much indeed. This is a thing which will strike any one if he puts it to the test and as a proof one need only recall the episodes of patter often introduced into music-hall songs at the breathing places, varying in length from one to many words, which, however, in no way interfere with the sense of rhythm or cause the listener to lose the thread of the tune when this is taken up again.

The reason, therefore, for *not* making breaths too long is simply because it becomes tedious if you do so, *not because it destroys the rhythm*. A common idea, however, is that all such intervals are quite impermissible “rhythmically” and that the mechanism, once it has been wound up and set agoing, must be allowed to run itself out without further interference.

Therefore, to take “breaths” of even reasonable—not to speak of exaggerated—length in such a performance was, as I found to my cost, quite as great a crime as the wilful introduction of grit into any other kind of mechanism. This was obvious from the scandalised looks of disapproval which you encountered whenever you tried the experiment so that, on the principle that it is as well to be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, the performances often developed into a regular fight between absolute rigidity and deliberate exaggeration in the opposite direction—resorted to in the hope that eventually some sort of compromise might be reached. The experience which one gained by this exaggerating was in itself illuminating. For one gradually became aware that the depths of the “breaths” taken bore a relation and were in proportion, not

only to the length, but also to the importance, or the reverse, of the piece performed.

That perhaps is why one often hears a player play small solos with great poise and beauty and yet when he comes to something bigger his style seems at once to become cramped and finical and the poise and balance are gone.

It would be easy to dispose of this phenomenon in a sweeping way by saying simply that a mind which is big enough to tackle small things is not necessarily adequate to cope with what is larger, and it might be enough to say this if there was no such thing as musical instruction and every one was left to find the way for himself.

But as no one ever reaches the stage of playing the larger things without instruction of some sort you have to take into consideration what this instruction has been, before making up your mind about the capacity of the player. For if from his earliest youth certain hard and fast conventions have been set before him as inflexibly right and beyond question the counteracting of these will require not only a quite phenomenal musical intuition but also a capacity as phenomenal for setting at naught public opinion. And although he may not possess these abnormal qualifications yet his ability and intuition might have been sufficiently good to have developed into a healthy growth under more natural auspices—just as the child thrives in sunshine and fresh air but becomes meagre and stunted in a closed atmosphere.

Yet, while these hard and fast conventions are enforced much *more* severely in so called classically-constructed big music, it is just these big works which actually require proportionately much *more* open space, freedom and air, than do the smaller ones where convention conversely and perversely allows more liberty. These two facts put together create a sufficiently hopeless situation and one so puzzling or else cramping to the intelligence of the student that there is small wonder that few get through.

In the Hochschule all the students were young, but I have often noticed in what a puzzling dilemma conventionally-trained older students find themselves when they first begin to attend Professor Tovey's classes in the Edinburgh University. Because here they at once have so many of their tenets of faith upset and

are obliged for the first time to distinguish between licence and freedom.

Much more will have to be said on this subject before it can be made at all clear but in a general way I will say here that a Joachim performance, far from giving one the impression of lawlessness and licence, made one feel at once that some far more adamant law than the ordinary one was being followed, but that this, being at the same time a far deeper law, was much more difficult to define and understand and that any hard and fast rule always led one farther away from it rather than towards it.

Personally, I have found that ever since those days vivid impressions of the whole thing, of what it meant and what the secret of it was, have continually come back to me in flashes which have, however, illuminated something much more like a picture or scene than any tangible point which could be explained. It is only in latter years, strengthened by listening to Tovey performances, that some hints of the underlying law have protruded clearly enough in my mind to be grasped and to some extent defined.

For the present, as regards this question of "breathing," I shall only say that the impression given was that an atmosphere was already there sufficiently buoyant and oxygenated and contained in sufficient space for the floating (so to speak) of the work and that when this work was a big one more atmosphere and more space was needed and, *vice versa*—when it was a small one—less.

As the conventionally trained musicians, however, do exactly the opposite and seem at once to turn off the supply of atmosphere when they approach a big work (in sonata form, for instance) while at the same time drawing in the space boundaries proportionately, one gets the uncomfortable impression of bulk out of place—without shape—because there is no room to see it; without purpose, because there is no atmosphere and scope for it to move in.

Thus it became gradually clear (and has since become clearer by listening to discussions between thoughtful musicians) that "rhythm" (which by derivation means "measured motion"—also "proportion," "symmetry," "shape") has as much to do with things in space as with things in time.

Yet to the conventional player "rhythm" not only appertains

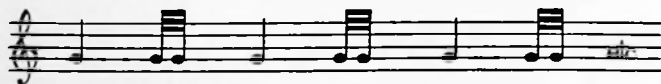
to time and nothing but time, but it really comes to mean little more than the accurate division of time into various short sections (the different bar and note-lengths) and proper accentuation at given points to give these short sections impetus—and there the matter ends.

At this stage too “rhythm” seems a very definite and easily defined thing, but go a step further and then on and on and it becomes progressively more and more elusive, more and more difficult to define, so that at one moment, one word, and at another—another with quite a different meaning, seems the best to express its essential nature—according to the angle from which you may be looking at it.

Thus, at various times, you may use instead of it any of the following synonyms: proportion, shape, balance or poise, reason, sanity, human feeling, life (as opposed to mechanical no-feeling), repose and restfulness, vision, etc., and at another time, when using the word “rhythm” itself, all these others may be floating vaguely in the back of your mind.

Perhaps of the above synonyms “Life,” in a sense, may be the most illuminating and when the Last Judgment is pronounced, who can say whether the quality of “Life” may not prove to be the very quintessence of rhythm—the essential element—which distinguishes true from false rhythm?

For if a machine—as, for instance, the powerful engine of a long-distance train when it settles down into its steady and purposeful jaunt—



does sometimes produce rhythmic sounds it is always at this point that it begins to seem alive, to imitate, as it were, a live thing, which has an intelligence and a meaning to express. Up to this point there has been nothing but shapeless noise, but the moment “rhythm” emerges there seems to be purpose, intelligence—“Life”—and conversely before this point is reached one is aware of nothing but mechanism, senselessness, dead matter.

If, however, “Life” is the quintessence of “rhythm,” one can

say as justly that "rhythm," which first brings shape and meaning into matter, is the quintessence of "Life"—and at this point one finds oneself using either word to mean the same thing, so that "Life" becomes "rhythm" and "rhythm" "Life."

It is from this point of vision that ordinary musical instruction appears for the first time not only to be inadequate but to be perverted. And, whether owned up to in so many words or not, the conventional rhythmic instruction has for its pattern, not a living, but a mechanical thing.

Thus it teaches the mathematically correct division of time into short sections (bar and note-lengths as already noticed) but instead of letting this form the stepping-stone into a wider region, in which one can see it in relation to the whole and to life, it stops short here and the student, endowed with natural musical feeling, is left in a confused and unhappy state of mind in which, at one moment, he feels that that most accurate measurer of time—the metronome—should really claim his sole allegiance and at another that he will be damned sooner than follow it another inch.

When one has had the luck, however, to have been led into a wider sphere and is enabled then to look backwards on all this, it is easy to see that clever mechanism, in this case, the metronome, does have its uses; but this only when, instead of being allowed to become the master, it remains the servant, and it is as such that one sees it in general use in the rooms of a great musician such as Professor Tovey. For, obviously, nothing can be said against the metronome in itself any more than can against a clock, a compass, a stethoscope or any other clever device to help out those human perceptions whose inaccuracies in no direction are more conspicuously evident than in the measurement of time—the same interval passing like a flash or like a funeral procession according to whether one is feeling bored or the reverse.

As a good doctor in diagnosing a patient would not fail to use his stethoscope to ascertain the pace of the heart-beat so a good musician may use the metronome to fix approximately the pace of a piece of music (whether there be composers' metronome-marks or not) and as a good doctor might advise a dancer or athlete to pay respect to his heart-beat, *i.e.* to let it work reasonably near to its normal pace—not to strain, in fact, or allow himself to gasp and

pant—in exactly the same way a good musician will advise a keen attention to the normal beat of the piece of music whether it be fixed by the metronome or otherwise fixed.

If evil then can be attributed to the invention of the metronome it is certainly not because it has made it possible to measure a beat more accurately, but I think is solely owing to the fact that the great majority of players have either not tried, or else not been able to make up their minds as to the use of such accuracy of measurement. Therefore they remain in a perpetually confused state of mind in regard to it, a state of mind which is in turn slavish, rebellious or apologetic or else a mixture of all three of these moods.

The metronomic "beat" therefore assumes the part of a sort of sour policeman, who, standing always prepared to rap you over the knuckles at any sign of insubordination to rigid regulations, turns people either into rebels or into slaves or else an unhappy mixture of the two.

Hence you get the phrase of "taking liberties with the beat"—liberties which are taken not as a right but which people allow themselves furtively and timidly as a sort of concession to human weakness and which, upon remonstrance, are immediately admitted with apologies and atoned for by keeping rigid time until the next temptation and opportunity to break away occurs.

When it does occur then the liberty often develops into very distinct licence on the principle, no doubt, that it is as well to make the most of a rare occasion.

As an illustration of this sort of thing the ordinary treatment of cadenzas in classical concertos seems to me to be typical.

These commonly appear to be regarded not only as opportunities provided for the performer to have his fling and show off his finger and bow dexterity but as halting places where he may divest himself for the time being of all responsibility in the matter of rhythm—even in the most limited sense of that word.

Thus elementary time-keeping, beat, correct note lengths, etc., may, apparently, like truthfulness on the first of April, be quite disregarded meanwhile.

When this occurs, as it usually does, after a typically rigid reading of the concerto itself the licence is all the more striking and the analogy between the whole proceeding, and that of the uniformed

official in his periods of stiff parade and short intervals of off-duty with its negligée of loosened belt, collar and boot-laces, is almost forced on one.

Yet the player who acts like an official ceases from that moment to be an artist for the artist's activity admits of neither on- nor off-duty periods.

The player (as the word implies) must play and only play ; to him nothing must be labour but all pleasure.

Besides, so far as I am aware, none of the important cadenzas are marked *ad lib*. The Joachim cadenzas, at any rate, are not only written in bar lengths, like the text itself, but are all profusely provided with expression marks of every kind, rhythmic as well as dynamic.

In the Hochschule, therefore, they were taught in just the same spirit of freedom and, on the other hand, with just the same strict attention to rhythm and under-lying *tempo* as was the rest of the concerto of which they seemed to be a natural outcome instead of sounding (as they so often do) like some quite foreign matter dragged in by the heels—for what reason the Lord only knows.

Because, however, the contemplative nature of all cadenzas seems to call for a greater amount of freedom than does the rest of the concerto, this extra freedom was allowed *for that reason alone* and *not* because the accompaniment happens to stop at the point where the cadenza begins and the player is therefore no longer under any external obligations to keep time.

Thus, although the fluctuations on either side of it tended to be larger the *tempo* itself was never lost sight of.

Altogether the ordinary attitude of mind with regard to time-keeping is exactly parallel to that which is generally adopted towards the rules of life, of good conduct and religion, *i.e.* that, as it is impossible to follow them implicitly without becoming a prig, some sort of moderately workable compromise and give and take has to be resorted to.

When this has been done, most people dismiss the subject from their minds once for all and never return to it.

That a law, both for life and for art, might be discovered to which you could indeed devote your implicit loyalty and the following of which would turn you not into a prig but into a hero,

is a possibility that does not occur to many. Yet it is just because I am convinced that such a law does exist for music that I have ventured to call the ordinary instruction about rhythm "perverted and mechanical."

The metronome itself has really nothing to do with the matter, and if music teachers should, at this point, exclaim in self-defence, "And as a matter of fact, we hardly ever *do* use the metronome in our classrooms!" I think the proper answer would be, "Well, then, why don't you?"

For the trouble is not because the beat is too accurately measured, nor have I used the word "mechanical" because the metronome happens to be a piece of machinery. The sense in which I do use it is this :

When laws for governing a whole living realm are made after only a small portion of that realm has been considered and studied they are certain to be wholly inadequate laws.

But this is not all. Their cumulative effect upon the whole realm will be worse than that of a mere dead weight, for although dead in the sense that they have no life, being imposed upon the living forces instead of growing out of them, they will still be an active force, *i.e.* they will move and function. In other words they will be devices, machines, they will be *mechanical*.

"Perverted" I have also used deliberately. For when one considers that the clever system of musical notation is only a few hundred years old while the problems of rhythm have existed ever since the world began and perhaps before that, it cannot be called very far-fetched to describe the approach to these great problems through the narrow channel of the first-mentioned comparatively modern development as *perverted*. To say the very least it is an *inverted* approach, a proceeding like putting the cart before the horse.

If, however, it is a fact that the shortness of life and consequent lack of time to do all one would wish to do, forces the musicians of to-day to approach the subject of rhythm from this angle, all the more is it important that they should realise what they are doing—for to stick fast in the approach, and this, alas, is the thing much the most likely to happen, is fatal alike to life *and* to rhythm. Once let it be established that this approach in itself represents a

mere flea-bite out of a practically limitless region and the mind is immediately in a healthier state.

Then at last real work can begin.

To make this more clear, however, I will put it into still other words, *i.e.* the equipment of a musician of to-day consists of so many kinds of mere dexterities (dexterity of the fingers, dexterity of the eye—for sight-reading—dexterity of the brain in theoretical directions, clef deciphering, etc., dexterity of the ear, curiously enough, being the only kind which is largely left to take care of itself), and professional competition renders all these so essential to his career that it is not surprising if at the early age at which most pupils begin themselves to be instructors, there should have been little time left over for anything more, except in the case of those who have had the luck to come under exceptional influences, or who are in themselves specially endowed.

Thus, barring the bands of Hungarians, etc., who play their native music with a quite conspicuous swing and rhythm and who, I understand, cannot read musical notation, no modern musician, whether great or small, except perhaps in remote infancy, can ever have known a piece of music without associating it somewhere in the back of his mind with the dots, tails and dashes which it looks like when written down on paper.

The ability to decipher the signs which indicate the shorter divisions of time (bars, note-lengths, etc.) is, however, in the average modern musician's training, his one dexterity in the domain of rhythm and for most of them, I believe, the word rhythm means simply this correct deciphering of the note lengths and accentuation at the prescribed points. This they hand on in turn to their pupils and the vicious circle is only broken at the rare intervals when a great musician (a Joachim or a Tovey) sheds light on a wider sphere for those who have the wit to benefit by it. The average musician, however, having had his deeper intuitive perceptions atrophied by his long course of intensive schooling, proceeds in his performances to pile one correctly deciphered bar on the top of another, like the red bricks in the wall of a jerry-built house, trusting to the fact that he has never been taught to do otherwise that this will end by producing a satisfactory result.

And the worst of it is, that to those whose eyes and ears have

become sufficiently hardened, it does actually produce a satisfactory result, *i.e.* a house that can be lived in and a performance which hangs together with a certain mechanical cohesion.

I am well aware that most of what has been said, up to this point, is merely destructive and that there is a crying call now for something more positive and constructive.

This will be attempted, to the best of my power, in a later section of these notes. In the meantime, so as not to wander too far away from the title of this particular section, "Das Athmen" (Breathing) I will conclude by saying that in the playing of big musicians such as Joachim and Tovey, I have always been struck by a quality of adamant sternness far exceeding that which one hears in the performances of lesser players, far exceeding too (because emanating from a source so much deeper) the accuracy in the matter of *tempo* which can be set up by any manufactured law or device, just as the imaginary line of the equator goes plumb round the very centre of the earth never deviating one hair's breadth from its course, in a way which no actual line could ever accomplish. Thus one feels that the comparatively subordinate question of mere metronomic accuracy has long since been absorbed, in such a mind, into something that is much larger : *i.e.* the rhythmic meaning and underlying mood, *tempo*, or whatever you like to call it, of the piece of music.

Rhythm then, having been defined here as something essentially alive, it follows that the essential condition for life—*i.e.* air and the power to breathe it—must here take a foremost place.

Big artists, however, who have been born with insight into these deep elusive questions and are able to demonstrate them through their art, apparently shrink from putting their ideas into so definite a form as words, so acutely sensible are they, it would seem, of the limitations of words spoken or written. Like a bright light, then, shining out into darkness, such an artist appears. Round him all the moths of the universe are at liberty to flutter, some to be warmed and enlightened, some to be scorched, and others to depart again into the outer darkness unaffected one way or the other. One need not be surprised, therefore, that many, like the moths who return to darkness, do not get from him what they might.

In such a category I should place a Joachim and a Tovey, whereas

in the Hochschule there were gathered together others, who, probably having had to pass through more puzzles and dilemmas themselves, were more accustomed to putting things into words and to giving practical pointers to their pupils.

