VIOLIN TECHNIQUE AND PEDAGOGY IN ROBERT SCHUMANN'S VIOLIN SONATA NO. 3 IN A MINOR, WOO2

by

JOHN PEYTON BRIENSLACK

(Under the Direction of Michael Heald)

ABSTRACT

The writing for violin in Robert Schumann's Violin Sonata no. 3 in A minor WoO 2 has been labeled by some as problematic, but existing literature does not clearly define what these problems are. The purpose of this paper will be to examine the relationship between Schumann's musical goals and technical, violinistic issues which have been seen as contributing to the work's problematic nature, to define these problems more clearly in violinistic terms, to present techniques for management (solutions in the form of fingerings, bowings, and potential exercises for practicing), and to examine the work's pedagogical usefulness.

INDEX WORDS: Robert Schumann, Violin Sonata no. 3 in A minor WoO 2, Violin technique, Violin pedagogy.

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JOHN PEYTON BRIEN-SLACK

B. Mus., University of Georgia, 2012

M.M., University of Louisville, 2016

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JOHN PEYTON BRIEN-SLACK

Major Professor: Michael Heald

Committee: Maggie Snyder

Emily Gertsch

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour

Dean of the Graduate School

The University of Georgia

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION

Tackling the late works of Robert Schumann comes with a number of challenges. Most of all, as Laura Tunbridge points out in her book *Schumann's Late Style*, "we tend to filter the late music through knowledge of the composer's biography, especially our awareness of his illness, however vague and unscientific it may be."[1] The equation of Schumann's final mental illness with the quality of his late works has complicated both their reception and performance since the composer's death. In addition to formal aspects of the late works which may be difficult to digest, the writing for violin in his Violin Sonata no. 3 in A minor, WoO 2 has also been seen as problematic. While Tunbridge's analysis of the Third Sonata in *Schumann's Late Style* is part of a larger examination of the relationship between form and content in Schumann's late chamber works, the critique of the writing for violin is highly important as, for her, it is not only an aspect of the work which affects the violinists who choose to perform it, but one which has important implications on the impression of the music itself. She claims that "the difficulty of this piece lies not so much in its vaunted virtuosity, as in its writing for the instrument, which contributes to the music's feeling of brokenness," and that it "suffers from the Violin Concerto's problem that its virtuosic writing, while not impossible to play, does not sit easily under the fingers… the body of the performer, her fingers and arms, are contorted and stretched into 'unnatural

[1] Laura Turnbridge, *Schumann's Late Style* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 178.

positions','' bringing "us back to the alleged weakness of Schumann's late music, to the master broken at, or maybe by his instrument."[2]

For Tunbridge, painstakingly explicating these issues in violinistic terms may have seemed inessential in making larger observations about Schumann's late chamber music. Her claims about the writing for violin do not get any more specific than the language used above. However, reading these claims as a violinist, many questions immediately arise. What precisely is occurring in the music to cause the performer to have to perform such contortions? What means do performers have to manage these potential issues? Being the work of a composer who saw Niccolo Paganini play and who both transcribed and composed piano accompaniments for his *24 Caprices for Solo Violin*, is the writing truly that taxing by comparison? How do these technical difficulties relate to the composer's musical goals, both within the work itself and to his overall aesthetics? Tunbridge's claims may be entirely justified, but require unpacking.

The work remains rarely performed and while several fine recordings of the work by violinists such as Christian Tetzlaff, Jennifer Koh, and Ilya Gringolts do exist, the opinions of performers and pedagogues may also play a large role in the work's continued obscurity. Especially at the university level, a student's time is largely spent learning works with the goal of making them employable (i.e. works that will develop style and technique and can be used in an audition setting). In the "Orchestral Etude Book: A guide to survival repertoire," University of Michigan professor of violin Stephen Shipps suggests the learning of sonatas is "enjoyable, but not a very efficient use of lesson time. Ivan Galamian felt strongly that if you had good technique, sonatas could be learned on your own. Most sonatas (excepting the Brahms d minor, Beethoven Kreutzer, Schubert C Major Fantasy, and the like) are not so hard that they will make

[2] Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style,* 167-177.

a big difference in a student's technical development."[3] To be clear, this is a somewhat radical view, but from a pedagogical viewpoint, choosing or assigning such an obscure work, even one by such an important composer as Schumann, may be seen as an inefficient use of time. So, due to lack of exposure, it would then fall upon seasoned performers to take it upon themselves to learn and perform such a work, a task that, with the plethora of beloved, canonical violin repertoire, may not be immediately attractive.

