



DR. JOSEPH JOACHIM.

JOACHIM AND HIS SCHOOL.

By MRS. E. CAWOOD.



NO one would imagine that the ugly square building standing far back in the Potsdamer Strasse, Berlin, was the "Royal School of Music"—the "Mecca" of so many aspiring students and the

musical home of Joachim. Yet such is the case; and it is within these unprepossessing brick walls that we propose

to take the reader in order to get a glimpse of the world's greatest living violinist. To the credit of the State it must be said, however, that a magnificent building is in close contemplation at Charlottenburg, which is to outvie all others in the world.

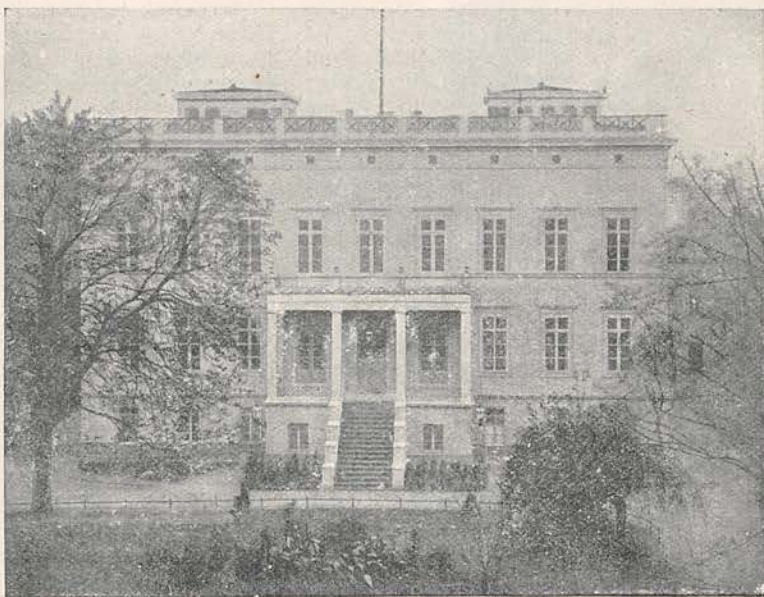
But, after all, it is a great personality and not a fine building that we come to seek. Dr. Joachim was appointed Director of the Hoch Schule in 1869, and the school owes its success to his untiring zeal and genius. His fame as a teacher is world-wide, therefore a few words must be said about the school so closely identified with him before we proceed to the musician himself.

The curriculum is divided into four parts: 1st, Composition and Theory; 2nd, Singing; 3rd, Orchestral Instruments; 4th, Piano and Organ—all of which are conducted by the best professors of the German School.

Entrance examinations are held twice a year—

Easter and October. The students are required to send in a written application, accompanied by school certificates, a certificate of baptism, and an account of their life, which must be of their own composition. No student under sixteen years can be received. Exceptions have occasionally been made in cases where unusual talent was evident. The number of students in all the classes has been limited and fixed by a Government order. In the summer term of 1897 the number amounted to 261, of whom 61 studied violin, 63 piano, 55 singing, 12 composition, 7 organ, and the remainder orchestral instruments.

In the present article I shall have no space to allude to any but the violinists. The desire of every violin student is naturally to be admitted to the class of Prof. Dr. Joachim; this is confined to a minority, the very best among the students, owing to the large number and the heavy burden of work that falls to the Doctor's share. Each student has two violin lessons of half an hour in length every week. Should a teacher consider that a pupil has made exceptional progress, he recommends him to Prof. Joachim, and the latter then decides whether



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he will undertake the new pupil or not. Should the decision be a favourable one, the student, in accordance with the time the Professor has to spare, gets either half an hour's lesson every fortnight, while retaining the two half-hours with his other teacher, or one half-hour every week, retaining the other half-hour with the other teacher. Thus every pupil of Prof. Joachim has additional regular instruction from one of the other professors. They are as follows :—

Prof. E. WIRTH.
 Prof. H. JACOBSON.
 Prof. C. HALIR.
 Herr A. MOSER.
 Herr K. MARKEES.