Even so one had to make the most one could of hints, suggestions, maxims, demonstrations, and so gradually work out something into a whole for oneself.

22. *Das Freispielen.* (Free-playing) *Gestaltungskraft.* (The power of shaping)

This brings us to the all-important matter, *i.e.* that which, in the Hochschule, was spoken of as "Das Freispielen."

The literal translation "free play," or "playing," does not convey all that was meant by this word when used there. The word "Rubato" (which I do not recollect ever hearing in the Hochschule) is apt, on the other hand, to convey a meaning which was often not intended at all when "freispielen" was spoken of, *i.e.* a special kind of "free playing," sudden and emotional, which is more often associated with a Chopin Mazurka or a Hungarian Dance, than with Beethoven or Mozart.

Another word that was used a lot in the same connection was "Gestaltungskraft," *i.e.* "the power of shaping" a thing.



The best way, I think, of making clear what was meant by all this is to take some concrete examples and examine them from this point of view.

In the above the last high A marked with a cross seems to be the

most natural climax of the phrase ; and in any case it could not be reached earlier than the *first* high A—that is, the first dotted quaver. In order to arrive at this climax with conviction and to make it stand out clearly as such, the six groups of four semiquavers preceding it must give the impression of an eager rush upwards, which nothing can stop until it reaches its objective. Any undue emphasis at the beginning of each group of four, however, gives the impression at once of an impediment to this rush.

A young, inexperienced player, feeling this strongly is, however, almost certain to hurry the semiquavers and to arrive at the top before the requisite number of beats have had time to be counted, so that the passage will sound wrong and unrhythmical and the accompaniment will be put out.

Then the teacher puts down his foot and says, “ This will never do. You *must* count and play in time ” ; and in due course, with the requisite amount of stamping and tightening of the reins, the passage will begin to sound correct and undisturbing.

When this elementary lesson has been thoroughly learnt and the player has become safely “ routinier ” (as the Germans used to express it), tuition in the matter of rhythm usually ceases altogether and the player may be said to have gained a firm footing on that rung of the ladder (a far from exalted rung and well within the reach of very average intelligence) which may be called the “ professional standard.”

Meanwhile, in the course of reaching this standard, the vague sense of disappointment and perplexity in the spirit of the once enthusiastic young player is quite unnoticed by his teacher, who has presumably outgrown all such feelings—if he has ever had them—and it is only in private that the pupil may think to himself sometimes, rather sadly, “ I used to like that piece of music very much and find it exciting and interesting, but I suppose I was quite wrong after all.”

In my own case, I well remember the impressions left on me by a very authoritative little foreigner, with a large Jewish nose, a wig and a great executive ability (for many years after this a leading light in the Royal College of Music), who not only laboured hard for years to give one a grounding in the all-important matter of elementary time-keeping but supplied one with ready-made

pattern examples (down to the very fingering, bowing, vibrato and all the rest of it) of how to play almost any given phrase which might occur anywhere. The result of all this was an oppressive sense that something was very far wrong but in the face of so much that seemed quite undeniably right and in its way without blemish it was a feeling difficult for a novice to justify to himself in silence and was still more difficult to give voice to.

I have since then seen people turning out nice round articles by means of the lathe and have watched others in the glass factories at Venice, whose miraculous technique in the use of a long, heavy pair of tongs, produces the most delicately made animals and such-like ornaments. In both, and in similar cases, I have been aware of the same sort of oppression of spirit. For one would be glad to admire the result wholeheartedly because the skill in itself takes one's breath away, yet the finished article is such that one simply can't.

With regard to this particular teacher, however, one was apt to take refuge in a subterfuge and say, "No wonder that a person so very boring as this—with a voice whose monotonous drone haunts one for days after he has gone away—should make everything that he touches sound equally boring."

But this did not explain the fact that it was now so difficult to make one's own performances sound anything else !

The mere out-of-time playing of the untrained enthusiast did not solve the riddle at all and was no use. For altogether apart from the fact that no colleague or accompanist could run in harness with such a player, his performance when quite alone sounded wrong and unsatisfying and one was well enough aware by this time that mere playing out of time was no escape from the dullness of a stodgily metronomic style and that rhythm was an essential part (probably the most essential part) of that very expressiveness which one was searching after.

I remember carrying these oppressive feelings and perplexities about with me all through this period and it was not until I came into contact with Hochschule influences that I began to see light. I felt then like one who has been shut up for a long time in a stuffy room and who is suddenly turned out into fresh air and daylight. For it was now no longer a question of being reined in and forced

into a water-tight mould formed on the lines of a very dull and stodgy model, but on the contrary you were continually being told that such and such a passage sounded "langweilig," *i.e.* dull and boring, that you must above all endeavour to play things spontaneously according to what you were *yourself* feeling at the moment of playing them, with senses, feelings and intelligence all acutely awake at *that very moment*, and that you must not merely imitate other players, however good, in a parrot-like and half-dormant manner, like one who has caught the trick of the sound without in the least understanding the sense—a habit which only leads to mannerisms and is but too easy to fall into. The knowledge that this was their aim and that the last thing these new mentors wished was to suppress the individuality of a pupil even in cases where they might not admire it, acted like a beacon ahead and was the only thing that carried me through a very weary period of acquiring a new style of bowing and more technique in the left hand, the first of which undermined the foundations of all that had been built up hitherto and consequently brought about a loss of self-confidence and an access of nervousness on which I very nearly foundered altogether.

But these new teachers were far too clever merely to say to one, "Go ahead and play with spirit." This they did say very often, but if they had done nothing else they would have left me (cheered up, certainly) but still very much perplexed. It was the use of the words "Freispielen" and "Gestaltungskraft" (freedom in playing, and shaping power) and their interpretation of these words and demonstrations of how this was to be carried out that first began to make things clear.

Talking these matters over lately with a Joachim pupil he said that he thought the whole thing lay in a nutshell if one only realised clearly that "the note should never be confused with the beat." This seems to me to be very well put, but to some one new to the idea it may not be at once clear what is meant. I will therefore endeavour to amplify it a little.

Imagine a composer to whom a melody has suddenly occurred. While this is still a liquid and live thing in his mind and while the emotion which gave rise to it is still there he writes it down in case he should forget it—puts the bird in a cage, in fact—to prevent it

from flying away. This in itself is doing a violence to the idea as it is to the bird, but that can't be helped.

They tell us, on the evidence of his note-books, that Beethoven very seldom let a theme stand in its original form, but that he kept "polishing" it up until it at last satisfied him. I have often wondered whether this was really the case or whether the truth was that that something (the emotion, the conception or whatever one may call it) from which the melody sprang was so omnipresent in his mind that it kept throwing off shadows of itself—all slightly different according to how the light struck it—and that he at last kept the one that most fully resembled its origin. Be that as it may, and leaving Beethoven to his heights, I expect it is the common experience of all who have dabbled, however little, in this sort of thing that merely committing it to paper and to the constraint of bars and set beats, does such violence to a musical idea of the frailer sort, that it at once begins to pine away, so that the anxious parent is tempted to rush into long commentaries and expression-marks of all sorts, in order to save its life—like eleventh-hour directions to the nurse in an attempt to keep alive the baby who is dying of asphyxiation. And yet the baby goes on dying because the damage has already gone too far.

It may be contended that such ideas die simply because there is no real vitality in them, but that does not change the fact that it is the act of trying to fix them in life and make them intelligible to others that finally kills them. When one such does, however, by good luck survive, I imagine it is because the original emotion from which it sprang is still within call and the "composer" never for an instant loses sight of the fact that what he has put down on paper is only an approximation to the real thing. The violence done to it by constraining it into bars and set beats does not, therefore, matter so much, because there is that behind it which enables him to tear up the notes, begin afresh and, if he likes, put it down in some other way. But once this first step has been taken and something intelligible, at least, has been put down on the paper, let him give it to a thoroughly "routiniert" (schooled) ordinary musician to play. It is then that he will get the eye-opener which is important in this present connection. Because, although he himself knows that that which is on the paper is only approximately right,

the player (who is sight-reading, of course) is merely concerned to make that which is before his eyes as deadly clear as possible to the listener. The result is that the lines of this mere "approximation" become so hardened and defined that the real thing itself is pushed more and more out of sight—and although the "composer" himself is only too well aware that the performance is a mere grinning caricature—it is the hardest thing in the world to bring this home to a player who is either not an artist or else has not been through the same sort of experience. An expostulation will only bring forth the retort, "Look for yourself; I am playing exactly what you have written." And to this he can only answer, "Exactly so."

But put the same thing into the hands of a big artist, and one would find, I expect, that he, far from being less observant of the text, both studies and follows it more carefully than the other, only that his study is like that of one who tries through close observance of the shadow to get in touch with the real thing that has cast the shadow, and, after communing with this reality, he gives us, not a grinning gargoyle with each feature equally hard and unnaturally marked, but a face with a guiding spirit in it; not a string of unconnected words, but a sensible sentence; not a lot of hard and plodding beats that are at pains to dragoon the actual notes into following them, like a crocodile of cowed school children, but a free and reasonable phrase with its beginning, its end, its climax and its component parts all in place, some less and some more stressed according to their importance in the general scheme, and the beat in the background as adamant as it ever was in its own course, but no longer the hard-faced drill-sergeant who thinks it necessary to constrain his companions into keeping rigid step with himself.

That is to say in simpler language, the artist moves by phrases, always alert and with purpose and a goal in view; the other moves by beats and bars like a man who plods along laboriously, planting each foot down carefully as he goes and comparatively unconcerned about where he is going to.

Again it may be objected that all this is highflown and exaggerated; that the great composers are as much above dabblers in this respect, *i.e.* the skill required to put down on paper what they wish you to play, as in every other.

Yet when this point has been granted, the real difficulty still remains, and that difficulty is the limitations of musical signs (in numbers if in nothing else), their consequent ambiguity, and hence the necessity for "interpretation."

To make this interpretation or "decoding" unnecessary one would have to imagine a system of signs and notation so extraordinarily complex and varied that, although it might be fool-proof in one sense, in another it would be so extremely difficult that it would become almost impossible to sight-read—would take ages to commit to paper (if indeed this were possible at all) and would be therefore altogether impracticable.

And after all I do not see why this should make one feel melancholy in the style of the Walrus and the Carpenter, but quite the reverse: it is a cheering fact to realise that there are still domains in which difficulties cannot be overcome by any mechanical device yet invented or by any amount of industry or preparation, but in which the only element which has power and value is real life, always wide awake, and living intelligence to be applied at the very moment required. I imagine that this is what Wagner meant by "die Volle Gegenwart" (the absolute Present) in his writings about art.¹

To return now to the example on page 67 and assuming that

¹ I have since those days become increasingly aware of the essential kinship which exists between the ideas in connection with musical performance met with in the Joachim environment and those of Wagner as expressed in his writings on music and art in general and on musical dramatic art more particularly.

All the more, on this account, does one wonder at and regret to recall the virulently hostile attitude towards Wagner which one could not but be aware of amongst the followers of Joachim.

So much so was this the case that had not my own parents' conviction of the immense significance of Wagner led them to consider it as an essential in the education of their children that these should receive their first impressions of his work under the best possible auspices (that is to say, at Bayreuth) instead of in the usual garbled manner through the medium of inferior performances or the hearing of disconnected scraps of his music in concert halls—and had I not therefore on arrival in Berlin had the inspiring experience of the Bayreuth festival already behind me, I should inevitably, in my ignorance, have concluded that the Wagner tendency in art was something that ran violently counter to all the fine things one met with in the Joachim environment, and especially to that spiritual attitude expressed in Joachim's own noble style of performance. That in fact the Joachim

Mozart *did* intend there to be an eager rush upwards, *without impediment*, to the last top A as his goal, how was he to make this absolutely clear?

There are six groups of semiquavers all looking exactly alike—the phrase is engaged in the ordinary bar of four beats, so that, by

tradition and point of view formed a sort of defensive bulwark against the flashy cheapness, flamboyance, striving after effect and “unclassical” bad taste which was assumed, apparently, to be the hall-mark of the “Wagnerite” attitude.

Yet to prove to oneself the utter falsity of this assumption it is only necessary to read Wagner's own criticism of and advice to operatic singers and conductors, together with the accounts by others of the uncompromisingly exacting demands he made on those of them who came under his training and to call to mind the stern, life-long struggle he waged not only against convention and the deadening force of habit in art, but against all the prevalent impurities, artificialities, and mannerisms of the operatic style in general, and his never-ending striving after simplicity, positive purity and natural spontaneity in performance.

In fact his aims seem to have been so essentially the same as those which Joachim himself, in a more restricted sphere, was striving after that one cannot doubt that through his connection as a young man in Weimar with Liszt, who introduced him personally to Wagner, Joachim must not only have known of but must have been powerfully influenced by this essential feature in the Wagner movement.

It is a melancholy thought, therefore, that the anti-Wagnerian blight which one suffered from in Berlin might never have arisen at all considering that the purely artistic differences which may have existed between Wagner and Joachim were not enough in themselves or of a nature to have produced it, had there not been besides these differences, and springing, it would seem, mainly out of the unhappy Jewish controversy, a personal animosity against Wagner on Joachim's side.

There are people who complain of the propaganda which, they say, was carried on in the cause of Wagner.

After fairly extensive reading of Wagner literature I have, however, so far, failed to discover anything of the sort. In Wagner's own writings one finds a passionate conviction of the rightness of his cause and of his mission which sweeps all before it. In those of his followers there is this same conviction combined with a devotion to their leader which often rises to the heights of adoration. But the patent sincerity of all this, to my mind, completely saves it from the stigma of the term “propaganda” which always implies a large alloy of *insincerity*.

With regret, on the other hand, I am obliged to record my own impression that the hostility to Wagner which I noticed in Berlin was *not* innocent of that stigma.

All the more do I say it because this hostility was seldom violently or even

the time the climax is reached, three first beats of bars have occurred and there is nothing, except perhaps the slur over the two first semiquavers (the *crescendo* in the second bar in the Joachim Edition has been added by Joachim himself) to indicate that *one* is more important than the other.

The main problem is how to play the semiquavers ?

If the first of each four is slightly and equally emphasised (as one usually hears done) the passage is not likely to be hurried much, is clear and easily followed and consequently "fits" well with the accompaniment.

This is probably the reason why it is usually played so.

These slight accents, however, when the passage is played steadily and exactly with the beat, at once produce the effect of a man plodding painfully up a hill because he must, not because he wants to, until reaching the bare top, and finding neither joy nor prospect there, he at once comes down again.

Consequently this won't do, so the player next tries to accent the two slurred notes at the beginning more than the rest and to play all the others as smoothly as possible, but still keeping with the crotchet beats. This, however, is not only very difficult to keep up but sounds dull and characterless. So that the question next arises, "Is it after all necessary that the notes should synchronise

explicitly stated and when not merely implied tacitly by a shrug of the shoulder or else a look of superiority it was generally expressed with a peculiarly unpleasant brand of acid restraint that seemed to imply much more than was actually said and to leave the worst, as it were, in the vague, only hinted at, and this is the manner of all others best calculated to excite and influence the minds of young and ignorant people.

Altogether it is sad to think that a great artist like Joachim should have stood aside and caused many others to do likewise instead of taking part in what was probably one of the greatest vitalising movements in art which has ever taken place.

I have inserted this note because it is my belief now as it was in those days that the anti-Wagnerianism in the Joachim entourage sounded a false note which was apt to lead to misconceptions not only as to the artistic tendency of Wagner but also, amongst those who did not know very much about him—as to those of Joachim himself.

For Joachim was not "academic" any more than Wagner was "unclassical." Both showed intense interest in the style of performing great music, and both had, it seems to me, essentially the same aim, *i.e.* an imaginative, *non-dry, non-mechanical* style of playing it.

with the crotchet beats?" "Yes," says the ordinary teacher, "quite emphatically so."

But under Hochschule guidance, not only were you "allowed" this freedom from the beat, but if you did not take it, you were at first looked upon as a novice who required instruction and later on as an unmusical person whom it was not worth instructing.

And yet—and this is the crux of the whole thing—these teachers were just as much down upon hurrying and dragging as any teachers could be, and as for rhythm one might say about them, in the words of Brahms, that the three things they did teach were, "Rhythm, rhythm, rhythm!"

Therefore, to return once more to the same example, they would insist that the soloist should give the orchestra enough time in the first two bars to get in (quite easily and comfortably) eight crotchet beats, "but," they would continue, "so long as you do this you must consider the notes *free from the fetter of the beat* and, above all, must play the passage with swing and intention and with the goal always in view."