Therefore, for pedagogues to take a stance similar to that of Shipps' is surely to contribute to such a work's permanent obscurity. This is not to say that violin teachers have an inherent duty to champion such works, but in overlooking them they may miss a useful pedagogical opportunity, especially at the graduate level. In addition to what the work may offer through the technical demands which must be met to perform it at all, interpreting a work that has little to no performance tradition, few recordings to draw from for example, and requires historic knowledge to approach intelligently, provides a different kind of challenge for both student and professor. In particular, honing the intellectual approach required to confront such difficulties certainly has applicability in the field of music performance outside of the university setting.

[3] Stephen Shipps, "Orchestral Etude Book: A guide to survival repertoire," *American String Teacher* 42, no. 2 (1992), 55-57.

CREATING A FRAMEWORK

Tunbridge's claims about the writing for violin serves as a starting point for this examination and much of what follows operates in dialogue with what she has written. While much of the language quoted from her will come across as harsh judgements of Schumann, this is only because I will be exclusively addressing her claims about the writing for violin. In its entirety, I find her writing carefully deliberates the problematic nature of Schumann's late work, addresses it with honesty, and, for all their potential problems, asserts that "while it might be harder to reach a clear interpretation of such pieces, it is worth trying to 'hear what it holds wholly by itself'."[4]

However, evaluating the quality of writing for an instrument and determining whether or not it is idiomatic is in itself problematic. Simply isolating passages and making subjective claims about their comfortability is insufficient. Nothing in this work approaches unplayability and the subjective nature of playing any instrument makes it difficult to make truly concrete claims about a work's awkwardness or difficulty. In an everyday sense, it might be reasonable to make claims about a work's or a passage's comfortability based on general truisms, but, from a more thorough, critical viewpoint, establishing the veracity of any such claims is difficult and the usefulness of such an approach seems dubious.

However, in viewing violinistic truisms through a combination of historical and aesthetic lenses, the exact nature of a work's relationship with the instrument for which it was written may

[4] Tunbridge, 179.

be more clearly understood. In the case of Schumann's Third Violin Sonata, perhaps the most important of these are establishing the historical context surrounding the work's composition and understanding Schumannian aesthetics. This way we can look at the kinds of techniques and styles of playing that he employed, and establish whether or not his writing for the violin was effective within the parameters of his own musical goals.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

While little has been written on the Third Violin Sonata in terms of criticism, its existence and the history of its composition is well known and fascinating. While Schumann wrote "idea for sonata for Joachim" in his *Haushaltbuch* (house-hold book) on October 15th, 1853 and later "Intermezzo for the Joachim Sonata" and "Finale for the Sonata finished" on the 22nd, these two movements were originally presented to Hungarian violininist Joseph Joachim as a part of a musical joke: the so-called F.A.E. Sonata.[5] This sonata was composed in collaboration with the young composers Johannes Brahms and Albert Dietrich as a surprise for Joachim. Dietrich would later recall that "on one occasion Joachim was expected to pay a visit. In a good mood, Schumann suggested that we should jointly compose a violin sonata…. The 1st movement is by me, the Scherzo by Brahms (with a motif from my movement) Schumann allocated the movements in this way. The whole thing was supposed to be a joke for the benefit of Joachim, who was supposed to guess the composers of the individual movements, which he did."[6]

Schumann's contributions were the second and fourth movements. The F.A.E. motto, which was used as pitch inspiration by Dietrich and Schumann, came from Joachim's personal motto *"Frei aber Einsam"* (Free but Lonely). Although the exact date of the first reading of the work is not known for sure, it is generally assumed to be October 28th when Schumann wrote in his *Haushaltbuch "*FAE Sonata Surprise," and it was reported in Joachim's biography by

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[5] Robert Schumann*, Tagebücher,* vol. III: *Haushaltbücher 1837-1856,* ed. Gerd Nauhaus, Basle, Frankfurt, 1987, pg. 639. As quoted in: Ute Bär, "Preface," in *Schumann: Sonaten für Violin und Klavier, Band 2,* by Robert Schumann (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition 2007), VII.

