



CONCERT PROGRAM IV:

# In Joachim's Orbit

JULY 23 AND 24

Sunday, July 23

6:00 p.m., The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton

Monday, July 24

7:30 p.m., Stent Family Hall, Menlo School

**SPECIAL THANKS**

*Music@Menlo dedicates these performances to the following individuals with gratitude for their generous support:*

*July 23: Paul and Marcia Ginsburg*

*July 24: Michael Jacobson and Trine Sorensen*

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN** (1809–1847)

*Lied ohne Worte (Song without Words) in D Major for Cello and Piano, op. 109* (1845)

Keith Robinson, *cello*; Gloria Chien, *piano*

**ROBERT SCHUMANN** (1810–1856)

*Adagio and Allegro in A-flat Major for Horn and Piano, op. 70* (1849)

Radovan Vlatković, *horn*; Gloria Chien, *piano*

**ROBERT SCHUMANN**

*Piano Trio no. 3 in g minor, op. 110* (1851)

*Bewegt, doch nicht zu rasch*

*Ziemlich langsam*

*Rasch*

*Kräftig, mit Humor*

Gilbert Kalish, *piano*; Yura Lee, *violin*; Keith Robinson, *cello*

INTERMISSION

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The sheer brilliance of Mendelssohn's musical achievements would inspire an emerging generation of Romantics. Robert Schumann considered him "the first musician of the day...He plays with everything...with such ease, delicacy, and art, with such mastery throughout." An equal mastery would bless Schumann's disciple Johannes Brahms, whose catalogue of chamber music stands without peer in their generation. A catalyst to the artistic triumphs of these and other composers, the violinist Joseph Joachim equally towers as one of German Romanticism's most consequential figures. A protégé of Mendelssohn's, Joachim would come to personify the German school of violin playing and served as muse to Schumann and Brahms in the creation of their greatest works for violin. Concert Program IV surrounds Joachim with signature works by these composers, culminating in Brahms's poetic Horn Trio.

**JOSEPH JOACHIM** (1831–1907)

*Romance, op. 2, no. 1* (ca. 1850)

Yura Lee, *violin*; Juho Pohjonen, *piano*

**JOHANNES BRAHMS** (1833–1897)

*Horn Trio in E-flat Major, op. 40* (1865)

*Andante*

*Scherzo: Allegro*

*Adagio mesto*

*Finale: Allegro con brio*

Radovan Vlatković, *horn*; Juho Pohjonen, *piano*; Paul Huang, *violin*

Johann Martin von Rohden (1778–1868). *Capriccio View of the Ruins of Heidelberg Castle*, oil on canvas. Private collection/Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images

# Program Notes: In Joachim's Orbit

Notes on the program by Patrick Castillo

## FELIX MENDELSSOHN

(Born February 3, 1809, Hamburg, Germany; died November 4, 1847, Leipzig)

**Lied ohne Worte (Song without Words) in D Major for Cello and Piano, op. 109**

**Composed:** ca. October 1845

**Published:** 1868

**Dedication:** Lisa Cristiani

**Other works from this period:** Violin Concerto in e minor, op. 64 (1844); Six Sonatas for Organ, op. 65 (1845); Piano Trio no. 2 in c minor, op. 66 (1845); String Quintet no. 2 in B-flat Major, op. 87 (1845); *Oedipus at Colonus*, op. 93 (incidental music) (1845)

**Approximate duration:** 5 minutes

Felix Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte* (*Songs without Words*) provide an essential snapshot of Romanticism. They are, first and foremost, a paean to the sovereignty of melody. They also reference, in an abstract way, the Romantic generation's preoccupation with poetry, as reflected in the lieder of Schubert, Schumann, and others: Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* succeed in capturing the clarity and expressivity of sung texts, but they do so relying solely on musical character, without the aid of poetry. Mendelssohn biographer R. Larry Todd writes that the *Songs without Words* "broached in a different way the ability of music to convey extramusical ideas." Indeed, Robert Schumann surmised that Mendelssohn originally composed them as songs with words and then withdrew the texts. Todd continues: "The new genre, which blurred the lines between the song and the character piece, later enjoyed great success and became synonymous with Mendelssohnism."