All of whom, excepting Prof. Wirth, are former pupils of Prof. Dr. Joachim.



Photo by]

[Schaarwächter, Berlin.

MISS LEONORA JACKSON.

The students in all the classes generally attend the School three years. It is not compulsory that they remain this length of time; while, on the other hand, a longer stay is not always per-

mitted, owing to the ever-increasing number of applications for admission to the School. It is even occasionally necessary to ask one student to resign his place to enable a newcomer to be admitted.

On leaving the School, every student can enter for a final examination. This is the only way a certificate can be obtained, teachers being forbidden to give private certificates.

The violin students have, of course, obligatory lessons in other branches of the art; theory, history of music, piano, orchestral, and chamber music performances being universally studied.

Many pupils, after a course at the Hoch Schule, style themselves "a pupil of

Joachim's," even though they have not had the privilege of studying under his immediate supervision. The truth concerning this frequently recurring swindle can only be obtained by insisting upon the production of the above-mentioned certificate, or by referring to the yearly report of the Hoch Schule, in which all the students are registered under the names of the teacher with whom they have studied during the year.

Prof. Joachim gives *no* private lessons. It sometimes happens, however, that pupils, after having left the Hoch Schule, occasionally play to him at his house.

Marks of distinction, such as the prizes given by the Conservatoires of Paris and Brussels, are not conferred by the Royal Hoch Schule.

On the other hand, there is a Felix Mendelssohn Fund which enables students, when capable of giving a finished, artistic performance, to enter for a competitive contest in playing. Two prizes, of 1,500 marks (£75) are annually awarded—one for the best composition sent in, and one for the best solo performance. Last year's prize was carried off by an American, Miss Leonora Jackson, who made her London *début* on February 5 this year at a Symphonic Concert in Queen's Hall. Miss Jackson made a most favourable impression by her playing of Vieuxtemps's concerto in D minor.

It is not compulsory that a candidate for these prizes should be a student of the Hoch Schule, but he must have studied at one of the German State Music Schools for at least a half-year. Another Memorial Prize is the Joachim Fund. It was instituted in the year 1888. Ever since that date, on the birthday of the Professor, either a violin is presented to one or two of the pupils, or a cello to a violoncellist.

And now we turn to the world-famous Director. A little summary of Herr Joachim's career may be welcome, especially as the facts are well authenticated. Joseph Joachim was born in a little Hungarian village, near which, it is worth recalling, a famous trio—Hummel, Haydn, and Liszt—were also born. His birthday was July 15, 1831. His first teacher was Servaycinski, in Pesth; later on he studied under Joseph Böhm, a pupil of Rode and the teacher of Ernst. Going to Leipzig, he became a member of the Gewandhaus orchestra when he was only twelve years old, and so astonishing were his powers as a violinist that by the time he was seventeen he shared its leadership with Ferdinand David. Young Joachim was

appointed a teacher at the Leipzig Conservatoire, but continued to receive instruction from such masters as David and Hauptmann. During his seven years' residence in Leipzig he had the high advantage of much advice and tuition from Mendelssohn, who took a keen interest in the young musician. He next went to Weimar as Director of the Concerts, remaining there until 1853, when he was appointed Master of the Chapel Royal at Hanover. All this while his fame as a player was spreading on the Continent, and in 1844 he had laid the foundation in London of that long friendship with the British public which is one of the most remarkable and pleasing experiences in his career. In 1868, the Minister of Public Instruction in Germany called Herr Joachim from Hanover to Berlin, that he might organise the Royal High School of Music. How he has succeeded is shown in this article dealing with the famous institution. In 1889 he received a splendid violin from his British friends in commemoration of his jubilee. Both the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge—cities in which Joachim has always been a prime favourite—have conferred honorary degrees upon the renowned player.