What it comes to then is this: that the semiquavers, although they do all *look* alike, are not *played* alike, *i.e.* that the first ones sound well when played a good deal slower than those that follow, and that only the average speed of each four, when the whole passage is considered, is a crotchet beat; that is to say that the delay at the beginning is compensated for by hastening later on so that the right average is struck.

In carrying this out actually I have often found it good to practise counting fewer and fewer beats—first four in a bar, then two, then one, and then only one to two bars, which is quite possible in a passage which goes as quickly as this one does.

This sort of thing, done with real mastery, might be compared to a fine horseman on a spirited horse riding in company with a steady-going hack (in this case the quavers in the orchestra) which plods along at an even and unvarying pace and which must not be lost sight of or left behind.

The rider, therefore, keeps his fiery mount in strict control, so that both horses may arrive at their destination at the same time but does not attempt on that account to keep it in rigid step with its companion. Whenever he feels inclined he reins it in enough

so that the other gets ahead sufficiently to allow him to gallop forward with a spurt, so letting off steam and perhaps even overhauling the hack, before reining up again and allowing it to catch him up in turn.

I have so far only quoted phrases or short sections, but in this connection cannot omit to mention movements of the "moto perpetuo" character, such as the well-known E Major Prelude of Bach for solo violin.

In this prelude you get nearly three closely-printed pages of semiquavers in groups of four with one or two *pianos* and *fortes* but otherwise no expression marks. It is a piece of music which almost every violinist tries to play, but which, I feel, most of them play with very little musical enjoyment. One reason for this may be that teachers are apt to prescribe it as a good exercise for technical difficulties (the all-important middle-of-the-bow bowing in particular) long before the pupil is fit to perform the piece as a whole. Therefore, when he gets more mature, he is already tired of it.

I think, however, that there is a deeper reason as well. For in what other mode of expression except music does one get instances of such insistent repetition as (in the matter of rhythm) is found here?

A picture in which there was nothing but a string of objects all of exactly the same shape would not be looked at twice, and in poetry or prose if you got a whole page, not to speak of three, made up of very short sentences all of the same length the effect would at once be pronounced unbearably boring. Yet in music this very thing often occurs and without exciting comment. If such insistent repetition has once struck one, however, as an absurd mode of human expression you cannot avoid taking the next step and asking the question—did the composer intend these groups of notes to be played exactly as they appear on paper, like the building of a cheap brick wall, or did he not?

Further, if he did not intend this, would there have been any other way of writing the thing down?

In the particular Bach prelude under discussion after the first two lively bars in another rhythm are over, it has always seemed to me that a few bars follow on quite naturally and with meaning; but that after this the trouble and the dull plod

begins at once. Then one says to oneself, "If the composer didn't really intend this piece to sound dull, then it is being played wrongly."

I never heard Joachim himself play it, so that what follows is merely surmise built up, however, in the light of other things which I did hear him play; by the study of the extra expression marks which he puts into his edition of these sonatas, and through lessons with Klingler who had studied them all under him.

I believe then that, in his hands, the semiquaver groups might have been not only:

(1) of various sizes, but also

(2) of various shapes, *i.e.* (1) some freely broadened at the expense of others, (2) the component notes of some broadened wherever he felt inclined.

The broadening of the first note of such a group or of a phrase is, I believe, what some people call the "agogic" accent, and as it may turn into a very irritating habit some players avoid it altogether like poison.

But if my memory is not very much at fault Joachim used this kind of accent quite freely. In his hands, however, it did not degenerate into a senseless habit.

Further (to return to the prelude), I believe that the semiquavers would have grouped themselves into sentences instead of standing out as they usually do like a lot of isolated blocks, and that these sentences in their turn would have become parts of sections, each with a beginning and end; that the sudden changes from *forte* to *piano* and *vice versa* (Bach's own marks) would have been played with dramatic meaning instead of in the plodding parrot-like style ordinarily adopted, and that the breaths between each would have been significant and deliberate; that springing bow would only have been used in places where it is musically expressive and never as a *tour de force* to show off technical ability. Lastly, as Joachim's own inserted expression marks seem to indicate, the music might, in certain places, have swelled to a breadth of almost passionate expressiveness. In that case the *tempo* would not have to be very fast, and the bowing would have to be, in many places, quite smooth and broad.

This is how I remember Klingler teaching the prelude, and like

this a piece of music, which usually sounds so dry and mechanical, becomes, if not exactly a dramatic narration, at least one with plenty of undulation and variety and with an ample amount of musical interest to hold the attention of the listener.

In long florid passages such as occur so often in slow movements of Haydn or Mozart quartets, when the first violin wanders about meditatively (probably in demi-semiquavers) above an accompaniment of quavers in the under parts, there seemed in Joachim's playing to be no attempt at exact "ensemble" between the two, that is to say the quavers, which in this case took on themselves the role of the "beat," moved along unconcernedly in strict time while the demi-semiquavers moved as unconcernedly up above, without any attempt to synchronise regularly with the beat (four into each quaver), but with free and gracious lines, only making sure to arrive at certain given points at the right moment and together.¹

When one listened to Joachim playing a passage of this sort it seemed like hearing a man musing quietly to himself in the solitude of his own room with a grandfather clock against the wall ticking peacefully beside him, unnoticed by him, except when his own musings (being also of a peaceful nature) got themselves somehow mixed up with the tick-tock, and so half-consciously proceeded on their way in a comfortable companionship with it.

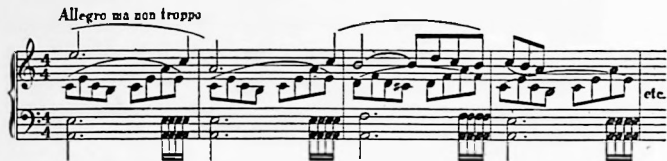
There was no sense of there being any anxiety in his mind about keeping in with the rest of the quartet, or that any of them made an undue effort to keep together but, instead of the mechanical ensemble and "fitting in" of the present day, one had an ensemble of spirit—a sense that one common objective bound them all together, and that they all meant to reach the goal in company. This gave a feeling of security and of restfulness, which you seldom get nowadays, except in Tovey performances.

I have always thought (although I never did hear him play it) that the first Adagio of the Bach E Major piano and violin sonata played by Joachim would have been a perfect demonstration of this point. Whereas in the ordinary performance the demi-semiquavers in the violin part always seem uncomfortably tethered to

¹ Klingler said lately that this playing independently of the beat should mostly occur *within* the bar. So that the synchronising points would be on the first beats of bars.

the insistent pairs of semiquavers in the piano part, while these pairs, behaving as if they were only there in order to keep the violinist in order, plod along without any attempt at expressiveness.

I give below another example which illustrates the above points very clearly.



This rhythm in the cello and violin parts goes on unaltered for a great many bars and recurs at intervals and for long stretches during the course of a long movement.

The movement, although marked *ma non troppo*, is still *allegro* and the two principal themes are already in long, *cantabile* notes. This in itself gives it a character of leisureliness, so that it can easily be played too slowly.

At a reasonable *tempo*, therefore, the semiquavers in the two lower parts come to be pretty fast and when played strictly with the last beat of each bar are not only difficult technically but begin very soon to sound rather monotonous and dry. As I remember hearing this movement played by the Joachim Quartet, however, there was no sense of either monotony or dryness and it was this rhythmic figure in the lower parts, which, under Hausmann's lead, gave to the whole movement, perhaps more than anything else, a character of romantic mystery. Sometimes it made you think of the sympathetic mutterings of a pair of interested listeners as the two upper instruments unfolded their tale of great sadness; or at another it might seem like an agitated pulse-beat occasioned by the memory or anticipation of something mysterious and ominous; but never did it sound trite and dry and precise as it does in the hands of most modern players.

And why should this have been so?

Perhaps it might be enough to say simply, "Because Hausmann was an imaginative artist, and these others are not," and I might

leave it at that were it not that I know from experience that there is much that can be definitely taught and learnt in these matters and that I, therefore, am convinced that if the music schools of to-day gave their pupils instruction in the problems of rhythm from a wider point of view and in a larger spirit side by side with and at the same time as the elementary and physical instruction on their instrument—as did the Hochschule at the time I knew it—the results would be very different from what they are.

As it is, if these problems are faced at all, as, for instance, when musicians come under the influence of Professor Tovey, it is usually (at any rate in the case of string instrumentalists) after they have already acquired a settled technique on their own instrument.

This technique, however, which from the first should have been studied in conjunction with the big problems of rhythm and interpretation, is quite certain now to be found inadequate, and this applies very particularly to bowing.

Apart from this it is more than probable that the “advanced” player has by this time got too “well grounded” in the hard and fast attitude towards rhythm to be able or willing to discard this and begin afresh.

The majority of string players, however, do not come under Tovey influence at all and for any one of these to do such things as were taught as a matter of course to all and sundry in the Hochschule would at once take on the character of a lone adventure without authority, into unknown realms, for which very few have the courage even if they have the inclination.

But to return to the example just quoted, I feel sure that any one remembering Hausmann's performance and the general attitude of the Hochschule towards such problems of rhythm, would, in instructing four players how to play it, say (to the two lower instruments) something to this effect: “I know quite as well as you do the difficulty of making a good change at the end of each bow and of playing the semiquavers clearly. This technical point needs practice, but at the moment you are so absorbed in it alone that you forget a much more important duty, *i.e.* to listen always with wide-awake and sympathetic interest to the flowing theme and its accompaniment in the two upper parts. It is from this listening that you will get your first clue as to the right way of

playing your own part. For you are not only playing a *part*, but a very important role in the ballad—the romantic story—which is going to be gradually unfolded and which is going to take quite a long time. If you do not therefore realise this very clearly and continue to feel the significance of your part throughout, in spite of the number of times the same figure is repeated, the whole thing will begin to sound dry and dull and much too long.

“I advise you, therefore, to try to imagine the first half-dozen bars or so to yourself *without an instrument*—your own part in conjunction with the theme above. Freed like this from all technical considerations you will at once perceive that the essential thing to bring out is the mysterious, ominous character of the semiquavers and that if this is not being brought out something must be wrong. Now try to play the figure at the proper *tempo*, counting four and playing the semiquavers exactly with the fourth beat. I think you will feel at once that this can't be right, after it has been repeated a good many times, and that the mysteriousness, which you felt so strongly when not playing, has quite disappeared. Try again, then, but this time counting two in the bar instead of four. As soon as the second beat (that is to say the third crotchet beat) has been counted, let yourself go and play the semiquavers with all the expression that you wanted when thinking only of their significance without an instrument; quite disregarding the fourth crotchet beat but coming absolutely in time on the first of the next bar. This will give you the space of nearly two crotchet beats with which to do pretty well what you like, and in which you can broaden the semiquavers in a way which will bring out their essential significance and allow you to play them with the expression you feel right. Should this broadening, however, seem monotonous to you after a bar or two you can always lessen it at will, getting over the difficulty of keeping together, by one of you (probably the cello) taking the lead. There will also be time in this way to vary tone and expression at will.”

Should any one at this point have had the pedantry as well as courage during a lesson of this nature in the Hochschule to call the whole argument in question on the grounds “that the composer had not written it down like that,” I think that (after the fury and the damning had subsided) the answer would have been something

like this : " Very well, if that is your opinion, can you tell me in what other way Schubert could have written it down if he *had* wished you to play it in *my* way ? "

This would, of course, be unanswerable, because with the existing notation there is no other practicable way of writing it down and so you are brought back again to the original premises, *i.e.* the limitations of notation and the consequent need of interpretation.

23. *Hausmann*

The above I shall leave as it is with apologies to the shade of Hausmann in the hope that he would excuse what is inadequately expressed out of consideration to the fact that it is at least a sincere attempt to put in words the impression left on my mind by his performance, and by much of the instruction which I got from him and others at that time.

Also it was Hausmann's playing and personality rather than Joachim's that particularly impressed me on hearing the quartet in London for the first time some years before going out to Berlin, when I was still far too unripe to recognise Joachim's greatness.

That the warmth and intensity of a man under fifty should have been more congenial to a child than the serenity of old age, which state Joachim was even at that time approaching, seems natural, but looking back now after a long lapse of years it is clear to me that there was about Hausmann—his playing, his personality, his general attitude and everything about him down to the nobility of his physical presence—an heroic quality that was unique, and I feel convinced that if any one of the famous cellists of to-day—name whom you will—had been in his place, the Joachim quartet would not, to the same degree, have left behind it on the minds of others, the lasting and ennobling impressions that it has.

And this all in spite of the fact that he was already suffering from neuritis in the right arm and a general nervous tension that prevented him from appearing in public except in chamber music.

As Joachim, by reason of old age, receded gradually into the rarefied air of the upper regions, Hausmann became more and more the nerve centre of the school until, at Joachim's death in

1906, he became the virtual head, the conductor of the orchestra and the mainspring of all real inspiration and life there.

That the quite unexpected news of his own sudden death in Austria, which reached us on a dark early morning in January 1909, should have therefore made one feel that the sun had fallen out of the sky and that it was an end of all things is not to be wondered at.

What a power he had been was immediately evident after his death, when all those elements of envy and meanness which exist everywhere began to show their heads and it was only with difficulty that the musical arrangements for his very funeral could be carried out as he would himself have wished, while the musical "Feier" (In Memoriam Concert) which followed later in the Hochschule had to be carried through at the point of the bayonet, so to speak, and was made possible only through the determined energy of a former pupil, who conducted the orchestra.

At this we played the 3rd Symphony Funeral March, the slow movement from Dvorak's Cello Concerto, with Arthur Williams playing the solo part, and Brahms' Tragic Overture.

The whole thing felt like the veritable funeral of an epoch—as indeed it was.

For after this the task of carrying on those ideas which Joachim had stood for (and which have since been called the Joachim tradition) fell on the shoulders of a younger generation, on Klingler's (the foremost of Joachim's pupils) inside the school itself and, outside it, on those of Arthur Williams—Hausmann's best pupil.

The Klingler Quartet too—with Arthur Williams as cellist—was then accepted by the Berlin Musical public as the successor to the Joachim Quartet, so far as it was possible for this to have a successor at all.

All this would be mere digression if it had not been gradually dawning on me while writing that probably the simplest and quickest way of conveying to people the essential spirit of the Hochschule instruction as well as the quite special string-technique which developed out of it, would be a representation of the personality of Hausmann (if that were possible) and even a history of his life.

Short of this the glimpses one may be able to give by personal reminiscences may be more illuminating than anything else.

Because Joachim, although the chief and the founder of all, was essentially the great star performer whose depth of character had led him to renounce the travelling existence of a soloist and virtuoso in order to settle down and develop his quartet and his school. But teaching still remained for him a secondary thing and I have actually heard him described as a "bad" teacher.

Hausmann was, on the other hand, from the beginning the enthusiastic disciple whose eagerness to impart to others the inspiration which he himself had got from Joachim seemed to be always radiating from him. This eagerness one felt the moment one came within its range and it was intensified by the extraordinary warmth and generosity of his character which seemed ready to embrace any one, however insignificant, in whom earnestness was apparent, whereas it might launch out against the most formidable person quite regardless of consequences, if this quality were lacking.

Consequently, with Hausmann a pupil had to expect one of two things: utter annihilation, so to speak, if there was the slightest hint of want of reverence for his task, or else, where this was not lacking, the warmest measure of encouragement in spite of obvious deficiencies in execution. The only exception to this rule which I can remember was when people, though earnest, played in an effeminate and rabbit-like manner. Such players, it is true, did find him terrifying. But a middle course didn't seem to be possible to him.

Thus all the terrors of the wet blanket and of icy criticism with their dire consequences of nervous depression which magnifies personal weaknesses and task alike out of all proportion to reality and creates seemingly insurmountable obstacles which have no reality at all, were entirely absent when playing to him and you always felt it possible at least to exert what powers you possessed to the best advantage and that it was well worth while to do so.

This was before the time when the study of teaching as an art in itself came so much to the fore. I have since seen this art applied where small children were the pupils and with such good results that it has made me wonder why it is that musicians in the first rank who teach seem so seldom to apply their minds to it.

One would think it would be worth while if for no other reason than that the time saved would be so enormous.

For it does seem incontestable that a necessary condition for any one to do his best in an art is self-forgetful pleasure in the activity. Therefore a teacher with many fine things to impart who, from the outset, makes this sense of pleasure impossible for his pupils, seems very much like a host who, having provided a tempting banquet for his guests, insists on their taking some noxious draught expressly intended to produce stomach-ache, just before and during their meal.