In addition to the eight volumes of *Lieder ohne Worte* for Solo Piano he composed over his career (comprising six songs apiece), Mendelssohn composed one for cello and piano, in D major, published posthumously as his Opus 109. It was Mendelssohn's final work for cello and piano, joining a corpus comprising the *Variations concertantes*, op. 17, a single-movement *Assai tranquillo* in b minor, and two cello sonatas, opp. 45 and 58. Among both subsets of Mendelssohn's oeuvre—his music for cello and piano and his beloved *Songs without Words*—the Opus 109 *Lied* stands out for its melodic perfection. Set in **ternary (A-B-A) form**, the work begins with an eloquent strain by the cello, supported by an elegant accompaniment. The piano turns turbulent in the middle section, engulfing the cello's *agitato* melody in a swirl of sixteenth notes. The cello ascends to a high pianissimo A-natural (above the treble staff); a subdued transition leads calmly to the A section's return.

## ROBERT SCHUMANN

(Born Zwickau, Saxony, Germany, June 8, 1810; died Endenich, near Bonn, July 29, 1856)

**Adagio and Allegro in A-flat Major for Horn and Piano, op. 70**

**Composed:** 1849

**Published:** 1849

**Other works from this period:** Detailed in the notes below

**Approximate duration:** 8 minutes

The years 1848–1850 saw a great surge in Schumann's creative output. In 1849 alone, he completed nearly forty works, including the *Spanisches Liederspiel*, op. 74, and *Lieder-Album für die Jugend*, op. 79, among numerous other songs; the *Zwölfvierhändige Clavierstücke für kleine und grosse Kinder* (*Twelve Four-Hand Piano Pieces for Small and Large Children*), op. 85; the orchestral *Concertstück for Four Horns*, op. 86, and *Introduction and Allegro appassionato*, op. 92; an assort-

ment of chamber works; the *Phantasiestücke* for Clarinet (Violin or Cello) and Piano, op. 73; *Drei Romanzen* for Oboe (Violin or Clarinet) and Piano, op. 94; *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* for Cello or Violin and Piano, op. 102; and the *Adagio and Allegro*, op. 70 (scored optionally for horn, violin, or cello and piano).

Schumann originally titled his Opus 70 *Romanze and Allegro*; indeed, its *Adagio* movement conveys the most deeply felt Romantic sentiment. The horn leads with a gently arching line, marked *Langsam, mit innigem Ausdruck* (slowly, with intimate expression), its initial ascent by **semitone** suggesting a come-hither glance. The piano responds in kind. An amorous dialogue ensues, the two partners issuing intertwining lines, increasingly ardent until the contented drowsiness of its coda.

The *Adagio* proceeds *attacca* to the muscular *Allegro*, marked *Rasch und feurig* (quick and fiery). Schumann's music is commonly understood as a dialogue between the composer's alter egos, Florestan, the masculine (in eighteenth-century parlance) and extroverted, and Eusebius, the feminine voice of tenderness and pathos. Following the unabashed poignancy of the *Adagio*, the *Allegro* is unmistakably the purview of Florestan.

## ROBERT SCHUMANN

**Piano Trio no. 3 in g minor, op. 110**

**Composed:** 1851

**Published:** 1852

**Other works from this period:** Violin Sonatas nos. 1 and 2, opp. 105 and 121 (1851); *Der Rose Pilgerfahrt*, op. 112 (1851); *Julius Caesar and Hermann und Dorothea* Overtures, opp. 128 and 136 (1851); revision of Symphony no. 4 in d minor, op. 120 (1851, composed in 1841)

**Approximate duration:** 26 minutes

"Robert is working busily on a trio for piano, violin, and cello," recorded Clara Schumann in her diary on October 11, 1851, "but he won't let me hear any of it at all until he is completely finished. I only know that it is in g minor." Later that month, following the trio's first rehearsal, Clara noted, "It is original and increasingly passionate, especially the scherzo, which carries one along with it into the wildest depths."