As a teacher, Prof. Joachim incites his pupils to the highest endeavours and wins their confidence and respect by his patience and courteous manner. Of his amiability and unpretentiousness the following is a good example:—

A talented American, while playing over a Scottish fantasia of Bruch's, changed the bowing, which was marked in pencil.

"Why do you do that?" asked the Professor.

"I like my own way better, Herr Professor," the pupil replied.

"As you please," the Professor remarked quietly; then added, "The pencil marks are mine."

In relating this afterwards, the pupil said, "I felt so ashamed that I wished I could sink through the floor; but the dear Professor quietly proceeded with the lesson and reassured me by his kindly voice he was not in the least offended."

The late Prof. Bargiel, Master of Theory, on one occasion conducted a rehearsal at the Philharmonic in which Joachim was taking part. The conducting was rather slow and precise, and the orchestra got ahead, Joachim purposely following. A sharp rap brought them to a full stop.

"Altogether out of time," said Bargiel,

irritably, waving his *bâton* towards the orchestra; then, bending down to Joachim, he added, "You were not playing in time, either."

"I'm very sorry, but will try to do better next time," the genial Doctor replied, with an amused smile.

Many talented pupils of Joachim have made a mark in the musical world, laying the foundation of his great method, and while the majority have been and are of the masculine order, women, too, are nobly represented. Miss Geraldine Morgan opened last November, in New York, "The Joseph Joachim School of Violin Playing," perhaps the first of its kind conducted by a lady.

Fräulein Gabriele Wietrowetz, so well known in England, was one of the Professor's pupils, and carried off two prizes during the three years she was a student of the Hoch Schule. In a recent interview I had with this charming violinist, she could not speak too highly of her dear master.



Gabriele Wietrowetz

(From a photo by Jamrath, Berlin.)

"He is a noble character," she said to me—"a very king; for he commands our reverence and respect, and it would go against our whole nature to vex or grieve him. My mother once said to him, 'You are so good and kind.' He laughed and said, 'But I can also be cross when I am not satisfied with my pupils.'"

"The Professor more than once played Bach's 'Double Concert' with me," Fräulein Wietrowetz continued. "He insisted on my taking the first violin; but how often has he not done the same to others, to give them confidence and bring them forward?"

"He is always willing to hear me play, if he has time; and when I have said to him, 'What can I do for you, Herr Professor, for all your kindness to me?' he has replied,

extending his hands to me, 'Be always my good friend.'

Fräulein Betty Schwabe is another of the Doctor's pupils who has this season distinguished herself. She was born at Aachen, and was only six years old when she began her studies with Prof. G. Hollander (also a former pupil of Joachim's) at Cologne. Her musical talent developed so quickly that her master brought her under the notice of Joachim, who, with Prof. Kruse, continued her musical education. In 1892, on February 18, Prof. Joachim introduced her to the public at the Sing Academie, Berlin, and himself conducted on that occasion.



Photo by]

[Meyer, Berlin.

FRAÜLEIN BETTY SCHWABE.

Joachim is extremely careful not to wound the feelings of any who are anxious to play before him, and he has never been known to speak disparagingly of their performance. Should anyone ask his opinion of an individual, the answer will invariably

be, "He is a fine fellow," or "She is a very pleasant lady," in gentle but decided tones that prevent further questioning.

With such a golden character (as the Germans express it) what wonder that he is beloved and almost worshipped by his pupils; some, indeed, are most extravagant admirers, more especially the fair Americans.

"If I only had my scissors, I would cut a snip off the dear Professor's coat right away," said an American belle, as he was making way past our chairs on Betty Schwabe's evening. Another American girl, while waiting with me in the anteroom, exclaimed as the Professor passed through, "Isn't he just lovely?"

It is a great sorrow to his friends that hitherto he has written no account of his life. When asked if he had not written a sketch of his busy and interesting career, he replied—

"Oh, no! I don't write any memoirs of the past. It is very wearisome to me to talk of myself."

"But Liszt left a diary, did he not?"

"That is possible. In his life he likewise spoke much of himself."