I do not think that Hausmann had ever studied the art of teaching for its own sake. In fact I feel sure he hadn't. Yet in my experience of teachers he stands out as the one under whom it was least difficult to forget yourself and other small things and become absorbed in what really did matter.

During the summer of 1908 I had, along with my three brothers, the great fortune to have quartet lessons under him and there is nothing in life I look back to now with more entire pleasure than those few months—nor have I had any musical instruction that left behind it such a feeling of uplifting exhilaration. Everything indeed seemed to combine to make the experience a perfect one—the summer weather, the warm, sunny drawing-room, the scent of flowers, one's own youth, the morning hours when one feels most vigorous, the friendly atmosphere of the whole family (Frau Hausmann and the two children) and above all the warmth and enthusiasm radiating from Hausmann himself.

We brought him a number of the biggest quartets—amongst them three of the five last of Beethoven and for once in a way one's own inadequacy and insignificance in relation to these big things seemed to matter not at all and all thought of these and consequent nervousness was swallowed up in the atmosphere he created of entire absorption in the actual music itself.

The most impressive of all these great lessons, however, was the one to which we brought Beethoven's Quartet in A Minor and that morning will remain for all of us a quite unforgettable one. Although it was, in the ordinary sense of the word, a lesson in which he stopped us many a time to correct what was wrong and to explain things, yet by the end of the first movement he had

worked himself up and had carried us along with him to such heights of intensity and exhilaration that when he stopped before going on to the other movements and said in a moved tone of voice, "Wir müssen jetzt ein bisschen halten. Das war ein Erlebnis" (We must stop for a little now. That was a real experience), one did not feel in the least surprised that he should say it, but it all appeared natural and at one with the spirit of the occasion.

Those who know the first movement of the A Minor Quartet may be able to realise what he meant.¹

It was just the same at his social gatherings in the evenings to which he often summoned us during that summer and at which he himself performed and was at the same time the very genial host.

It was as if the cold conception of Art as an abstract thing had once and for all been annihilated so that the music was now as much a part of real life as all the rest—the people, entertainment, conversation—which in turn had to rise to a level at which the contrast would not, at least, be too glaring.

Thus I well remember how a supper guest who, in a manner not too well bred, began to whisper a piece of gossip across the table was peremptorily called to order by his host's loud command, "Speak up! There is to be no whispering at this table. Here we are all friends."

He himself, with his tall, athletic figure, noble carriage of head, appearance of vital health, gleaming brilliance of blue eyes which, if genial and kindly as a rule, were capable of flashing the most devastating fire on occasion, seemed exactly to typify such a conception, and one often felt that he must surely have strayed somehow by accident into the ranks of his more decrepit and stuffy

¹ With Hausmann as with the other teachers the breath *between* phrases was, of course, essential, but with him in certain cases, and the first part of the "heilige Dank-Gesang" out of the above-mentioned quartet was a very striking instance—the idea of breathing, of drawing long salutary breaths *throughout* the phrases was so prominently brought out that one became aware of a natural fact which is incontestable *i.e.* that after a long breath, *in and out*, there is always a pause in which nothing seems to be going on before there is the need, hence the impetus for a new breath. In many musical instances, and the one I cite above is a particularly good one, this seemingly still point at the end of a phrase feels as if it were essential to its own rhythm as also to that of the phrase which is to follow and mechanical counting of the beats makes this rhythm, therefore, impossible.

brethren—a captain out of a viking's galley or from the deck of an explorer's ship, a leader from an army of crusaders who had discovered here, if not a new quest, at least a new way of reaching the goal. A failure in enthusiasm became therefore a veritable betrayal of the religion of life. And who was to complain if lightning flashed and thunder roared when this happened?

I remember a particularly odious type of person, who sat next me in the orchestra, being caught in one such storm when, in a spirit of insolent carelessness, she let her bow fall on the strings with a clatter during the brief hush which followed the performance of a Beethoven Finale. If she survived that storm it was indeed a sure testimony to the toughness of her skin.

In music (perhaps also in other arts) it seems that there is a stage in the course of acquiring efficiency at which the efficiency gained is, in the majority of cases, balanced by a proportionate loss of imaginativeness and poetic feeling for the art.

This stage, perhaps, might be defined as that rung of the ladder on attaining to which a musician often begins to earn his living by music.

The fact that on a much higher rung of the same ladder where the all-round efficiency is also much greater, a childlike imaginativeness also is much oftener apparent, does not, for some reason or other, often seem to strike the rank and file of musicians.

If it should suddenly do so you would then expect that the next revelation would be the fact that one of the main obstacles to their own all-round progress was just this very lack of imaginativeness.

As things are, however, it seems that at the stage when music has, so to speak, just become a useful handicraft, the mind is apt to be turned away at an acuter angle than at any other stage from those very ideas, inspirations and impulses which must be the original cause of all music.

Indeed at this stage it requires a quite considerable degree of courage and assurance to suggest to people anything at all in the shape of an idea which points to the music having some sort of meaning. And this is often especially noticeable in cases where it seems perfectly plain that the lack of ideas is the main obstacle in the way, not only of general progress but of the mastering of some seemingly quite technical point.

When the mere suggestion that the words of a song are a guide to its musical performance is, as you sometimes find, received as a slightly childish suggestion, how much more apparent is not this attitude sure to be when ideas which are not strictly technical or practical are introduced at rehearsals of purely instrumental music.

If your suggestion is then received with a slightly amused indulgence, this is usually the utmost that you can look for.

Apparently it is felt that this sort of thing is only compatible with the amateurishness which has once and for all been left behind.

Just this amount of excuse for such an attitude may exist, namely, that the typically cheap-novel sentimental descriptions of musical performances are written, one must suppose, because they appeal to a certain class of so-called "music-lover" and a practical musician does not, in the remotest sense, wish to be associated with such maudlin stuff, and secondly, on a higher plane, there are people who seem to think that the "understanding" of music consists in being able to expound it all in the manner of what is called "programme" music and neither is this outlook likely to produce a sympathetic reaction in the player.

At the same time to ignore pointers which may be got by analogy with other arts or out of experience of real life can only be called stupid, and to lose sight of the fact that all genuine music has sprung from real experience of real life by real people simply means that the mind has gone to sleep altogether. It is just this vital knowledge that one felt was always so much alive in the mind of Hausmann that he was able to communicate it without conscious effort to other people.

In this connection an idea out of one of Wagner's prose writings on art has often occurred to me. If statistics could be collected I believe it would be found that (at least in this country) quite ninety-nine people out of a hundred whose lives have, nevertheless, been devoted to art in one form or another, are entirely ignorant of the many prose writings which Wagner has devoted to the subject. Apparently they have come to the conclusion (those of them who have thought about it at all) that notwithstanding the fact that he is acknowledged, to put it very mildly, as one of the greatest minds of last century and that his whole life was devoted to art, what he

has to say on the subject is, for some reason or other, not worth bothering about. Vaguely they may be aware of the term "music of the future," or even of something which has been called "an art-work of the future." Vaguely they may connect these conceptions with Wagner and Wagner operas. Still more vaguely and irresponsibly they may have arrived at the conclusion that Wagner operas represent this music and art of the future and that it was Wagner himself who so named them.

There the matter ends.

That the term, "music of the future," was not Wagner's at all but was merely a malicious perversion of the title of his article "An art-work of the future," invented by an obscure and hostile writer in the Press; that Wagner himself, far from claiming to have written any such art-work (not to speak of "music") of the *future*, devotes his whole article expressly to pointing out the impossibility of such a work ever occurring under present-day conditions; that this was the one and only reason for writing the article, and that the word *future* is used quite unmistakably as distinct from that of *present*, is certainly not generally known.

The particular idea to which I have referred is to the effect that in prehistoric times when speech, myth and art first began, that which we call genius was not known. "No one was a genius because all were geniuses." In other words, under these conditions, every one showed the genius that was in him.

In the ordinary sense a genius is a person with special gifts.

In Chambers' Dictionary, however, genius is defined as "the inborn faculty of an individual," presumably of any and every individual.

As I understand it Wagner's meaning is that, in modern civilisation, there is such a weight of encumbrances and waste matter of all sorts in the shape of books, education so-called and much else obstructing the way to the vital essence of anything that it is only the individual with special gifts who is able to make his way through it.

If, however, this waste matter, this rubbish, had never existed or, as one may imagine in some future ideal state of things it had been finally cleared away and mankind had thus been enabled to rediscover its original childlike nature then "the inborn faculty,"

the "genius" of each individual set free would be enough to reach the goal, *i.e.* to see through the external of a thing into its essence.

You would then with the "open healthy senses," which he talks of elsewhere—the intuitive insight unhampered by consciously imposed thought, and with every one face to face with the vital and real have, so to speak, poets everywhere.

Thus, just as flowers in a garden vary in size, colour and importance without striking one as being, on that account, either less or more perfect—having each its limitations imposed on it by the law of nature (not by external circumstances) to emphasise (not to hide) its essential quality—so would the infinite variety of individuals great and small in the human sphere now at last appear each perfect in its own way.

In this ideal state with universal genius set free the individual "genius" is no longer so conspicuous, and the ideal work of art which might spring up in so sympathetic an atmosphere could not indeed be called anything but one of the future—and of the very remotest future at that.

In the meantime, however, what does concern the present day is this: that the mere conception of such an ideal is to dispose of that other conception according to which "the" genius is without more ado set aside in a class by himself as a being cut off from the rest of mankind, to be admired perhaps like a star from the distance, or more often merely wondered at like some curious and rare animal, but whose work has little practical bearing on the lives of others—lives which remain stuffy and comfortable by the law of nature and not by the violation and smothering of that very law.

The genius now, on the contrary, appears as the most practical being in the universe—the one of all others whose work concerns the lives of his fellow-men in a practical sense because this work, above all else, is the liberating of their own genius.

Further than this if he become impractical and loses touch with the vital interest of all men his genius is at once obscured.

This automatically puts many an expert brain which, so to speak, becomes involved in its own meshes, outside the category of real genius, whether accepted as such in the ordinary view or not.

Conversely a child with his, as yet, undeveloped brain may show genius.

It seems, therefore, that "genius," "the inborn faculty," does not depend on the extent of brain power but is—and this is the important point—common, though in varying degrees, to all.

If, then, to arrive at the vital essence of anything is alike the only aim and the only proof of genius, it is neither here nor there how this end is reached so long as it *is* reached. Whether it be through an abnormal power of the brain or of the heart or of both combined with favourable circumstances or enlightened education added to the whole, matters not at all. Any one who gets there has been led there through his "genius," whereas the many who stick on the way, be their mental brilliance and dexterity what it may, can no more claim to have shown genius than can the dullest fellow-traveller who may happen to have reached the same milestone on the road.

The worst, however, of the musical profession (and the same probably applies in varying degrees to all other professions), is that it presents such a wide field for the exercise of dexterities, both mental and physical, that this dexterity in itself is often accepted as genius. Thus the whole issue gets confused, and the one and only aim of all art—the presentation of a vital essence—gets more and more pushed into the background. It is because of this that so much of what one hears and sees seems like sham work.

That Hausmann would have passed as "a" genius, according to the ordinary view, I doubt.

That he had an "inborn faculty" for insight into the vital essence of music in a most profound degree I have no doubt whatever.

That this came above everything from an unbounded warmth and love of his task I personally felt, and the memory of it as you look around to-day and see cleverness, dexterity, general capacity and even brilliance displayed on every hand in such a marked degree and in so many quarters opens your eyes to a possible explanation of the fact why all this so seldom leads to anything truly inspiring.

Can it be that a simple and great love of music, solely for its own sake—an absorbing interest in *it*, hence in the manner of its performance—is one of the very rarest of qualities?

It would be interesting if one could analyse the various causes

that go to the filling of concert halls—when they *are* full. There is fashion, there are “stars” to be heard, there is interest in particular instruments and particular performers, and there must be a variety of other causes.

This is not the place to consider them all, but there is time to express this one belief—that if the sole interest of “music lovers” was in the sound itself then at once the whole standard of playing would go up by leaps and bounds. For, as an immediate result, the players would develop interest in the dormant possibilities for expression both in themselves and in their instruments, and a host of technical problems would, for the first time, be tackled, simply *because* they would now (as never in the past) *for the first time* be recognised as existing.

But about Hausmann there was no suggestion, in the phrase of the sentimental novel, of “one living amongst the clouds.”

He was a masculine, active and most intensely human person, and if one did not feel when playing to him that the seat on which one sat was as exalted as any seat upon a cloud could be, it was entirely one’s own fault.

It will now perhaps have become clearer why the “technique” which such a musician required was something much more varied and much wider than is usually meant by this word. Further, that one could not even begin to acquire this sort of technique without entering into the spirit of the music at the same time. Further still, that in this sense technique became interpretation and interpretation technique; or, still better expressed, that the two entities were so closely interwoven and allied that one seldom, if ever, met them apart.

Therefore the idea of “learning the technique and putting in the soul afterwards,” became preposterous, mainly because one never could know, without the “soul,” what technique was required.

Thus it occurred that pupils who had left the Hochschule to go to Sevcik and others just in order to acquire from them a greater amount of technique were found often when they came back to the performance of great music to be conspicuously inadequate *from a technical point of view*.

To make this still clearer (whether necessary or not) although

it is, of course, possible to acquire an agility of both finger and bow without much reference to the "soul" this qualification is on such restricted lines that it occupies only a narrow strip of the territory which, throughout these memories, has been termed "technique"; and *vice versa*, although a great artist may be able to impress his hearers very deeply in spite of faults in technique (and Hausmann himself when in the throes of neuritis and nervousness was an example of this) he himself will be the first to feel the impossibility of ever really acquiring enough technique for his needs—perfect technique, by this time having gained the very exact meaning of absolute obedience of the body at any given moment to the will of the spirit, and the body, even at its very best, must always remain too gross a thing to attain such absolute obedience.

These reminiscences, by reason of the way they began without any intention of becoming more than a few notes on half a dozen sheets of notepaper, have acquired such a topsy-turvy construction, that much which might be expected to come now, has already been mentioned long ago.

As a matter of fact, however, this is actually more true to the chronological sequence of events in my own life than the other order would have been as, although in the Hausmann environment, from our first arrival in Berlin—principally through a brother who was his pupil and eventually became leader of the cellists; then through the Hochschule orchestras, the "small" one first and later the "large" one, and, of course, from continually hearing him playing in the quartet—I did not actually have any direct tuition from him until the summer of 1908. Therefore most of what I have tried to express in the foregoing pages came to me first through lessons with Klingler and with Arthur Williams. Neither of these was very long past his own student days, and you felt that all that you got from them was vital with vigour and growth and fresh from the source.

Arthur Williams had, as a matter of fact, been previously a student at the Royal College, but something innate to himself had saved him entirely from the cocksureness which one associates with that institution, and had, while still a youth, driven him away from it to Hausmann and to the very different atmosphere of Berlin at that time.

When, in 1903, we arrived in Berlin he had just returned with his wife, after an interval of some years, and again for a short time appeared in Hausmann's classroom as a senior pupil.

Klingler was already established as teacher in the Hochschule, and was the youngest teacher there.

But these memorable lessons with Hausmann in 1908 acted like a light which is suddenly switched on to a manuscript that you have been trying to write in semi-darkness.

And, strange to say, you find that a good deal of it has been correctly written, and you are very glad.

Or it was like when, trying to find your way along a strange road in the twilight of early dawn, the sun suddenly goes up, and you find yourself not only on the right road but actually, however far off, in sight of your destination.

This was really the main thing. One could no longer feel that the journey was quite hopeless, and therefore not worth while, and Hausmann, with his extraordinary warmth, helped by paternal age, had the power of making one feel that he was not so much the teacher as the strong fellow-traveller who would be sure to help one along the road, because he was going himself to the same place, and this place was the only one worth going to.

Under the younger teachers, on the other hand, additional obstacles (where there were already more than enough) in the shape of self-consciousness and nervousness were apt to crop up, and these, for the time being at least, often neutralised the effect of their otherwise exceedingly enlightened teaching.

The timely intervention of these lessons with Hausmann, however, together with entry into the Hochschule a little while before and the consequent abandonment of private tuition, gave me, personally, just that needed help which enabled me at last to begin making some use of the instruction of the four previous years.

And it was with the buoyant feelings of some one who recognises that he is now, at least, partly initiated that you found yourself no longer making mistakes like the following :

(1) When told that a passage in the *piano* was "tonlos" (toneless) turning to the teacher in surprise and saying, "Well, but it is *piano*." This very common response would have driven Hausmann out of his senses.

(2) When told that a certain note needed more bow, making the response, "Well, but it's dotted."