[6] Albert Dietrich, *Erinnerungen an Johannes Brahms au Briefen au seiner Jugenzeit,* 1898, pp. 4-5. As quoted in: Ute Bär, "Preface," in *Schumann: Sonaten für Violin und Klavier, Band 2,* by Robert Schumann (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition 2007), VIII.

Andreas Moser that the sonata was played that evening. After Schumann's death, the sonata was more or less forgotten. However, the posthumous publishing of Brahms's scherzo movement as his WoO 2 in 1906 renewed interest in the work as a whole and the whole sonata was then published by Heinrichschofen publishing house in 1935.

Evidently, the completion of the F.A.E. sonata inspired Schumann to expand upon the two movements he contributed to create a complete violin sonata of his own. As early as October 29th, the day after the "FAE Surprise," Schumann writes in the *Haushaltbuch,* "Good days. Worked on 1st movement of the Sonata," and on the 31st, "Finished the Violin Sonata."[7] Clara Schumann mentioned the work to Joachim as early as November 2nd and had initial rehearsals with Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski (Schumann's concertmaster during his tenure as municipal music director of the Allgemeiner Musikverein in Dusseldorf). After receiving the score, Joachim wrote to Schumann that, "The additional parts of the Sonata, with concentrated energy, match the other movements splendidly. But the whole thing has become something different!"[8] Joachim's seemingly positive initial impressions are important in evaluating the work, but, despite being seemingly accepted by Schumann's inner circle, the work was, like several other works composed in close proximity to his admission to the mental institution in Endenich in the spring of 1854, withheld from publication after the composer's death. However, based on her correspondence with the publisher Julius Schuberth in 1859, Clara Schumann was evidently willing to submit at least some of the work for publication saying, "I am not willing to publish the Violin Concerto, beautiful though individual parts of it are, and I have decided not to publish the whole Sonata, only the 2nd and 3rd movements… but I reserve the right to decide the

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[7] Schumann, *Haushaltbücher,* 640.

[8] Joseph Joachim, *Briefe von und an Joseph Joachim,* ed. Johannes Joachim and Andreas Moser, vol 1: *Die Jahre 1842-1857,* (Berlin, Julius Bard 1911), 106.

title, either 'Two Fantasy Pieces' or, 'Andante and Scherzo from an yet unfinished sonata'."[9] However, after asking Joachim to look through the middle two movements while preparing them for publication in 1860, he advised her against publication and she withdrew the offer.

Historical details such as these are important in evaluating the work, even from a violinistic perspective. As one of the most important violinists of the 19th century, simply dismissing Joachim's evaluation of the work is not an option. Tunbridge uses Joachim's advice to Clara as proof of the work's poor writing for the violin saying "Indeed, the greatest strain between the work and the performer in the Third Violin Sonata is probably its rejection by the virtuoso for whom it was written."[10] However, based on his correspondence with Schumann while the composer was still alive, referring to Joachim's advice as rejection may be an overstatement. Schumann's inner-circle's (namely Clara Schumann, Joachim, and Brahms) relationship with the composer's late works is complex due to their likely skewed view. The fact that the three of them witnessed Schumann's mental deterioration in such close proximity to these work's composition must have affected the lens through which they saw them and their concern in protecting his legacy may have led them to be overly cautious in judging what they saw fit to publish.

However, with the passing of time scholars have become increasingly willing to challenge these views. Schumann's Violin Concerto, which was written around the same time as the Third Sonata and also has a fascinating, complex history, has also suffered the criticism of being poorly conceived for the instrument. John Daverio points out that,

> An influential source for this view lies within Schumann's circle itself: in his 1898 letter to Moser, Joachim claimed that both the first and last movement of the Violin Concerto contained many passages that were 'difficult to play without being effective.' Joachim's

[9] Letter from Clara Schumann to Julius Schuberth. As quoted in: Bär, "Preface", IX.
[10] Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style,* 177.