His friends look forward, however, with the hope that when he rests on his well-earned laurels he will relent somewhat, and permit a few, at any rate, of the back pages of his life to be returned for the public interest.

One is apt to feel a little nervous in anticipation of an interview with so famous a personage; but all that disappears when once one is with the Professor. He is simple and courteous, and withal has such a quiet dignity of his own that makes one feel immediately at ease.

"I must apologise for not answering your letter," he once said to me, when we were discussing a matter of business. "I have such a continual strain on my arm with playing and conducting that I spare it as often as possible."

As I have already stated, he was born in Hungary, but he was only seven years old when he left, and scarcely remembers anything of the language, though he still has a soft spot for the land of his birth and its musical people. Germany is the land of his adoption, though he loves England and its hospitalities—so much so that he says he would be equally happy to live there.

It was in London, just before taking his degree at Cambridge, that he parted with his favourite forelock, for which he had a sneaking affection, and which so often found its way over his forehead.

"Better let me take this off, sir," the barber said, holding it gingerly between finger and thumb. "Makes you look like a fiddling German." The Professor added, when relating the story, "I felt so ashamed" (or was it modesty?) "to own to my profession that I allowed the fellow to have his own way." The consequence was, he was barely recognised by his acquaintances in Cambridge, and spent his London season without his old friend.

On another occasion, while in London, he once left his two "Strads" in a cab. He and his brother were due to dine with Sir Frederick Leighton. Neither thought of the violins, nor did the Professor miss them,

till in the middle of dinner the servant whispered that a cabman wished to speak to him. "My violins!" he suddenly exclaimed. We are sure the man was handsomely rewarded for his honesty.

It is generally known that the Professor has a great partiality for Beethoven. When the "Quartette" were in Vienna last year an obsequious barber was called in to perform on Professor Kruse. He cast his inquisitive eyes about the room and discovered a mute lying on the table.

"Ach! Mein Herr plays the violin?"

"Yes."

"Mejn Herr is one of the Quartette?"

"Yes."

"And plays this evening?"

"Yes."

"What is the programme?"

"Three concertos of Beethoven."

"T h r e e ! Ach!"

"Why do you exclaim?"

"Well, a hungry man could eat one beef-steak, and perhaps two, but three beef-steaks! Gott im Himmel! Impossible!"

The joke tickled Joachim so much that Prof. Kruse was asked to repeat it several times to his friends.

Joachim was a great friend of the late Field Marshal General von Moltke, and often spent an evening with him, delighting his soul with his exquisite playing. The General's passion was for Spohr, and Joachim would play till he got weary of it and then suggested something else.

"No, no, I can never get tired of Spohr. Please go on," the man of war would exclaim, and Joachim would do so till his arm refused to work any longer.

There was a good story told of the Professor when he was in Hanover. During the winter there was a great deal of skating going on, of which he had a good view from his window. It looked so easy, and everyone seemed so happy, that he thought he would have a try. Accordingly he strolled down and was soon pounced upon by the ice-cleaner, who asked if he wished to skate.

"I have never tried yet," Joachim replied.

"I will show you, Herr Hof-concertmeister," the man said, screwing on a pair of skates. "So! Now stand up. Now slide the right foot so, and the other so, and then off!"

Joachim slid his right foot, and prepared for the left, but before he had righted himself he was indeed "off" and sprawling on the ice.

"Ja, ja, ja!" the man exclaimed, as he raised the famous violinist. "It is not quite so easy as playing the fiddle."

The Professor lives in a very unpretentious style in Bendler Strasse, on the fourth flat, or, at least, what we should call the fourth. In Berlin

the first is called *parterre*, and sometimes the second *hoch parterre*, which would thus make the Professor's flat the second. Anyhow, the stairs seem interminable, and I could not help exclaiming to Herr Markees, who lives with the Professor, "How can you and Herr Professor mount these stairs, perhaps several times in the day, and live? They are truly awful!"

And here I must conclude my sketch of one of the greatest musicians of the century and kindest of men.