Robert Schumann's Piano Trio no. 3 in g minor, op. 110—his final, and actually his fourth, work in the genre, counting his *Phantasiestücke*, op. 88—manifests its composer's Romantic soul in intense concentration. The work comprises four movements. The first, marked *Bewegt, doch nicht zu rasch* (agitated, but not too fast), simmers with pent-up disquiet, its first theme a turbulent rising and falling in the strings atop a restless undertow in the piano. The second theme derives from the first, retaining its sweeping melodic contour but now reimagined as a benevolent, major-key gesture.



The development section illustrates Schumann's counterpoint studies. (The composer's fragile psychological health was a lifelong struggle. He suffered deep bouts of depression as early as 1828, accompanied by increasing thoughts of suicide throughout the 1830s. In 1844, he had a particularly severe breakdown. His gradual recovery in early 1845 was aided by the catharsis of counterpoint exercises, which produced a set of Four **Fugues** for Piano, op. 72, and *Six Fugues on the Name BACH* for Organ, op. 60.) After a series of fragmented thematic utterances, the cello presents an enigmatic pizzicato motif, setting off an extended contrapuntal passage, quivering with nervous

\*Bolded terms are defined in the glossary, which begins on page 92.

energy. As a haunting afterthought to the movement's recapitulation, the cello figure returns just before the movement's close.

The slow second movement proceeds in 12/8 time, the piano silent on the **downbeats**, as if pacing a drugged **waltz**. The violin and cello, while lyrical and deeply felt, likewise demonstrate Schumann's idiosyncratic melodic language—**chromatic**, asymmetrical, and curiously affecting.

This ghostly romance gives way, without warning, to an agitated middle section, propelled by staccato sixteenth-note figures in the cello. The music turns faster still before, just as abruptly, subsiding back to the drowsy 12/8.

A sinister scherzo in c minor follows, forte-piano string chords echoing about a serpentine chain of eighth notes in the piano. This movement, “which carries one along with it into the wildest depths,” saith Clara Schumann, seems to mirror Robert’s emotional volatility, suddenly shifting gears to a slow, tenderhearted C major trio section and then, after a return to the scherzo, introducing a second trio, in A-flat major, juxtaposing legato triplets and a martial dotted rhythm.

The extroverted finale reveals the thoughtful craftsmanship perhaps otherwise obscured by the trio’s mercuriality. Its main theme springs from the ascending sixth that appears in the opening movement’s second theme and again in the slow movement—transfiguring what was an expression of yearning into one of proud confidence.

So does the tenderhearted trio melody from the scherzo movement reappear, followed by the second trio’s dotted rhythm. Finally, the legato triplets likewise return, rushing inexorably towards the trio’s emphatic conclusion.

## JOSEPH JOACHIM

(Born June 28, 1831, Kittsee, near Pressburg (now Bratislava); died August 15, 1907, Berlin)

### Romance, op. 2, no. 1

**Composed:** ca. 1850

**Published:** 1852, Leipzig, in *Drei Stücke* (Three Pieces) for Violin and Piano, op. 2

**Dedication:** “Herrn Musikdirektor M. Hauptmann”

**Other works from this period:** *Andantino and Allegro scherzoso* for Violin and Piano, op. 1 (ca. 1850); *Hamlet Overture*, op. 4 (ca. 1855); *Drei Stücke* (Three Pieces) for Violin and Piano, op. 5 (ca. 1855)

**Approximate duration:** 4 minutes

The premiere violinist of his generation, Joseph Joachim ensured his legacy through his close association with the leading composers of his day. He was a close acquaintance of Robert and Clara Schumann’s and Johannes Brahms’s—indeed, it was on Joachim’s urging that the young Brahms first presented himself to his eventual mentor and inamorata. Joachim famously

collaborated with Brahms on the composition of his Violin Concerto and also received the dedication of Schumann’s Violin Concerto, among other works.