(3) Being bamboozled by the two seemingly contradictory commands which might very likely be given not only within the space of two minutes but even simultaneously, e.g. not to "drag," but to "broaden" a passage; not to "hurry," but to go "vorwärts" (forward—ahead) with another.

(4) Being confused when told (within a *piano*, perhaps) to bring out certain notes more than others although no change of expression marks occurred: and so on with many other things, all which made one realise how much one owed to the enlightened teaching which had gone before and which was now at last beginning to bear some fruit.

To take only the first of these points: if Klingler and Arthur Williams had not been for years impressing upon one the fact that playing *piano* did not mean playing without tone, that all tone must have "quality," and that "toneless" playing meant sound without quality, therefore without "tone" ("toneless") there would, from the very start, have been a great stumbling-block in the way of peace and progress in those lessons with Hausmann.

For although this fault in a quartet leader would perhaps be detected eventually by most intelligent listeners, it is not nearly so conspicuous in under parts, and therefore occurs much oftener in them.

Hausmann, however, being the player of an under part himself, paid almost equal attention to all the parts and his own playing in quartets was a regular revelation of how the simplest bass could be made so impressive and interesting that one generally found one's attention almost equally divided between it and the top melody. The modern style of "fitting in" modest, unobtrusive basses to suit the general texture of performances, whose obvious aim being smoothness at all costs flow inoffensively and entirely uneventfully along their prearranged course would have simply enraged him, and one trembles to think what might then happen if he were to appear once more in the flesh at some such performance—which at the present day so often brings down the house in a hubbub of applause.

As a matter of fact one of those quartets that later on became

“world-famous” did appear in Berlin a few months before his death, and just as it now strikes me always with amazement that people in Edinburgh, who have had a Tovey to listen to for twenty years, should (apparently) be able to enjoy much of what is imported to us from elsewhere, so then for the first time was I struck by the same phenomenon: an audience which had for many years been accustomed to Joachim (at that time little more than a year in his grave) listening complacently to one of the most lifeless performances I have ever heard, in which “breaths,” “joints,” changes of key and mood and all that makes music alive was entirely disregarded, and which plodded dully on towards its conclusion with the air of a somnambulist.

After the concert Hausmann entered the café where I with my sisters happened to be, and striding up to our table in a perfect fury, shouted out “War das nicht scheuschlich? War das nicht schauderhaft!” (Wasn’t that dreadful! Wasn’t that a disgrace!) I afterwards heard that his excitement during the concert very nearly created a disturbance in the hall.

The playing of lower parts in a quartet under his direction (as also under Klingler and Williams) had always a quite peculiar interest. To say that you were encouraged to play them like “solos” wouldn’t perhaps be accurate, but that you were expected to play your part with quite as much wide-awake attention and interest as any soloist is no exaggeration at all.

But the foundation on which all was built, the thing demanded of you first and last and all the time, was an invariably wide awake interest in what was going on round about you.

This interest in itself means keen listening—and such listening gradually develops the power to hear more and more. This is, of course, as essential to the first violin as it is to the under parts, but these, having usually less to play, have more leisure to devote to listening, and if they do not do it are sure to allow their attention and interest to wander.

If, however, it has become second nature to listen and the interest is really there, the sympathetic warmth and responsiveness engendered is as immediately noticeable, though in a subordinate voice, as is its absence in that brand of obtuse stodginess which is the hall-mark of the hack-player.

I have often been struck in latter years by the special difficulty of getting up wide-awake performances of things like Haydn slow movements where the under parts often have little to play. At first when I came up against this obstacle it was a surprise to me, but it didn't take long to realise what the cause of it is and how extremely difficult it is to surmount. Because, for one person who is able to take a live interest in a piece of music as a whole, (irrespective of what he has to play himself) you will get hundreds who will respond to a piece of melody or some technically difficult passage in their own parts, and in music where these occur frequently they will keep awake and play their best. But where they do not occur interest flags to such an extent that tone, emphasis and everything else deteriorates immediately, and this deterioration is so much spread over the whole that it is difficult to put one's finger on any particular point where attention can be concentrated and the fault removed.

Yet to tell a good, sound player who is confronted by the very blank-looking page of a Haydn under part, that his faults in playing it are "technical" faults (although this would be largely true) would be so insulting to him that he would probably refuse to play at all.

On the other hand, it is not usually possible to get people to change their whole mental attitude towards a subject after they have passed a certain age, and this would be the only other way of getting them to realise these deficiencies in the performance.

Many of these have already been dwelt upon in detail in the foregoing pages, but if one had to try to convey to some one in one word the general spirit of Hausmann's instruction and what he demanded from his pupils, the word "generosity" would express the thing best, *i.e.* generosity in spiritual outlook, generosity in interest and sympathy and generosity in physical movement.

And it was this last requirement which demanded that special technical study of both bowing and fingering which is so often left out in the instruction of the mere technician (*i.e.* the teacher of mere agility of finger and bow) and was often conspicuously absent in pupils of Sevcic.

Thus if in the performance of the bare bass of a Haydn quartet the stodgy "tum-tum" of the hack player, as equally the ladylike

stinginess of the more refined performer which seems constantly in dread of emphasis and warm energy, would always excite Hausmann's wrath, yet he would not, I think, have stopped short at a general damning of its dullness and coldness. At least two technical faults would be pounced upon at once:

(1) The want of a generous movement of the arm beyond the point where the bow leaves the string and the note ends.

(2) The want of intensive articulation with the fingers.

The first of these is so conspicuous in the ordinary playing of subordinate parts that once the attention has been drawn to it no one can fail to notice it, especially when it occurs in the cello part.

The impression given is that the player is on no account going to exert himself more than is absolutely necessary in order to make his part audible; that he feels himself on a pedestal from which he surveys, with a certain superior contempt, not only the "casiness" of his own part, but the whole trend of the piece of music, and that it is out of the question, therefore, to expect from him anything else but a prim stinginess. This is peculiarly irritating to any one who has once adopted the attitude of self-forgetting abandonment in the playing of any part, regardless of its "casiness" or its difficulty, and this was the only attitude which would pass the test with Hausmann.

Often, however, in the case of this type of player, although he is certainly not aware of it, the actual technical difficulty of carrying the movement of the arm along in a generous sweep beyond the note has not, I feel convinced, been thoroughly overcome, *i.e.* it has not developed into second nature and a matter of habit simply because, except perhaps where a piece of flowing, full-blooded melody occurs, he has not had the warmth of feeling for his part which demands more than a niggardly motion of the arm. And the flowing melody does not occur often enough to train the muscles and make the motion automatic even if, on these occasions, his warmth of feeling alone were sufficient to make him carry out the movement with abandon—which is not likely. For although this playing "through" the note is quite an easy physical movement in the middle of the bow, and a beginner, if taught well, will learn to carry it out as easily as the more niggardly movement,

the case is different at the extremities of the bow and particularly at the hilt. There the action of "casting forward" the bow without actually losing hold of it, needs a great deal of practice. (See, for example, Kreutzer Study No. 35.)

This is only one instance of the many which show that as soon as interpretation of the music for its own sake is made the first consideration technical problems at once crop up, which would probably be quite neglected by those to whom technique (so called), i.e. mechanical dexterity, comes first.

Thus, the player of the Haydn under part who, from the start, has his attention concentrated on listening to what is going on round about him and particularly to the melody, wherever this occurs, instead of exclusively on his own part, for the first time gains the necessary sympathy for the whole composition, hence the necessary insight as to how his own part should be played from a *technical* point of view.

From which follows the seeming paradox, but undoubted truth, that too much concentration on a small part of anything leads to neglect of that very part itself simply because one does not see it in relation to the whole to which it belongs.

The "articulation" by means of the fingers came into much the same category as the foregoing. This needs technical practice, and still it would never occur to a player not sufficiently interested in the music as a whole to put himself to the additional trouble and exertion which this "articulating" requires when "merely" playing an under part; hence it would not be practised, and hence he would not have the facility even if he should suddenly develop the wish for it.

In the upper part, on the other hand, the actual need for this articulation is never so great as it is in under parts because the top note of itself comes out more prominently, however it may be played. Thus the betting is that the kind of player who does not feel the need of articulate intensity when playing an under part will feel it still less when playing the upper one and will therefore never learn the art at all.

No one who ever heard Hausmann could have missed this quality of intense articulation in his playing and the significance (in

his hands) of the barest bass part, or the simplest cello entry. Nor was this less so in the changes from one important harmony note to another—in all interesting counterpoints and all rhythmic figures. This will remain for ever unforgettable. Yet what made the whole thing so impressive and seem so right, was that it always retained the character of a sympathetic response to the melodious upper part. It was like the comments of the chorus in a Greek tragedy—and never degenerated into egotistic utterances—calculated to draw one's attention away from the main stream of the narrative.

When then the cello itself took the lead it always seemed in Hausmann's hands as if some one with a character profound as his voice was deep, but content in the main to keep in the background observing and sympathising, came forward now, simply because that which was in his mind was of such significance that it had to be said and no one could say it so well as himself.

A case memorable to me of this was his playing of the second subject of the great B \flat Quartet (Beethoven—1st movement) on the first occasion I heard the Joachim Quartet in London :



when the music suddenly and unexpectedly settles down into G \flat and the cello introduces the new key as above.

The passage in itself is one to take one's breath away, and it is enough to say that Hausmann seemed to be its perfect exponent. It was as if some one rendered omniscient by a vast depth of experience is left standing alone to utter the very last word and utters it with a finality which leaves all hearers breathless. Therefore after the first violin has actually ventured on a questioning response and has been calmly silenced by the same profound wisdom (with a slight variation) one wonders how in the world the music is going to proceed any further. Yet it does go on, but only by remaining for a long time in the same key—wandering about, as it were, in thoughtful contemplation of the deep wisdom which has been uttered. A parallel instance only of how life has to proceed in its

normal course, even after some profoundest experience has made it seem impossible that it should do so.

It is just this sort of thing which, once heard, remains memorable for ever, and which the typical modern playing with its heartless glibness misses altogether.

24. *Joachim versus the Moderns Again*

Indelible also, though quite unlike and more elusive than the above impression, is that left on my mind by Joachim's playing of many themes, mostly of Mozart or Beethoven, and, as I write, two of these at once occur to me : (1) The Scherzo theme of Beethoven's A Minor Quartet and (2) the opening theme of Mozart's Quartet in B flat (K. 589)—two things quite unlike except in the fact that they are neither of them of a sombre character. And this makes me realise that it is mostly in themes of this nature that the quite individual flavour of his playing keeps recurring to me.

I have heard both the above played many times since and have also tried to play them myself, but have found that both listening and playing always seem to frighten away this elusive memory as if it were a shy bird. Later on, however, after an interval of silence and occupation with other things it always, to my relief, returns again—although it can neither be caught nor caged. Neither have I been able to describe it in any sort of way through words until quite lately when the right adjective, after which I had long been groping, struck me all of a sudden—and it was not "subjective" or "objective" or any of the many other appellatives often used to describe art, but simply the word retrospective. That is to say that this playing seemed to be unlike that of those who express what subjective feelings they may have at the moment, or of those others who are content with being coolly objective and intellectual. It was rather that of one looking backwards through a long vista of years, recalling things long ago felt deeply and subjectively and now made still more beautiful by the distance—beautiful with that peculiar tenderness which is shed on all things of long ago, especially when they are childlike and playful things. Thus a depth and a gracious touching quality seemed to be a part of

the lively sportiveness of much of Mozart which in other hands so often sounds prim, dry and small, suggesting the stiff artificial movements of marionettes. One felt, too, that this depth was not arbitrarily introduced into the music, but was really an intrinsic part of it to all whose sensitiveness is keen enough to perceive it. For the playfulness of a great mind is always sublime, and space and distant view are essential to such a mind.

Although in Joachim's later years age may have fixed this deep retrospective attitude as a prevalent mood, one felt that the power to take this most impressive and mature of all long views must have been his much earlier, and that at all times his playing must have conveyed a sense of space and distance.

Thus it is that the five last Beethoven quartets are so inextricably connected in my mind with the playing of the Joachim Quartet (by whom I first heard them performed) that it is no exaggeration to say that to hear the superhuman spirit of this inimitable music exposed to the insensitive manipulations of the modern mechanised style is to me a desecration which it is often hardly possible to sit through.

Yet all this, alas, makes no difference to the mounting number of new combinations of sleek, black-coated musicians who turn up everywhere to demonstrate to an applauding public not only in the flesh but across untold distances, and from unknown regions through the mysterious atmosphere, the easy indifference with which they can skate over all the profound moments in music. Thus even the tremendous tragedy of the last movement of Beethoven's C# Minor Quartet can be presented as a palatable condiment to thin slices of bread and butter, light conversation and cups of tea, while the autumnal wistfulness and mystery of the E Minor Scherzo out of Rasoumaffsky No. 2 is thrust aside in favour of the perky preciseness suitable to the mechanism which produces it. Thus, too, the gracious playfulness of Mozart is exchanged for the dull plodding of a deaf and dumb dancer who, without a sense of hearing or of pleasure to guide him, follows stiffly the rules laid down for him by his dancing master.

All this, and with good reason, sends a cold shudder down one's back ; because what signs are there that the religion of the machine is decreasing ?

None whatever, but quite the reverse. And even in some circles where the work of the "hand" is recognised as a thing to be encouraged, one sees the prize invariably awarded to that piece of work which most resembles the production of the perfect machine. Nor need one wonder at this so long as that which is frankly aimed at is really better produced by the perfect machine, *i.e.* as in the case of many embroiderers, a perfect regularity of stitching.

But it is just here that most musicians are not frank, for they all like to think of themselves as artists, and if one were able to pin them down to confessing that their conception of perfection was a mechanical one they would feel much hurt. Yet no one could possibly fail to notice the obvious mainspring of most ordinary modern performances of music, which look upon themselves as up to the mark, *i.e.* the striving after "faultlessness," after flawless execution, *as an end in itself*.

In this the whole thing is really contained as in a nutshell, but I am going to amplify it a little further as follows :

"Faultlessness" is, then, not as it is usually represented, an aim too high for human standards, but, on the contrary, is definitely not high enough—that is to say not worthy of the highest human faculties.

Hence the paragon is not a dull and boring personality because he is too good, but because he is not good enough, because his absorption in the negative task of eliminating a multiplicity of faults causes him to commit the one greatest fault of all without being aware of it, *i.e.* the fault of failing to do active and positive right.

Here you get the distinction between the paragon and the saint as also between the numerous commandments of the Jewish-religion and the one all-embracing commandment of the New Testament.

If, then, that which distinguishes true from false art is an absorption in the essence, the essential right, hence the mainspring of life in anything—in that and in nothing else—it follows that the paragon can never be an artist and conversely that the saint cannot help being one.

Therefore "faultlessness" can never become the goal of an artist with all his human faculties alive and in play, but on the other

hand it is the highest goal which can be aimed at by that which one can legitimately call the extension and materialisation of the human brain by itself, *i.e.* the machine.

Thus "faultlessness" is a mechanical aim, and those who pursue it cannot help becoming mechanical.

Lest this, however, may be looked upon as an encouragement to duffers, one must not mix up the conception of "faultlessness" with that of "perfection," the distinction between the two being exactly the same as that between paragon and saint.

For perfection is like a sunlit mountain peak, always before the eyes of the entranced climber—a thing of such beauty that it becomes the sole quest of his life to get closer and closer to it, far away as it is. And he starts afresh, after each interval of rest, with renewed zest, taking the inevitable hard work and endurance in his stride and making light of it—for in his quest there is also excitement, adventure and joy.

The pursuit of "faultlessness," on the other hand, is like the state of mind of the man who comes into a garden with his soul intent on eliminating the "weed"—and the more he pulls up the further he looks for more and more to pull and the task is endless, for the longer he is at it the more time there is for more and more weeds to sprout up. And although it may be said that the eventual aim of all this is a beautiful and blooming garden, yet the immediate and absorbing dream of the weeder as such is merely a brown patch of clean earth with not a growing thing in it.

Yet although this negative task—accomplished always with bent back and eyes riveted on a multiplicity of minute objects—seems to be toil and nothing but toil, it does not really entail the intense exertion of the Alpine climber with his head up, his light and adventurous spirits and his one and only bright object in view.

But to return to the original theme there was another thing which made the Joachim Quartet different from all those that now exist (so far as I have heard them): there was no feeling in their case that you were listening to a uniformed and strictly drilled company of players, who had felt it their duty to sink their various personalities under the stiff black cloth and high collars of their uniforms.