> criticism is a lame one. In fact, there are only two brief passages in the first movement – comprising a total of four bars – that are genuinely impracticable from a technical point.[11]

After a careful description of the actual problem itself he emphasizes that,

> ...these measures and their analogues in the recapitulation are the *only* passages in the concerto that approach unplayability. Otherwise, Schumann usually demands much less of the soloist than Brahms does in his concerto, not to mention Tchaikovsky or Sibelius in theirs. Moreover, we can assume that if Schumann had seen the concerto through to performance and publication, he would have arrived at a more grateful solution. The one supplied by Gustav Lenzewski in Georg Schunemann's 1937 edition of the concerto is perfectly acceptable.[12]

While composers and performers displaced by multiple generations may have felt comfortable editing Schumann's works, those closer to him may have found it more difficult. However, based on Schumann's correspondence with Joachim about the Violin Concerto, it seems perfectly clear that he was open to suggestions for revision saying (based on the seemingly contradictory wording perhaps in jest or in error), "Cross out anything that doesn't look too hard for you."[13] Again, when he gave Joachim his Phantasie for Violin to look over, he asked him to identify any impracticable passages. However, after the composer's death, Joachim may have felt uneasy about editing his works. Similarly, in an effort to protect the composer's legacy, any passages he did identify as impracticable may have served as a red flag to withhold the piece from publication. While it is important to emphasize that all of this is simply conjecture, it demonstrates that "rejection" may be too strong a term in describing Joachim's relationship with this work and his complicated relationship with the Concerto illustrates an important, analogous situation.

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[11] John Daverio, "Songs of dawn and dusk: the late music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), 283.

[12] John Daverio, "Songs of dawn and dusk: the late music," 284.

[13] Robert Schumann to Joseph Joachim, Düsseldorf, June 8, 1853, in *Joachim Briefe,* 1:59.

VIRTUOSITY AND SCHUMANNIAN AESTHETICS

Another important facet that must be considered in evaluating Schumann's writing for the violin in the Third Sonata is his overall musical aesthetic, especially in regard to virtuosity. Tunbridge repeatedly refers to the work's "virtuoso writing," "virtuosity," and "the virtuoso for whom it was written," implying that violinistic virtuosity plays a role in the piece's musical effect. In addition to questioning the quality of the virtuoso writing, she also questions its place in the work all together, pointing to the use of "semiquaver arabesques decorated with mordents" in the first movement and noting that "while such embellishment-for-its-own-sake makes sense in a virtuosic showcase, it is a little out of place here."[14] However, this begs the question as to whether Schumann's writing for the violin is truly virtuosic, both in terms of how it compares to other virtuosic writing for the violin at the time of its composition and in terms of Schumann's own concept of virtuosity. Furthermore, even if we do find virtuosity within the Sonata, in our attempt to understand what Schumann's musical goals might have been, we must decide whether or not we agree with Tunbridge when she claims that chamber works "are not the places for this kind of virtuosic display…"[15]

The role of virtuosity and the virtuoso in musical life was of immense importance during Schumann's lifetime. Establishing the exact role that virtuosity should play in the musical world of the day was a point of contention and something that Schumann and his contemporaries struggled with. On the one hand, many saw it as a superficial display that threatened music as a

[14] Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style,* 167.
[15] Ibid, 177.

serious art form and, on the other, saw its potential power in communicating Romantic ideals. This is something Schumann considered a great deal, not only in his extensive, published writings on the subject in the form of criticism, but also through his life. As Alexander Stefaniak points out in his book *Schumann's Virtuosity,* Schumann had a lifelong, living discourse with virtuosity that was in a constant state of flux as he moved between the many facets of his career; from a performer with the intent of becoming a virtuoso himself, to composer, to critic, to the husband of one of the most important virtuoso pianists in Europe.[16]

In terms of violinistic virtuosity, in her discussion of the Third Sonata, Tunbridge asserts that the violin's

> …virtuoso performance seems to work differently to other instruments. The violin does not have the mechanical associations of piano playing… The commentary around the most famous virtuoso violinist of the nineteenth century, Paganini, tends to credit his technical wizardry and his bewitchment of listeners to supernatural phenomena – to that infamous liaison with the devil. Even his technical daring and mastery were said to be driven by the "demon of mechanism' rather than mechanism itself. Schumann himself referred to Paganini's '*poetic* virtuosity', the origins of which, as Samson extrapolates, derive from the connotative values of the violin, which seems to function as an extension of the performer.[17]

