

A resume of
JOSEPH JOACHIM

Johnstone-music note: the following information is of great interest to us today, for the simple fact that it was written in the nineteenth century and thus much closer to the action and events than we are today. The writing shows a deep understanding and respect of the day towards the musicians that it features ...

From A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF FIDDLERS
by A. MASON CLARKE.
(Author of "*The Fiddle Historical and Biographical*")

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JOACHIM, JOSEPH, born at Kittsee, near Presburg, June 28, 1831, still living; the greatest interpreter of classical violin music of this or any other time. At a very early age he showed a remarkable disposition for music, and his father, who was engaged in commercial pursuits, anxious to encourage and develop his young son's musical genius, bought him a small violin and at the age of five, placed him under Szervaczinski, concertmeister of the opera at Buda-Pesth. After about two years' study with that excellent teacher the young prodigy made his first appearance before the public, on which occasion he played duets with his master with great success.

In 1838 he went to Vienna and studied under Bohm, and in 1843, when only twelve years of age, played at a concert of Madame Viardot's in Leipzig, and in November of the same year he appeared at one of the famous Gewandhaus concerts in that city. In the following February, 1844, he came to England and made his debut on March 28,* at Drury Lane, for the benefit of Mr. Bunn, and on May 1st of that year appeared at the fifth Philharmonic Concert at the Hanover Square Rooms. ** Joachim celebrated the jubilee of his first appearance in London on March 28 of this year (1894) with unbounded enthusiasm.*

The following November he again played at one of the Gewandhaus concerts at Leipzig. About this time his parents expressed a wish that their son should not then enter upon the career of a virtuoso, and acting on the advice of David and of Mendelssohn, Joachim continued his studies at Leipzig. This course was quite in accordance with the views of the young musician in that he himself desired to be perfected in musical culture rather than in technique, and for several years he studied under David the great classical works for the violin, especially the music of Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Spohr.

Joachim remained in Leipzig until October 1850, at a time when Mendelssohn and Schumann were at the zenith of their fame ; he received great encouragement from the former, as also from David, his master, with whom he occasionally played at the Gewandhaus concerts with increasing success. His next visit to England was in 1847 and again in 1849, then successively in 1852, 1858, 1859, and 1862, since which time his visit to London has been an annual event. In 1849 he was leader of the band at Weimar, where Liszt was conducting operas and concerts. Joachim, however, did not long occupy this post ; his views of music being diametrically opposed to those of the great pianist, and he accordingly quitted Weimar in 1854, and accepted the post of conductor of concerts, and solo violinist, at the Court of Hanover. In 1863, during his stay at Hanover, he married Amalie Weiss, a notable contralto singer, who had made a name as an interpreter of Schumann's songs. In 1868, the two artists went to Berlin, and Joachim was appointed head of the Hochschule fur Ausubende Tonkunst (High School for Musical Execution), which, under his rule, soon rose to a high position as a teaching institution. In 1877 the University of Cambridge bestowed upon him the degree of Doctor of Music, and he has been awarded many other honours and degrees in his own country, besides various orders from the reigning princes. As an executant, Joachim stands at the head of living violinists, but it is as a quartet player that his intellectual superiority is so apparent ; indeed, in this respect he has no rival. For many years during the concert season Joachim has been the chief attraction at the Popular Concerts ; he has also performed on various occasions at the Philharmonic Concerts, also at the Crystal Palace.

As a composer Joachim has produced but few works for the violin; the most important is the Hungarian Concerto in D minor, Op.11.

His other compositions are:

Overture to " Hamlet " Op. 4;
do. to Schiller's " Demetrius " (MS.), Op. 6;
do. to " Henry IV." (MS.), Op. 7;
dp. to a play of Gozzi's (MS.), Op. 8;
do. in commemoration of Kleist, the poet, Op. 13;
Two marches in C and D respectively, with trios;
" Andantino and Allegro," for violin and orchestra;
3 Stucke (Romanze, Fantasiestiick, Friihlingsfantasie), Violin and piano.
Concerto in one movement, in G minor, with orchestra, Op. 3;
3 Stucke (Lindenrauschen, Abendglocken, Ballade), violin and pianoforte,
Op. 5;
Hebrew Melodies, viola and pianoforte, Op. 9;
Variations on an original theme, viola and pianoforte, Op. 10;
Notturmo, viola and pianoforte, Op. 12;
3 Cadenzas to Beethoven's violin concerto,
Songs, &c.

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