Although the three players under him were all Joachim pupils (and Hausmann, though a cellist, more so and in a deeper sense than the other two) there was no indication that it had ever occurred to any one of them to do violence to or to suppress his own individuality. And indeed, with perhaps the exception of Wirt, the viola player, who seemed by nature to be more of the pedagogue pure and simple and whose playing, therefore, showed a close study of all the minutiae of Joachim's style, one could not well imagine a small company of people containing a greater diversity of personal characteristics both in playing and appearance—the most striking contrast being that between Hausmann and Halier—Hausmann with his lean energy, intensity and fiery nobility, and Halier with his comfortable fatness, loose facility and great physical talent.

Indeed I have heard it said that some listener to the quartet expressed it once as his opinion that "Halier was a far better player than Joachim!" As a matter of fact he seemed to me just one of those players, with great facility and not too much character, who might easily have fitted into a modern quartet combination.

Yet, under Joachim, he did not really appear out of place any more than did Hausmann with his great character, which was, however, a very different character from that of Joachim himself. Uniformity, in fact, seemed neither to be sought after nor required—the one qualifying condition (given physical fitness) being that they should all have agreed to go on the same journey, as it were, to follow the same quest. A kind of brotherhood, in fact, not unlike that of the famous musketeers with its Porthos, its Athos and other striking contrasts of character, united only by a singleness of purpose.

And it was just this very contrast between the individual members which drew one's attention so particularly to that which made the quartet as a whole such a harmonious unity. For individuality in the other players did not in the least detract from Joachim's own greatness as leader, but quite the contrary, as one felt all the more on that account, that instead of the egotistic despot who feels it necessary to squash every other individuality and force all into his own mould in order to assert his power, one had here a wise and great ruler who knew how to draw the best out of his subordinates by giving them freedom to develop a mode

of expression characteristic to themselves *so long as this did not infringe the wise central law* to which he, "the highest servant of the State," in like manner subordinated himself. And this "law," I think, may be best described as the absolute devotion and sacrifice, if need be, of all talents and powers to the spirit of the music being performed at the moment.

It was also, I think, a testimonial to the broad-minded outlook in the Hochschule that while under training there one could still listen to a player like Ysaye with appreciation—even when he broke without compunction all the laws one was used to, and did not feel that rigid rules and schooling were standing by to rebuke you for recognising his bigness and individuality through it all.

Playing of a more negative kind and with less character, like that of Kreisler and Kubelik, on the other hand—although it violated fewer rules—I found much more difficult to appreciate at that time. It is also noteworthy that the violin music of Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski, with all its French atmosphere, was a great deal taught in the Hochschule and no one with the slightest intelligence could go away in the belief that he was in any sense an artist, without attempting to develop as many tone colours and shades of expression as he was capable of.

Yet in these post-war days it is as well to remember that before the world had become the topsy-turvy place which it now so often appears to be the Germans, whatever may be the case now, could claim to have developed a style of their own for playing their own music—at any rate, their string music.

In limiting oneself to the discussion of string playing at the beginning of the century it certainly must be owned that Joachim—the chief exponent of the German style of performing German music on stringed instruments—was not only no German but a Jew, and an Hungarian Jew at that. He had, however, for so long identified himself with Germany and the spirit of German music that he may well be accepted as the representative of that style.¹

The other school of violin-playing with a distinctive character of its own was the French or Belgian one and when a great player

¹ Perhaps a better way of stating this would be to say simply: that a style of playing on stringed instruments which seemed to have sprung from a reverence for the great German music had developed under Joachim.

like Ysaye turned up one could listen to him appreciatively, not merely as a representative of another style of violin-playing but also of another view of music and of life in general.

Yet a normal person brought up in the German tradition of playing would never have dreamed of copying Ysaye (even supposing he could have done so) in his playing of German music. This would have seemed about as reasonable as to engage a Frenchman to teach one the pronunciation of the German language.

Yet, nowadays, it seems that the very knowledge of the existence once upon a time of such a German tradition and of the distinctive difference between this and the French one, is as good as extinct. Anyway, in this country, it is only those few who belong to an ageing generation and who came into close contact with it who still continue to cling to that tradition as the clue to a proper understanding of German music.

For this style seemed to have sprung up out of such a deep consciousness of the innate spiritual nobility of the great German music that at one and the same moment a whole field for active endeavour in the domain of intense expression ranging from the most passionate to the most ethereal was opened up, while, as a result, all trace of sensuality and impurity in playing fell away without question. Against this the admittedly sensuous element in the French style could stand on its own merits provided that it were presented to you in a characteristic enough manner and in its own sphere.

But to differentiate between these two styles is what nowadays is becoming more and more difficult because one so seldom comes across either of them. What one does usually get is a characterless compromise between the two—a dull appeal to the mere senses presented by people who have at the same time got the word "classical" rooted in their minds as immovably as any of the ten commandments.

But the word "classical" has, it seems, come to mean something academic, dry and negative, so that the introduction of a little bit of sensuality may be regarded as the saving of the situation—the bringing back of life to dead matter. It is for this reason that one sometimes fears that if sensuality were forced out of some sorts of playing nothing living would be left behind—that it is there, in

fact, just in order to cover a vacuum and so had better be left undisturbed.

It is more than likely that teachers of the "classical" are themselves largely to blame for this state of things. If they are themselves cut-and-dry people they may often only see far enough to perform the negative job of lopping off that which may appear to them to be in bad taste, without being able to stimulate a positive inspiration which, in pursuance of its own aim, would, in its stride, eliminate foreign elements as a matter of course.

With young players, therefore, one would in the first place make no attempt to eradicate any sort of positive quality, but given the chance, would try to foster such a thirst for the positive quality of noble feeling which to many people is inherent in the great German music, that this by itself could be trusted to preserve purity of style and keep sensuousness in its place.

It is the same, I believe, in all walks of life. If there is a dearth of other positive qualities, sensuality will always come into prominence as, indeed, the last and lowest bulwark between life and death.

It is like the rats that show themselves in the sinking ship. "And what matter," say you, "as the ship is already doomed?"

It does seem that without a doubt the likelihood must be faced that there is something in modern life—in the modern outlook (and is it from this that the lurid literature, the jazz and the rouged faces and lips of to-day derive their being?)—which not only tends to make people insensitive to the nobler human feelings and shades of feeling, but stimulates in them an active appetite for what is less noble? Whether it is the appetite which causes the insensitiveness or the insensitiveness the appetite, who can say? It is only the result which is clear and, alas, but too clear—an opaque barrier through which it often seems impossible not only for the elements of air and light but for the fiercest heat of fire and intensity to make a breach.

In saying this it is not voluptuaries who are in my mind.

Outstanding voluptuousness, like other violent occurrences in nature, seems often to appear side by side with things which are in violent contrast to itself.

I am not thinking merely of sober people but of ultra sober people. And it looks almost as if in the attempt to face life com-

pletely "honestly" they deliberately reduce it to its lowest denominator and then uphold this as the one thing which is undeniably genuine.

Thus it is that romance and intensity of sentiment become to them a fairy tale which, together with all nursery toys, has long ago been laid aside and forgotten. And the crying call for active and vivid expressiveness in the performance of classical music is simply not felt and not recognised, and lower elements are introduced in order to soften down what is felt to be otherwise cut-and-dry and dull.

In the old tradition it was not only the music but the instrument itself that was treated with reverence. It was as if this also had a fine soul of its own and was, therefore, not to be put to base uses.

25. *Tempo*

("Freispielen." "Athmen." "Die Gestaltungskraft." "Joints." "Punctuation." "Rubato.")

Up to this point I have simply put down and amplified in the best way I am able any feature of the Berlin instruction which has occurred to me, pretty much at random and without any plan, just at the moment when it did occur to me. Therefore important and less important matters, technical, semi-technical, semi-musical and entirely musical ones (*i.e.* those which concern any kind of instrument) have been all mixed up together without design.

Each detail as it comes back into one's mind seems interesting and important and well worth dwelling upon because each of them, even the most technical, was taught as something bearing directly upon real music and never as a *tour-de-force* of gymnastics. By far the most important, however, as well as the most interesting part of one's studies was that which (as already said) made the Hochschule quite unique, *i.e.* the problems of rhythm, "Das Freispielen," "Das Athmen," "Die Gestaltungskraft," all of which have already been dwelt upon at some length. These problems, which, as far

as one can judge, are so generally neglected nowadays were, in the Hochschule, presented before the minds of the young and raw students there as, to put it at its lowest, a matter of routine, and became, when one had the luck to get under the inspired individual teachers, the all-important centre-point round which everything else grouped itself and which not to recognise at once branded you as a quite useless and entirely unmusical dud.

I realise that nowadays the adjective "unmusical" is generally used about players who scratch or bump, or make any other such "unmusical" noise. But at that time in Berlin it denoted wooden stodginess and want of imagination. To take risks which might easily and very often did lead to scratches, bumps, out-of-tuneness and wrong notes too, was in no way looked upon as a sign of being "unmusical," but indeed rather the reverse; not because scratches and bumps were wanted any more than they are now, but because those students who took risks, being intent on bringing out some musically purposeful idea, could not avoid often producing ugly noises. It was realised then that these could only gradually learn to avoid jars by constantly taking risks as part of their daily practice.

Nothing could then be more "unmusical" than the attitude of those whose aim was euphony at all costs, for this often meant sacrifice of the musical idea—the one unforgivable sin in a musician. On such a basis the difficulty of perfect tone-production, desired by all, is merely evaded, not conquered, because the range is so limited.

Thus the careful negative player, so common nowadays, if suddenly set back in that environment would have heard, certainly with surprise and probably with indignation (this being the last thing that he imagines about himself), that his main fault was an "unmusical" attitude of mind.

No student had any excuse for passing out of the Hochschule without being at least familiar with its characteristic attitude towards the study of music because, even if bad luck placed him under one of the less enlightened individual masters, there was always the orchestra, conducted either by Joachim or Hausmann and, above all, there was always the Joachim Quartet to listen to.

Nonetheless there was a great deal, inevitably, left for each

individual to work out in his own way and, in my own case, there was one particular point which hung about in my mind for many a long day, like an interesting and intriguing puzzle which one takes up, works at and then lays aside, many a time before it is satisfactorily solved.

It was this : To what extent and in what way was the *tempo* of a whole movement affected by "Das Freispielen," "Das Athmen" and "Das Gestalten" (the shaping (of phrases)) ?

To avoid lengthiness I shall first state what is now my settled conviction and then go backwards over the process which led up to it.

It is this : that Joachim varied the *tempo* less, not more, than the ordinary mechanical player. I was about to say that this was in spite of all his "Freispielen" but, on second thoughts, I shall go a step further and say that I believe it was this very "Freispielen" that made it humanly possible for him to keep a strict *tempo*. Thus the conventional retard at the end of movements—especially fast ones—introduced by so many rigid players was conspicuously absent in Joachim performances.

With these others it is as if one were approaching a halting-place in some mechanical vehicle driven at too great a pace. The mechanism, it seems, has taken charge, but the driver, becoming aware of this in time, applies the brakes and so avoids a nasty jar.

Under the circumstances it is the best thing to do both in the case of the vehicle and also the musical performance, and for the fault—the lack of control, poise and balance—which makes it necessary, one has to look further back.

The controlled freedom, the poise and balance from start to finish in a Joachim performance, however, did not call for such expedients.

The same sort of power was evident in his treatment of any of those strikingly impressive bits which come so often and generally with a change of key, in fast movements, especially those of Beethoven.

If a temporary reining in of the speed did occur at all on such occasions it never gave the impression of a change of *tempo*.

In many such parts of Beethoven with their depth, intensity, and almost superhuman sadness, any trace of that personal senti-

mentality which many players introduce with, it would seem, the idea of increasing the expressiveness, at once breaks the spell.

In such parts Joachim, as if with a special clue to the inner meaning, seemed just to go quietly through, straight and sure, to the goal, while others—lacking that clue—put off time looking for it or just hang back aimlessly.

From such evidence, drawn from his general style of playing, one imagines, for instance, that he would not have changed the *tempo* at the great G minor section in the first movement of the Beethoven concerto where most players do so, and which Kreisler takes at about half the speed of the rest of the movement.

The muffled thudding of the crotchets in the accompaniment—reminiscent as they are of the bar at the very opening—seems in itself to make an intimate connection between this supremely expressive bit with the rest of the movement and, although I never had the luck to hear Joachim play the concerto, merely to recall this particular part is enough to bring back to my mind the memory of his noble style of playing many things of the same nature, in a manner quite peculiarly poignant. Because one feels that that style, and that alone, is the only possible right style here.

As already said, during the many years which have elapsed since I heard him play, I have continually had flashes of recollection in which the poised restfulness and serenity peculiar to his performance has come back to me vividly. Then—just as one felt on the point of grasping some clue to the inner secret—the memory has vanished away leaving the mind blank and once more in a puzzled state.

With this experience fresh in mind, allusions to the "Joachim Tradition" (which one often hears) have left me wondering what exactly people mean when they use this term. Sometimes it seems to indicate merely the flexibility of his physical style—his bowing in particular—at others his purity of tone, his simplicity and dignity are apparently being referred to, and yet at others his flexibility of phrasing seems uppermost in the speaker's mind.

Yet not only do none of these qualities, important as each of them are, taken singly—but even when all combined together—constitute that which I take to be the complete "Joachim Tradition"—without the inclusion of the all-important power of making the

tempo FELT throughout a whole movement—not as a worrying condition which hinders, but as *the* guiding spirit which promotes all expressiveness.

It is this keen conception of *tempo* which one feels in the performances of a number of players who came in contact with Joachim, but in none more than in those of Professor Tovey.

I have become gradually satisfied, therefore, in my own mind that, to the big imaginative artist, the *tempo* of any given piece of music, although it may vary from performance to performance, is each time the most essential thing about it, the thing above all others that gives help, guidance and scope to his imagination. With the mechanical player, on the contrary, it always seems to act as such a hindrance to all natural feeling that he, being human at bottom when all's said and done, cannot resist the temptation of discarding it altogether on occasion and having a good time, after which enjoyable interval and concession to human nature, he returns with redoubled conscientiousness to his duty of keeping rigid step and line.

Two things therefore seem clear enough :

- (1) That the "Freispielen" of the Joachim school was something quite different from irresponsible licence ; and that
- (2) The "keeping of the *tempo*" meant something different from what it ordinarily means.

A good deal has already been said about the first of these (Das Freispielen) but nothing so far about this second very nearly allied question (the keeping of the *tempo*)—partly because what one gradually became aware of in this matter cannot be said to have been actually taught, and partly because it is really the sum total of all the other matters that *were* more definitely taught, *i.e.* "Das Freispielen, Das Athmen, Die Gestaltungskraft," and so on.

Therefore the best place to draw attention to it seems to be here, in what will probably turn out to be the last section of these notes.

One heard, it is true, of playing freely "within the *tempo*," but it was then left for the individual to make what he could of this hint, and personally I felt it to be rather a vague hint. Thinking it over now I feel that, as a description of what occurs, it lacks vividness.

Looking back, the treatment of this subject of the *tempo* seems

like that which one might see allotted to the supreme secret of some imaginary initiation rites, to which many pointers are indeed given but which is then left as the highest test of his capacity for the candidate to solve for himself.

Another likely cause for its not having been much discussed seems to me to be that shrinking from fixing their ideas into words (lest they should harden into mere theoretical caricatures) which musicians, or at least good musicians, always have, and the preference they show for demonstration and example, rather than explanation, in their methods of instruction.

Thus "das Athmen," "das Freispielen," "die Gestaltungskraft," could be demonstrated by taking only two consecutive phrases, whereas an uninterrupted performance of a whole movement would have been necessary to demonstrate this problem of keeping the *tempo*—and this did not often occur in lessons where time was limited and in which things had to be pulled to pieces and details criticised. It can hardly be doubted that such high and subtle matters are best learnt naturally through hearing very fine performances over and over again, so that a subconscious knowledge is gained before any conscious thought has been directed to the matter. Only, alas, this is a counsel of perfection because to-day most of the so-called "very fine performances" are demonstrations of what is diametrically opposed, in this matter, to all that one heard and learnt at that time in the Joachim environment. I think, therefore, that almost any expedient is excusable which has the faintest chance of hindering the progress of that great snowball of public opinion, which in this matter threatens, by sheer force of size and weight, to bear down or else force everything in its path to adhere quite hopelessly to its own bulk.

I shall try, however, to avoid crudity and hard-and-fast statements as far as possible.

It is quite probable that some people, in agreement with me up to this point, might say that any one who has taken in the main ideas about the shape of phrases—breathing between phrases, and "free playing"—has got all that he needs. But phrases after all are only parts of a whole, and in all activities, music not excepted, there is risk of getting absorbed in the part to the detriment of the whole.