Whether or not we buy into the idea of the violin's virtuosity as being singular, we do need to establish whether or not the image of a technical wizard bewitching audiences was primarily how Schumann would have conceived of the virtuoso in the 1850's. If we look specifically at where this virtuosity discourse stood when the Third Sonata was written, we see a distinct shift from the image of Paganini or Liszt inducing a trance-like state upon a packed concert hall with dazzling pyrotechnics. By mid-century, particularly in Germany, musical culture was beginning to synthesize virtuosity and the work concept. Stefaniak defines this work concept, or *Werktreue,* as "a multi-faceted ideal that is central to nineteenth-century musical aesthetics. At its heart was the

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[16] Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity,* (Bloomington, IN: Indicana University Press, 2016), 1-15.
[17] Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style,* 77.

belief that musical life should resolve first around the composition, performance, discussion – and, potentially, the veneration – of musical works."[18] Therefore, the virtuoso was no longer simply a performer with pyrotechnical abilities, but must also be a thoughtful interpreter of canonical works.

Though seeing Paganini live in 1830 was a well-documented influence on Schumann, this view of virtuosity centering around pyrotechnical and mechanical ability likely predates a more sophisticated view Schumann might have had in the 1850s. While emphasizing that Paganini's virtuosity was more than simple technique fetishisation, Mai Kawabata points out that while "Paganini's virtuosity was self-serving… it was grounded in improvisation-based Italian musical practice in which the notion of *Werktreu* held no sway. The performer-centric approach to interpretation of works by others was a post-Pagininian historical development."[19] Where Tunbridge points to the liaison with the devil and the idea of the virtuoso bewitching the audience, the kinds of metaphors being used to describe virtuosity in the 1840s and 50s were completely antithetical to this. Edward Hanslick famously claimed that the "four true priests of art (Clara Schumann, Joseph Joachim, Johannes Brahms, and Julius Stockhausen)… personify for us the true mission of the virtuoso."[20] Franz Liszt, in an essay on Clara Schumann published in the *Neue Zeitschrift fur Musik,* referred to her as "An obeisant votary of the Delphic god (Apollo), full of faith and reverence, she serves his cult with shuddering, true conscience…. For her…. All is sacred and should be received free of doubt and with blissful veneration. And she is ruled by devotion that the supple human element almost entirely retreats from this objective interpretation of art."[21] Most importantly, as early as 1837 Schumann himself painted a picture of

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[18] Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity,* (Bloomington, IN: Indicana University Press, 2016), 155.
[19] Mai Kawabata, *Paganini: The 'Demonic' Virtuoso* (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2013).
[20] Eduard Hanslick, *Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien* (Vienna: Wilhmelm Braumüller 1869), 1:418.
[21] Franz Liszt, "Clara Schumann," *Neu Zeitschrift für Musik* 41, no. 23 (December 1, 1854): 245-252.

an ideal musical world in his review of the Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra season saying that, "As my imagination strove to condense everything into one picture, all of the sudden a sort of blossoming mountain of the muses stood before me, upon which I saw under the eternal temple of the older masters new arcades, new paths, and among them, merry virtuosos and lovely singers like flowers and butterflies."[22] In the review of a season which combined the canonical works of the old masters with virtuoso showpieces, Stefaniak points out that while, "he seemed to portray virtuosos as decoration rather than superstructure, he nonetheless made it clear that they inhabited and enriched the mountaintop and its edifices."[23] Most importantly to this examination, Stefaniak points out that, "the ideology of the musical work also shaped original showpieces. Composers of such music could present themselves not only as scriptwriters for astonishing performances, but as architects who exerted compositional mastery over the virtuosic spectacle, created idealized musical works, and jockeyed for a place within the canonic tradition."[24]

When looking at a work of chamber music as opposed to a so-called "showpiece," it is important to realize that, as Tunbridge points out, "the availability of these performers (Brahms and Joachim) meant that Schumann was able to write technically complex music which verged on the virtuosic. These were not pieces only to be played at home but also to be performed in public, reflecting that the status of the genre more generally was changing from *Hausmusik* to art music."[25] This shift in intended audience must have affected Schumann's musical goals and it is hard to understand why, after making this concession, Tunbridge then says, "sonatas for violin