But Joachim’s earliest, and arguably most consequential, musical alliance was with Felix Mendelssohn, with whom he began studying in 1843 at the age of twelve. Mendelssohn became something of a father figure to Joachim, providing for his general education in addition to fostering the launch of his musical career. Under Mendelssohn’s guardianship, Joachim traveled to London in 1844, where he debuted with Beethoven’s Violin Concerto. The performance was received with great acclaim, thus forging Joachim’s international reputation on this most demanding of repertoire pieces.

Mendelssohn’s death in 1847 was a personal crisis for the sixteen-year-old Joachim. He later composed his Three Pieces for Violin and Piano, op. 2, as a sweet remembrance of his beloved teacher. The first of the three pieces, a fetching romance, captures the spirit of nineteenth-century expression. As a performer, Joachim would come to represent “a new species of ‘ascetic’ violinist,” writes musicologist Beatrix Borchard, “subordinating himself to the composer rather than glorying in his virtuoso technique.” The Opus 2 Romance suggests Joachim’s reserve, presenting the violin’s sweet, singing tone rather than indulging in virtuosity.

## JOHANNES BRAHMS

(Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg, Germany; died April 3, 1897, Vienna)

### Horn Trio in E-flat Major, op. 40

**Composed:** 1865

**Published:** 1866

**First performance:** November 28, 1865, Zurich

**Other works from this period:** Sonata in f minor for Two Pianos, op. 34bis (1864); String Sextet no. 2 in G Major, op. 36 (1864–1865); Sixteen Waltzes for Solo Piano, op. 39 (1865); *Ein deutsches Requiem*, op. 45 (1865–1868)

**Approximate duration:** 28 minutes

Brahms completed his Opus 40 Trio for Violin, Horn, and Piano in 1865, months after the death of his mother, with whom he was close. The trio represents a poignant **tombeau**. (Brahms’s choral masterpiece, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, is likewise thought to commemorate his deceased mother.) The work’s unconventional instrumentation suggests its deep personal resonance: Brahms studied the horn as a child and may have been nostalgically compelled to substitute that instrument for the more conventional cello.

The first movement *Andante* begins with a lilting lullaby in the violin, marked *dolce espressivo* and soon taken up by the horn. The music becomes more animated with the introduction of an unsettled second theme. The balance of the movement, rather than extensively developing these materials, simply swings back and forth between these contrasting humors.

The scherzo follows, its frenzied opening measures abbreviating the repose of the *Andante*’s final cadence. The sobering mournfulness of the scherzo’s trio section gives the listener pause, and while the second movement ends with a reprise of the extroverted scherzo, Brahms elaborates on the trio’s downcast character in the third movement. Marked *Adagio mesto* (slow and sorrowful), this movement can only be heard as the composer’s lament for his mother. Brahms instructs the pianist to play *una corda*, producing a softer, less radiant timbre. Above this haunting piano accompaniment, the violin and horn introduce a ghostly melody. The unaccompanied horn desolately cries out the elegiac second theme; the violin and piano quietly sympathize, as if comforting the bereaved.

Before the *Adagio mesto* expires, the horn introduces a new melody, taken from the German folk song “In der Weiden steht ein Haus” (“In the Meadow Stands a House”). Evidently a childhood favorite of Brahms’s that he learned from his mother, the folk song serves here as a nostalgic reminder of happier times. Though only briefly alluded to near the end of the slow movement, the tune erupts as the theme of the rambunctious *Allegro con brio*. What depths of despair Brahms achieves in the slow movement, he matches with ecstatic joy in the high-flying finale.