Thus, although perhaps likely, it is far from being certain that a player accustomed to read music by phrases, instead of merely by bars, will take the next logical step upwards and from there survey the movement as a whole. If he does this, however, it will then appear to him that the same problems that he has already studied in the phrase, in miniature, so to speak, are again before him, only on a larger scale.

This is what I think the intelligent teachers of those days expected one to find out for oneself without having it pointed out in so many words and with the Joachim Quartet there continually as demonstrators, one had a good chance of doing so.

It has often occurred to me since then that there can be no better or more enlightening exercise in this matter than reading aloud to children some good (and preferably old-fashioned) book of the sort that is neither written down to their intelligences nor crowded with sensational incidents on every page, but which is, nevertheless, full of human interest so that if read with a sense of proportion there will be an ample store of entertainment for an unspoiled mind.

I can think of no better example than a Scott novel.

The analogy between the colourless, monotonous reading of a dramatic part of the story and a dull parrot-like playing without attention to phrasing of essential salient melodies is obvious.

But one of the things which gives old-fashioned literature its special character is the leisure and space which the authors allowed themselves, thereby creating an atmosphere in which the tale seems, as it were, to live and float, a perspective by which it can be seen at a distance, like a well-hung picture.

If, however, these meditative and descriptive digressions, which create this atmosphere, are read stodgily and dwelt upon too much the thread of the tale is lost, the child's attention wanders and he begins to yawn.

Exactly the same thing happens in the playing of music when the player does not distinguish between what is salient and what is subordinate, and when everything being equally stressed—shape and proportion—is lost. This can happen even when the phrasing is good.

Thus a student who had got a fair grasp of the meaning of free phrasing, and who found that he was succeeding passably well in some salient main section, might at first be rather bewildered when he felt himself being pushed ahead and not allowed to stress phrases in the next section. He would be further taken aback when, after getting fairly under way, the reins were suddenly drawn in once more.

If, when only part of a movement was taken and when playing himself, the first impression of all this on the student's mind was that the *tempo* was being disregarded the next development of the situation would make him doubtful of the correctness of this conclusion—for the novice's inevitable comment.

"So you want me to play slow here. Then that bit is to go quicker and this bit slower again?" met always with the same seemingly evasive response. "You must dwell on this bit. Then this part here must go forward ('vorwärts') and this you must play quietly ('ruhig')."

Besides not even a novice could fail to hear that "hurry and drag" did not at all describe the ebb and flow or the dramatic and breathless moments of any Joachim performance any more than they do the still larger movements of nature even when these are wild and convulsive. For behind these one feels that there is a law of which balance is an essential part.

"Hurry and drag," on the other hand (as used by musicians), denote a loss of balance.

The next thing that began to be apparent was that the words "vorwärts" (forward) and "ruhig" (quietly, calmly) did not necessarily apply very much to the actual pace, but were primarily descriptive of the mood and character of the section.

Thus, although it is unreasonable to make your dwelling-place in paths and passages in whatever sphere these may occur, because they are there only for the purpose of leading you from one point to another, this does not, therefore, make it *necessary* for you to hurry along them unduly.

So of certain musical "passages" you were told to go "forward," *through* them, or in other words, simply to keep moving, and this sense of purposeful "moving" was the essential thing, not the actual pace at which you moved.

Conversely, when you came to a section of essential importance

where a statement of the subject-matter of the piece occurred, you had to convey the impression of dwelling on it, of resting there for a time—this being one of the goals of your journey.

The word "ruhig" conveyed this impression, as also the lyric mood of a great many second subjects to which it was generally applied.

Since these second subjects always come after a transition section, the contrast between the "vorwärts" movement which is concerned in getting from one place to another, and the movement which is a purpose in itself as it is, for instance, in a dance, was more easy to demonstrate here than elsewhere.

Whether these opposite impressions can be conveyed entirely without change of speed will have to be decided by each player on each occasion, but in any case a great deal can be done by the treatment of accent alone. Thus one single impulse, like the push to a wheeled vehicle, can convey you along a straight passage or path, but on the threshold of a dwelling-place, purpose and movement at once become less straight ahead, and for each turn and twist there is needed another push and another impulse.

So in the transition section the fewer the accents the more you get the impression of passing on to something important, and the greater number of bars that can be passed over without emphasis the more you are prepared for the final climax which does not occur until the appearance of the new subject.

If by undue emphasis a climax is made before this point and the impetus is thus checked, the subject, when it does appear, enters lamely and without clear purpose.

When, however, ushered in dramatically by a great player the impression given is that a new personality, whose appearance first makes one pause and on whom one's attention then settles down and dwells restfully, has come onto the stage.

The same thing happens, only on a smaller scale, within the subject itself. The climax here, however, is an integral part of the subject, not the beginning of something new and the notes leading up to that climax may be looked upon as the counterpart, in miniature, of the transition section (referred to above) with its "vorwärts" tendency leading up to the subject.

To return now once again to the idea of the Joachim pupil

(already referred to) which was quoted in an earlier section : that which makes phrases in the great majority of performances so lacking in point is that the conception of the "beat is not kept separate from that of the note," i.e. that the player thinks it necessary to make note and beat synchronise quite irrespective of whether the sense of the phrase suffers thereby or, equally, of what his own natural feelings about it would be if there were no rules to follow.

To the player who has been emancipated from these rules, on the other hand, beat and note are like two personalities who have come to a friendly understanding not to lose touch with each other, and just because of their close relationship and mutual trust do not find it necessary to keep rigid step with one another in the manner of the new recruit with his drill sergeant.

This is more easy to understand, as well as to carry out, when the beat is merely imaginary ; but when a sufficient degree of independence and understanding between the players has been acquired, it can often be carried out successfully and without any disturbance to the listener in places where the beat is audibly kept going by an accompanying underpart—as has already been noticed. It was apropos of this that Klingler said to me recently when discussing the "faultless ensemble playing" which gets so much praise from the musical critics nowadays : "As a matter of fact, I personally do not want that sort of ensemble, but if I put this in print I should only be misunderstood."

This is just one more instance of the unwillingness of good musicians to put subtle matters of this sort down in black and white. As I, however, have committed myself, for better or worse, to this very task, and have no reputation to lose, I shall here stick to the simile of the two friends out for a walk *versus* the drill sergeant dragooning his recruit, crude, as it is, as the best one I can think of to illustrate the difference between the ordinary conception of ensemble and that which one learnt in the Hochschule.

For once a friendly understanding has been established between beat and note, the same sort of independent intimacy between the individual players in ensemble music follows automatically ; and a quartet, instead of a dragooned combination of people under a leader who hushes up into a characterless subordination all sounds which do not happen to be produced by himself, is transformed

into a pleasant conclave of friends who have met to discuss a subject of mutual interest. Each expresses himself with equal freedom and without restraint in his own individual way and with his own individual voice—his relative importance being established entirely by the amount and the intrinsic value of that which he has to say.

But the *tempo* too, and this is what I especially wish to emphasise here, is now no longer the rigid taskmaster, but is found to be merely the "beat" (with which terms have already been made), as it is extended throughout the whole movement, and just as, within the phrase itself, one note is subordinate to others so, as the scale widens, one bar becomes subordinate to another bar, one phrase to another phrase, and finally one section to another section and there must be a sense of passing over the one without emphasis and of dwelling restfully on the other. If, in making this clear, fluctuation in speed does occur, as is often the case, this is something entirely different from any set change of *tempo* for the very good reason that the *tempo* is always in the background, whether audibly or inaudibly, keeping up the idea of an average pace, a normal pulse-beat, and so playing the most important role of all—that which welds everything into a sensible and balanced whole.

To repeat this for the sake of clarity in slightly different words : If the note lengths as written down are approximately, but only approximately, correct, then, as the scale widens, will the bar lengths in relation to one another be also only approximately correct and so on as the scale gets still wider will it be with phrases and finally sections in their interrelation.

What does remain, however, absolute and adamant is the normal pulse or the *tempo*, but this will always be more real—will exercise more, not less, control the more it remains inaudible, invisible—a spiritual thing of the imagination.

The performers do then, for the first time, actually have to "play" (instead of stodgily following the lead) like children who frolic round the steady footsteps of their parent, never straying far afield, simply because they feel themselves more contented and happy in being near him.

I have found that the same sort of thing happens with *tempo*

when looked upon in this way, as does with "rhythm" when one has been thinking much about that subject, *i.e.* it becomes metamorphosed in the mind and, although the word itself may refer to "time" alone,¹ you begin to feel that the same thing can be expressed in other ways which have no reference to time.

Thus *tempo* often appears to be just the underlying essential mood of a piece, round which everything else moves and groups itself naturally and contentedly, and which, if lost, leaves everything in a fog to wander aimlessly. Or it may at other times seem like the first essential impulse in the composer's mind which sets everything else a-rolling; or at another is like the buoyant atmosphere, which keeps all else afloat. Then a number of other transfigurations may come forward if one gives them time to appear, but of all of them I think the first-mentioned will prove the most helpful, because once looked upon as the underlying essential mood the mind at once becomes disentangled from the fallacy that getting free of the *tempo* is going to heighten the expressiveness of any piece—it being now apparent that this cannot fail to do the very reverse.

It remains true, however, that *tempo*, as usually conceived of, is no such thing as the underlying essential mood of a piece principally because it is not permitted to *underlie* it, but is hauled forward to take on the role of an aggressive tyrant who drives all before him, and from whom to escape, when opportunity occurs, is only human and natural.

Thus in performances not of the most highly-drilled order, yet which are in their class typically rigid ones, the sense of *tempo* is often quite lost by the introduction of *retards* and *accelerandos* not marked by the composer. These should not be confused with the gracious undulations of "Das Freispiel" and yet they often are so confused.

Real *retards* and *accelerandos*, as I understand them, denote as definite changes of *tempo* as any other *tempo* marks, only that

¹ I have since heard it affirmed, whether with good foundation or not I can't say, that the word *tempo* is derived from the Italian word meaning "temple," *i.e.* the temple of the head where the pulse can be felt. Hence that it means the pulse of the music.

these changes take place gradually instead of all at once. It is all one whether they lead to a settled new *tempo* or back again to the *tempo primo*—in both cases the old *tempo* is thrown overboard and one loses touch with it for the time being.

The fluctuations of speed, when such occur, in "Das Freispiel," on the other hand, never lose touch with the *tempo*, for a fluctuation in one direction is made up for, in the long run, by one in the opposite direction. Thus the sense of an average speed is preserved and this average is the *tempo*, but not necessarily the pace at which the music is moving at any given moment.

Thus you often found that a novice following the lead of a free player and suddenly left alone to play some salient phrase after a transitional section during which the "vorwärts" movement had led to momentary increase of speed, would continue moving at this increased speed under the mistaken impression that he was doing what the leader intended him to do. The consequence of this for him would always be a rap over the knuckles because he had not taken the initiative and restored the balance by a shortening of the reins, so to speak.

Conversely, supposing the lead to be in his part, he would be expected to pick up the speed on his own responsibility after some salient phrase had just been broadened by the leader so that the sense of an underlying *tempo* would never be lost sight of.

The irresponsible *retards* and *accelerandos* which are so often introduced are, on the other hand, as much outside the *tempo* as the legitimate ones marked by the composer and for neither of these is compensation allowed.

The stricter the idea of time-keeping from beat to beat too, in the mind of the player, the less likelihood is there of the balance being restored by accident.

In very highly-drilled mechanical performances, however, although no very obvious *retards* and *accelerandos* may occur, even the slightest variation of speed—which human nature can hardly avoid—takes on the character of either one or the other of these simply because it occurs as a mistake in the rigid structure and therefore stands out in isolation as having nothing to do with it. For give and take being essentially foreign to this rigid structure

no compensation is allowed for and so the balance is never restored.

In such performances, as I have noticed, these lapses occur oftener in the direction of hurrying than of dragging and to this fact I believe is due the impression one so often gets of the music sliding just a little in front of the true rhythmic beat and of the whole being therefore so lacking in restfulness and poise.

There appear to me to be only two conceivable ways of establishing a *tempo*: the first is that which I have already endeavoured to describe as being the essence of "Das Freispielen," *i.e.* the constant awareness of an average speed and mood round which the music itself plays freely; the second is an absolutely rigid adherence to the beat of a carefully adjusted metronome—beat for beat, bar for bar, throughout.

This last, if really carried out, could at least claim to have established an approximately exact *tempo*, and although the music would sound like the ghastly product of some Robot, not that of a flesh-and-blood man, some people might argue that it was meant so to sound.

But the ordinary mechanical performance follows neither of these courses and only succeeds in giving one the impression that it would like to follow the latter if that were possible. And any one who has tried to play a lengthy piece of music to the accompaniment of a metronome, keeping with it beat for beat, will at once realise the almost insuperable difficulty of accomplishing such an aim with mathematical exactitude, without the help of some sort of mechanical device.

The ordinary rigid performance then just falls hopelessly between two stools. For it is not only unsatisfactory from a human point of view, because of its stiffness, and from a mechanical one, because of its resemblance to bad, not good, machinery, but it fails in the one essential feature which is common to both the human and the mechanical ideal, *i.e.* the establishment of a stern, unyielding sense of *tempo*.

This brings one back to a question which, so far, has only been vaguely approached and indicated, *i.e.* what useful musical end, if any, is served by the standard of accurate time-measurement set up by the metronome?

If some one would just affirm boldly that strict obedience to the metronome in the letter as in the spirit *was* indeed the ideal towards which he strove with consciousness and conviction, then one would at least have ground to stand and make a fight upon. But I have never heard such a statement made and am convinced that, in the minds of the majority, the question remains unanswered and rather unhappily suspended.

It is as if music were conceived of as a thing with a dual personality, of whom one was the most human of arts and the other the least human and most abstract of sciences.

As these two personalities, then, are at continual variance the only thing for it is to make some sort of workable compromise.

But this cannot be said to be an answer to the question put above, and to me the only satisfactory one is this: that the metronome can fix the *tempo* desired by the composer *approximately* and that further, just like the signs of notation, it can fix *approximately* the time values of the notes. Because of this it has a value, but once this service has been performed its utility abruptly comes to an end.

For, far from being *too* accurate, it is, just as in the case of the signs of notation, quite inconceivable that a mechanical beat could ever be accurate enough in the subtle matter of fixing the exact note lengths as equally in the matter of fixing the exact *tempo*.

For in the latter case—to use again a simile which has already been used—just as the imaginary line of the equator goes plumb round the middle of the globe without deviating one hairsbreadth from its course in a way that no actual line could ever do, so the imaginary line of the *tempo*, as felt by the composer, being purely spiritual, is a thing far too exquisitely delicate to be represented otherwise than clumsily and inadequately by anything originating in a material, man-made device.

This fine spiritual line, *tempo*, or whatever else you choose to call it, does not, then, like a crude material beat, destroy the sense of freedom but on the contrary the constant awareness of its presence in the background, which one feels in the performances of great players, seems to be the very thing that does give a sense both of freedom and, at the same time, of adamant security and restfulness.

For this *tempo* does then at last seem to be revealed as the true and indispensable heart-beat, the normal pulse and so the very life

and spirit of the whole. Yes, and one might even go a step further and call it, in all reverence, the Holy Ghost of the music.

This then is the real thing—the metronomic beat the crude approximation only.

The beat of the inspired conductor is, however, neither the real thing nor the approximation. *His* beat is the actual music—the sound—translated into a visible form. Thus the players have to follow the beat of the conductor *absolutely*.

The crude approximation has, by this time, been left far behind, while that which I have called the real thing remains ever present yet always in the background, generally inaudible and invisible, but constantly in the mind of the conductor. And, human nature being what it is, that which is audible or visible will always approach as near to it as it is possible to get by merely playing round about it and attempting nothing further.

Who can say but that this by-play, this wisdom that avoids a too close approach to an ultimate truth, which is beyond the power of human perceptions to grasp, is but one more revelation of the elusive nature of that thing which we call rhythm?

If those who, by following sound intuition alone, have never gone wrong, find this definition absurd and unnecessary, then they do not need to attend to it.

The fact remains, however, that judging by results the great majority do seem to go wrong.

If this is due to faulty intuition then perhaps nothing can be done about it. If, however, as seems more likely, it is owing to a mere mental complex, a knot or mistaken thought resulting from early tuition, then the situation is much more hopeful.

A mental knot, however, can only be undone by a mental effort and that is perhaps the excuse for examining this matter so consciously and explicitly.

I am well aware that the immediate and invariable result of any great performance is to reduce theories to silence.