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[22] Robert Schumann, "Frangmente aus Leipzig," in *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik un Musiker* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1914), 1:311.
[23] Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity,* 155.
[24] Ibid., 157.
[25] Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style, 136.*

and piano – especially ones in part composed as a joke or game between friends – tend to be chamber music, for intimate settings. They are not the places for this kind of virtuosic display, even when they are transferred to the public stage as gradually happened to Schumann's chamber works."[26] It does not seem a stretch to extrapolate that when Schumann decided to expand his two movements from the F.A.E. Sonata, he likely did so to step away from what had started as a musical joke and compose something serious, intended for public performance. Schumann understood the potential of a virtuosic display to have a variety of musical effects on listeners and, if we accept the premise that the work was intended for public performance, it seems the more nuanced outlook towards virtuosity Schumann likely held in the 1850s would allow for some degree of technical display in a chamber work.

However, while Schumann's aesthetics of virtuosity in the 1850s may have been distinct from Paganini's image, from a technical viewpoint it feels absolutely necessary to appeal to him. His contribution can be heard not only in the profound impact he had on other virtuoso composers, but even violin works by more conservative composers such as Mendelssohn, whose use of double-stop tremolandos in the second movement of his Violin Concerto in E minor, op. 64 sound very much like Paganini's Caprice no. 6 in G minor.[27] In transcribing Paganini's caprices for the piano in his *Six Concert Etudes after Paganini Caprices,* op. 10, Schumann would have been acutely aware of the precise techniques that Paganini helped more fully integrate into the violinist's technical vocabulary such as left-hand pizzicato, ricochet, flying (up-bow) staccato, double harmonics, *scordotura,* etc. It seems reasonable to claim then that a post-

[26] Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style,* 177.

[27] This is not to say that any of Mendelssohn's concerto was directly inspired by Paganini, but considering the general absence of this technique from violin repertoire prior to Paganini, it is hard to imagine Mendelssohn would have come up with such a passage had Paganini not helped more fully integrate the technique upon which it draws into the violinist and composer's toolboxes.

Paganinian composer such as Schumann, familiar with these techniques and writing with the intent of creating a virtuosic effect, would employ some of these, but none of these techniques appear in the Third Sonata.

However, I would argue that there is one passage in the work that seems indisputably virtuosic. While it does not employ any of the virtuosic techniques listed above, the sweeping sixteenth and thirty-second note arpeggios, dramatic leaps from low to high notes, and trills featured at the end of the last movement certainly seem like a technical display and give the impression of virtuosity. Tunbridge concedes that it is possible that such a passage may serve a musical purpose rather than existing for its own sake, but also suggests that this, "has of course long been an excuse for excessively ornamental passagework" and, while it might signal the work's closure it does not "sound like good virtuoso writing in the sense that the violinist struggles with all those arpeggios, rather than transcends them."[28] This is simply opinion and the "struggle" she hears may have everything to do with specific recordings she has heard or performances she has seen.

In fact, tempo might have a great deal to do with this perceived struggle. The movement is marked "Markirtes, ziemlich lebhaftes Tempo" (Marked, quite lively tempo). Whereas the final movement of the First Violin Sonata is simply marked "lebhaft", the inclusion of "Markirtes, zeimlich" perhaps indicates a somewhat slower tempo than we might expect for the finale. This is not unlike the last movement of the Concerto which is marked "Lebhaft, doch nich zu schnell" (lively, but not too fast). This movement of the concerto, which has a metronome marking of quarter note equals sixty-three, is a considerably slower tempo than we might expect for a virtuosic finale and many performers have chosen to take it faster. However, this creates a

[28] Ibid., 176-177.

different effect in the passages of fast arpeggios that occur later in the movement, which are strikingly similar to those in the last movement of the sonata (again it is important to emphasize these works' proximity in composition and shared dedicatee). Perhaps in both cases, these movement's role as finale may conjure up the need for speed in many performer's heads, but slower tempi give passages in both of these movements a more playful, improvisatory character than they have at the faster speed, where they feel devilish and pyrotechnical. Additionally, in the case of the Third Sonata, much of this could also be heard as accompanimental and coloristic as it occurs over melodic material in the piano.