It is this very knowledge that now induces me to describe how this particular theory—if theory it needs must be called, was almost forced upon my mind.

My experience of the Joachim Quartet was spread over a long

period of years during which time I heard a great number of performances. The impression left behind is therefore more the net result of all these than of any single performance.

In youth impressions are received far oftener in a passive and subconscious way than they are in later life. Thus although there were characteristics of the Joachim style (its flexibility of rhythm and freedom of phrasing, for example) which could not but be noticed consciously, even these occurred so naturally that one very soon began to accept them all as a matter of course, in fact simply to take them for granted.

One might indeed compare them to the everyday evolutions of nature which excite no comment simply because they seem so fitting and right, or to perfect manners which become merged in the personality as a whole instead of obtruding themselves on the notice as does a mere "manner."

The fact, too, that during this period one heard very little else of musical importance (other than some operatic and orchestral performances) and, except for the Klingler Quartet, no other quartet at all, prevented one from comparing it with anything else except that inferior tuition of pre-Berlin days already alluded to, the memory of which very soon began to fade away in the distance.

It was not then until shortly after Joachim's death when I heard the performance (described earlier in these notes) by a quartet which later on became well known, that I began to realise a thing which very soon became only too obvious, *i.e.* that players entirely lacking in those qualities which one had all this time considered as essential to an artist, could rise to eminence and receive almost universal applause from the so-called musical public. It was repeated experiences of this depressing nature, however, which forced, for the first time, into the full light of upper consciousness a characteristic of Joachim's performance that might, but for this, have remained dimly in the back of my mind.

I have more than once alluded to the elusive quality in his playing which baffled analysis.

If most of this must for ever remain elusive under the label of the single word, Personality, some part of it did now, by contrast with a style so entirely different, begin gradually to appear capable of at least partial elucidation.

Above all was this the case of the characteristic which, as time went on, began to assume greater and greater importance in my mind, *i.e.* the combination of freedom and flexibility of phrasing with that inflexible, unyielding sense of tempo which one never gets in a rigid performance.

I have already tried to give my own explanation of this striking feature of the Joachim style—my theory about it, if theory it must be called—as, however, it came to me without any conscious effort or will of my own but as the slow dawning of the light of truth round an interesting but puzzling object: I think that perhaps it deserves a name less invidious than that of theory.

26. *A Few Concluding Remarks.*

Lest by any chance the foregoing should unintentionally have conveyed the impression that Hochschule teaching, as I knew it, did not insist on the most meticulously careful reading of the text as written down by the composer, with strict attention to all note lengths, characteristic rhythms, expression marks, and everything else, I here most emphatically and once for all state that it did so insist. To those who are familiar with Sir D. Tovey's maxim, "that more than half the secret of good interpretation lies in playing exactly what the composer wrote down," I say that, in this as in many other ways, Tovey-teaching and Hochschule-teaching resemble each other very strongly.

Any one, too, who tries to do this strictly will realise at once what a big task it is in itself, from a purely technical as well as from other points of view.

As an instance out of many I need only cite a point which will come home in particular to string players, *i.e.* the making of *crescendos only* where they are written and the avoidance of a "bulge" where the bow is weak and no *crescendo* is indicated.

If a careless listener, however, should leave a Tovey class with the impression that his maxim stated that the *whole* secret of interpretation lies in this, the fault would obviously be in his inattention and his failure to notice that the words used were

“more than half,” not whole; that, therefore, there remains a large section of the “other half” not accounted for.

Any representative Tovey performance, too, should be enough to dispel such a misapprehension if it did occur, and again I need only cite one instance out of a countless number to prove this, *i.e.* the way the Reid Orchestra, under his leadership, plays the following quotation from the 8th Symphony :



There is, of course, no mark between the *forte* and *piano* to indicate that breath should be taken, but needless to say a breath is always taken here in Reid performances, and the noble serenity with which the wind instruments float in with their long *legato* phrase is so exquisitely beautiful that one would think any one hearing it would agree at once that this and only this is what Beethoven intended. Yet in two performances of the same symphony—one of them under what the newspapers describe as “a world-famous conductor”—which I heard recently, the orchestras plodded across this “joint” without the slightest vestige of hesitation and on through the wonderful *piano* phrase as if they were sleep-walking. Thus on each occasion it was half over before one had thoroughly recovered from the shock of the preceding *forte*.

A well-remembered Hochschule maxim was that when a *forte* passage was followed suddenly by a *piano* one you should always let the noise of the former die away (“*verhallen*” was the word used in German) before proceeding with the *piano*; otherwise, the first notes of the *piano* were almost certain to be lost, and neither player nor listener had time to get used to the new mood before it was half over.

Then in sudden changes of key which occur so often with the dramatic effect of changing scenery, there are seldom any marks

to indicate what the player should do. Yet a stodgy plodding through these changes as if they did not exist will not be tolerated by any one who feels their dramatic import, any more than will the plodding across *fortes* and *pianos* just mentioned. Therefore something or other—which is not written down in the text—has to be done to avoid this.

Similarly with the "Auftakt," which has already been explained as meaning one note, or a number of notes, coming on the unaccented part of a bar at the beginning of a phrase and leading up to the accented beat. This may occur after a rest at the beginning of an important theme and may, in certain cases, if played exactly as written without any broadening, sound unnatural, trite and insignificant. As an instance, I will cite the *arpeggio* triplet on which the solo violin floats up to the high A that begins the first theme of the Beethoven Concerto. One usually hears this played exactly on the last crotchet beat as written, but Klingler, who studied the concerto under Joachim, told me that Joachim always played the triplet broadly, deliberately borrowing what time he needed for this from the rest which precedes it and thus not in any way interfering with the *tempo*. Played so the triplet has the same serene character as the theme itself, and seems to belong to it, instead of appearing like a rather unhappy tag-end or a flimsy ladder put there only to enable the player to reach his high A in tune.

There may be differences of opinion about this, but in any case the most rigid pedant cannot prove *from the text* that Beethoven did not intend it so to be played because, supposing that he did so intend, there exists no other way, except that which he adopted, of putting it into notes on paper. An explanation in words would have been the only way of making the thing perfectly clear.

This borrowing from rests (and also from longer notes) was often resorted to but did not interfere with the other well-remembered Hochschule maxim much enforced *i.e.* that "rests" should be "played"; that is to say that the player should not regard them as pauses in which he can allow himself to be lazy and his mind to wander, but that he should feel the music and its rhythm or (in cases where there is silence) the rhythm alone throughout the rest, so that he may enter again with attention and interest fully awake.

This applied to all rests, but one gradually became aware that

there were "rests" and "rests." That is to say that (just as with notes) rests were sometimes written exactly as the composer intended them to be regarded and sometimes only approximately so, that one had, by experience, to learn to distinguish between the two.

As an instance of the kind of rests which it seems vitally important that one should play exactly as the composer wrote them I will cite those which come between the four chords, leading back to the first theme in the slow movement of Beethoven's F Major Quartet Op. 18, marked respectively *f p pp* and *ppp*. If the rests here are at all cut short, which is very apt to happen—even when the *adagio tempo* is not taken unduly slowly—when players get impatient of the long silent wait four times repeated, there is a weakening of the breathless tension which the expression marks in themselves seem, beyond possibility of doubt, to indicate. Thus much of the deep impressiveness of the mournful return to the theme is lost.

On the other hand there is a passage further on in the same movement the exact opposite of this. This consists of three bars on the harmony of the diminished seventh chord which leads up to the *fortissimo* climax immediately preceding the mournful *coda*. In each of these three successive bars occur three *forte* chords each three quaver beats long, and after them come six quaver rests.

Discussing this passage lately with Klinger he said that, in his opinion, the rests here, if taken literally, were far too long.

He meant, if I understood him rightly, that one should feel the passage as a whole, and that if one did so the intense onward and upward urge towards the final climax would of itself shorten the rests.

In other words this is a "vorwärts" passage in spite of the long silences, and one must play it as such just as if the silences were filled in with notes. The intention and rhythm of the *whole* is as always the important thing, and to count the quaver rests pedantically does not only distract the player's attention from this main object and prevent him from feeling it as such but, although done in the name of rhythm, only serves to destroy that very rhythm.

It is as if someone let out three loud shouts which are to culminate in a fourth one still more mighty. Between each he takes breath so

that each successive one may be stronger than its predecessor. But these breaths are taken *involuntarily—unconsciously—not* like a man doing breathing exercises.

No musical signs exist which could mark these subtle differences. It is otherwise, however, in the case of the mere breathing pause which, in comparatively recent music, is often indicated by a double dash or by a simple comma as in literature. This has often made me wonder why a Beethoven allowed his works to go out into the world without troubling to safeguard them with some such additional marks so as to make them to this extent fool-proof. Can it be that in his day, before the monster of mechanism had reached its zenith and laid its all-powerful stamp upon the human mind, any one calling himself a musician could be trusted to approach his art from a human, not a mechanical, point of view, so that pointers which concern the most non-mechanical of all functions, *i.e.* "breathing," were not considered necessary?

The same question of how one is to take full advantage of the possibility of getting on without the aggressive counting of individual beats comes up always when all instruments are moving together with the same note-lengths and there is no interplay of parts.

The following extract from the slow movement of Beethoven's Quartet Op. 127 is a good instance :

DIM CRESC

When coaching four players in this quartet, Klingler, at this place (and at a number of others like it), insisted on the quaver beats *not* being counted. The players had to synchronise with one unanimous impulse, and to do this they had not only to listen but to look at each other and then move together and feel the music as one person.

This would not be so difficult if only the common habit of keeping the eyes glued to the notes, even after these have been thoroughly learnt, could be more easily overcome.

The great importance of using the eyes as well as the ears, not only in places like the example quoted but throughout all quartet playing and by all the players alike, is a thing which, as he emphasised more than once, is seldom attended to.

That no really fine ensemble can be attained to without a wide-awake interest in the music for its own sake shared equally by all the players concerned seems certain, and yet this is just the thing most difficult of all to arrive at. If it were not so the irritating habit of beating with the foot, even after the music has been thoroughly rehearsed, would surely soon disappear altogether, for with the senses and interest of all wide awake there would no longer remain the vestige of an excuse for such a habit.¹

Compare in this connection the ordinary prim exactitude of a mechanical ensemble, fitted together so carefully like a well-arranged jigsaw puzzle, with the whole-hearted "togetherness" with which free players synchronise with one uniting impulse on a climax, foreseen and worked up to by all and at which it is of vital importance that all should arrive at the same instant with mutual conviction.

In other words, is it not noticeable that mechanical ensemble—exclusively preoccupied as it is with the matter of time—is conspicuously weak in rhythm? That it somehow gives one the uncomfortable impression of an object slightly tilted forward and, therefore, off its true balance; of some one hurrying unduly and

¹ That Joachim himself, in the last year of his life (as reported by a thoroughly trustworthy witness), did sometimes beat with his foot to an extent which was actually disturbing to those sitting on the platform seats, may surely be attributed to a weakness consequent on old age.

in the characteristically awkward attitude of scurry—with body and head slightly in front of the true centre of gravity?

And so this just brings one back to the question of whether true rhythm can ever be attained to if considered only in its relation to time, and hence whether true ensemble, which is dependent on a mutual sense of rhythm, can be reached without a real human feeling shared by all for the sense of the music which will lead of itself to a bond of mutual understanding between the players.

The sharpening of intimacy of contact and the ensemble of spirit and rhythm as also of technical methods (bowing, etc.) which a keen awareness of one another's presence and playing brings about, is incalculable.

Vice versa the damping effect on a player of glancing up and finding his colleagues' eyes riveted with a fixed and unresponsive stare, as if fascinated, on the dots and dashes before him, is quite incalculable.

The effect, too, of facial expression and physical movements sympathetic or the reverse on the feelings of the listener ought not to be overlooked.

"But you should not be using your eyes at all," says some one. "Yet my pleasure should not be entirely spoiled if I do happen to use them," answers the listener.

Above all, in an orchestral performance, who is to avoid noticing whether the conductor's beat is alive and sympathetic or the reverse? And how else is his personality going to impress itself on the members of the orchestra except through facial expression and sympathetic movements?

Not long ago I heard the same "world-famous" conductor, already referred to, rehearsing for a concert. The orchestra was a scratch one and the rehearsals scanty, so that there would have been nothing surprising if no more than reasonable accuracy had been aimed at. What *was* surprising to me, however, was that the conductor, who did occasionally request the orchestra to take "breath" (though this was not the word he used) in some very obvious places, did so in such an apologetic tone of voice, explaining to them that it was the "merest fraction" of a second that he was asking for and "nothing more." Quite involuntarily one seemed

to see the sinister phantom of press musical criticism sitting in the background of his mind, keeping him constantly reminded that "over stressing," "exaggeration," and any interruption to the "smooth flow" of the music was the fault of faults to be avoided at the expense of all others if need be.

The effect of his tentative suggestions was hardly apparent to the listener, as might have been expected, and only goes to prove how absurd it is to worry about the question of "exaggeration" in a case where nothing short of a veritable upheaval or else some quite insurmountable obstacle could do anything effective in the short space of time available, to turn the course of the senseless habit of "all-steam-ahead, through-thick-and-thin, no-matter-whither," which has become the almost universal routine of ensemble playing. It is also remarkable how the most rigid kind of players, who would never dream of taking the "liberty" of a "breath," are often the very ones who take the greatest liberties with the composers' definite *tempo* marks.

As an instance of this I will mention a recent performance by wireless of Beethoven's Quartet in B \flat Op. 18, the last movement of which (carefully marked *Allegretto quasi Allegro*) was played so fast throughout that the *prestissimo* at the end was hardly noticeable, because no room had been left to get appreciably faster.

Some people may object that much of what has been gone into in the foregoing pages ought to be left to the musical instincts of any musical person and that in many instances so much conscious thought is not only unnecessary but likely to have bad consequences. This view of the matter, I feel, would be a very just one if only there were no such things as Notation, Instruction, or Ensemble.

About the two first perhaps sufficient has been said but it must not be forgotten that (with rare exceptions) everything written for instruments other than the piano and organ—hence everything written for stringed instruments—entails eventual co-operation with some other instrument and therefore with some other person. Thus the player knows that the simplest melody will have sooner or later to run in harness with an accompaniment played, nine times out of ten, in a wooden and unsympathetic manner, not by his own left hand, as is the case with the pianist, but by another individual. So that any freedom he may have allowed himself,

while playing alone, whether of a legitimate or an unwarranted nature, will at once be brought to book.

If he does not then from the outset come to some understanding both with himself and his colleague as to what *is* allowable and what is *not* and then make a stand and a fight for it, he is quite certain, in spite of himself, to be carried along by the main stream. For it is so much easier and quicker to get up a parrot-like performance and it saves so much friction to do as the majority do.

Probably experience and greater mastery of his own part may eventually render him more or less independent of a mere accompaniment, for the function of an accompaniment is very often just to make the beat audible, and this beat ought always, whether audible or not, to be somewhere in the back of his own head. When, however, it comes to more complex ensemble (as, for instance, in string quartet playing) a flexible performance can be got, I feel sure (under present-day conditions) only by all the players coming to a mutual and conscious understanding and by thus working together towards the same goal.

It is perhaps natural that any one who has had (like myself) the good fortune to have been in early youth in the environment of a Joachim and then to pass, with little interval, into that of a Tovey, should be liable to conclude, perhaps erroneously, that the barrenness of modern playing is a falling away from the nobler spirit of a bygone age, whereas it might be more truly contended that the two great men mentioned had created an oasis in a desert which has always existed. On the other hand it would be difficult to conceive of the serene human spirit and balance of a Joachim or a Tovey coming to maturity at this present hour—for the languid spinelessness of modern music and playing can no more be compared to this serenity than can the characterless smoothness of a touched-up photograph be compared to the transfigured stillness of a Botticelli Madonna. And when all's said and done the dominant mood of modern music and playing, for all its smoothness and for all its mechanical exactitude, is unrest—not rest—vagueness—not purposeful confidence. Conversely it does not look as if in the quieter, more human atmosphere of yesterday the blatant spirit of the machine can have flourished to the same extent as one sees it flourishing to-day.

So that one does at last reach the definite conclusion that rhythm, true ensemble, balance, restfulness, and all qualities, in fact, that may be called great, can be reached only on the foundation of the human spirit and can never be so much as approached by mechanical means. And my last word on the subject is, that it was just this human spirit and the fact that he never for one single moment seemed to be aiming at doing anything which a machine can do better than a human being that distinguished the playing of Joachim from that of the typical modern player and makes it a thing which, even to-day, in retrospect goes on living and renewing itself in one's memory as if heard only yesterday.