While there is not a metronome marking in this final movement, in the program notes to his recording of all three Schumann violin sonatas with violinist Christian Tetzlaff, pianist Lar Vogt points out that,

> It is extremely fascinating to analyse [sic] these metronome markings, which in the fast tempos are not that fast at all, but very moderate, the piano part, for example, is so complex and polyphonic that it cannot even be played at a faster tempo. This kind of emotional structure is so much more vehement when you can probe and perceive all these structures at a more relaxed pace than when you play through most things quickly. In the end, we found these metronome markings reasonable and, based on this experience, chose tempos for the third sonata, for which there are no metronome numbers, but was obviously composed in a similar spirit as the second sonata.[29]

Furthermore, as is noted in the Weiner Urtext edition, Schumann imprecisely notates the number of sixteenth and thirty-second notes and it is suggested that the "metrically imprecise semiquaver and demisemiquaver figures should be executed with rhythmic liberty."[30] In addition to this general rhythmic liberty, a liberal use of rubato in this passage seems in character, is collaboratively viable with the slower moving piano part, and lends a sense of both technical and musical freedom to the ending of this piece. Therefore, while Tunbridge makes no reference to

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[29] As quoted in: Elke Albrecht, liner notes to *Schumann: Violin Sonatas,* Christian Tetzlaff and Lars Vogt, Ondine, B00EPRJ4A6, CD, 2013.
[30] Robert Schumann, *Schumann: Sonaten für Violin und Klavier, Band 2* (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition 2007), 37.

tempo or rubato in hearing “struggle” in the arpeggios in the last movement, choosing a statelier tempo in the spirit of the finale of the concerto, combined with at least some use of rubato, may placate this struggle to some degree.

POETIC INSPIRATIONS: SCHUMANN AND JOACHIM

Equally important in understanding Schumann's musical goals is understanding his poetic ideology of music. While he was opposed to strictly programmatic music as he believed it restricted the imagination of the listener, he accepted that "the exterior world, bright today and darkening tomorrow, often touches the inner being of poets and musicians."[31] [32] Therefore, as Ulrich Tadday points out,

> Schumann understands the production and reception of music as a cohesive process, and rejects the formalist view of a supposedly 'absolute music' as a delusion. The open-ended process described by Schumann, emanating from the creating composer to be continued by the post-creating listener, is of course not restricted to the meaning or interpretation of titles or headings…. As Schumann's music criticism clearly states, music, if it is poetic, creates opportunities enough to give the recipient's imagination wings…. Schumann's aesthetics of music is Romantic and revolutionary.[33]

Joachim's performance and personal persona influenced Schumann's composition for the violin in 1853. We know this not only due to the lasting influence the "F.A.E. surprise" must have held on the entirety of the Third Sonata, but in Schumann's writings to Joachim about his other violin works that year. When he sent him the score of the Concerto he wrote, "I'm enclosing something new here, which perhaps will give you an image of a certain seriousness, behind which a joyful tone often peeks out. Often you were present in my imagination when I

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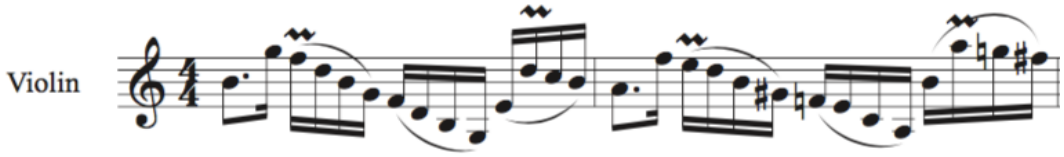
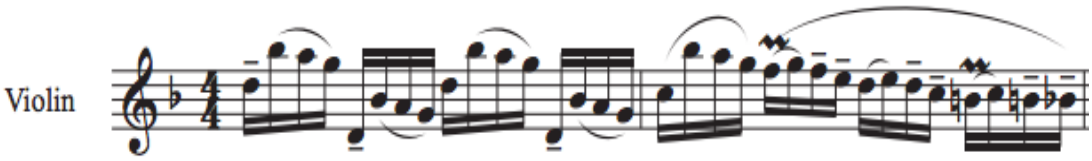
[31] Ulrich Tadday, "Schumann's aesthetics of music" in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), 43.
[32] Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften,* 462.
[33] Ulrich Tadday, "Schumann's aesthetics of music," 45.

wrote it."[34] Similarly, when he presented the Phantasie to Clara as a birthday gift, he wrote to Joachim, "I was thinking more of you when I wrote it."[35]

In particular, Joachim's personal connection to Schumann's violin works may help clarify some of what Tunbridge sees as unusual about the Sonata. As previously mentioned, in the first movement of the Sonata she points out a passage whose figurations, "more than anything… resemble those of the Violin Concerto, with its semiquaver arabesques decorated with mordents; while such embellishment-for-its-own-sake makes sense in a virtuosic showcase piece, it is a little out of place here."[36] So, instead of hearing these similar figures as "embellishment-for-its-own-sake" belonging more in a concerto, perhaps we can hear them as being connected to Schumann's impression of Joachim's character.



Example 1 Schumann, Third Violin Sonata, first movement, mm. 37-38



Example 2 Schumann, Violin Concerto, first movement, mm. 81-82

In addition to the mordents, the relationship between these passages is reinforced by the similar sixteenth note figures which start with a leap of either of sixth or seventh and then continue in descending stepwise motion. This figure connects these passages at least as much as

[34] Robert Schumann to Joachim, Düsseldorf, October 7, 1853, in *Joachim Briefe,* 1:84.
[35] Robert Schumann to Joachim, Düsseldorf, September 14, 1853, in ibid., 1:77.
[36] Tunbridge, *Schumann's Late Style,* 177.

the mordents. Additionally, they occur at such a moderate tempo that, even with decorative mordents, in the shadow of Paganini they cannot really be described as virtuosic. Both passages appear in moments of tonal instability (in the Concerto it appears in the middle of a harmonic sequence) and the additional meandering feeling lent to the passage by the ascending and descending of the scales and arpeggios gives the music a sense of searching in this moment. This feeling of searching or yearning in moments of harmonic instability can easily be linked with Joachim's "free, but lonely" motto. I would argue that the mordents, rather than being purely decorative, lend a trembling, almost vocal quality to these passages which seem totally in this character.

Similarly, in writing music which potentially reflected the character of the virtuoso for whom it was written, Schumann may have felt inspired to include a moment for technical display at the end of the work's final movement, which originally belonged to the FAE sonata. Whatever his exact reason, it seems reasonable to extract that much of this work's character can be attributed to Joachim's influence on Schumann at the time of its writing, including those which Tunbridge sees as inappropriately virtuosic.

VIOLINISTIC PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS, AND PEDAGOGY

However we might judge Tunbridges' evaluation of Schumann's writing for violin on the whole, her point that the part does not sit well under the fingers is well taken. In terms of the violinist's left hand, there are many passages where, upon first glance, a logical fingering does not seem to jump out. The thoughtful violinist must spend some time experimenting. In her "Notes for Interpretation" in the Wiener Urtext edition of the Sonata, violinist Christiane Edinger does not see this as rendering the piece "unviolinistic" saying, "Much seems to be written at odds with the violin, but is in fact only unorthodox, not unviolinistic. I therefore, also suggest rather unorthodox fingerings. These have been proven in practice, and should on the one hand be an aid, and on the other a stimulus to seek sonic possibilities that are off the beaten track."[37] She also points out that, like many pianist/composers, Schumann's slurs are phrase markings and, "in order to create a large sound which on the one hand is adequate to the piano, but which on the other is also warm and soft, it is often essential to divide up the large slurs of the original. Of course, they can also be divided differently: my proposals are simple variants which have been tried in practice."[38] This idea of searching for sonic possibilities has important implications, both musically and pedagogically.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the simple reality is there are no violin techniques contained within this sonata that could not be taught elsewhere. The passages therein which

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[37] Christiane Edinger, "Notes for Performance", in *Schumann: Sonaten für Violin und Klavier, Band 2,* by Robert Schumann (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition 2007), XII.
[38] Edinger, "Notes for Performance," XII.

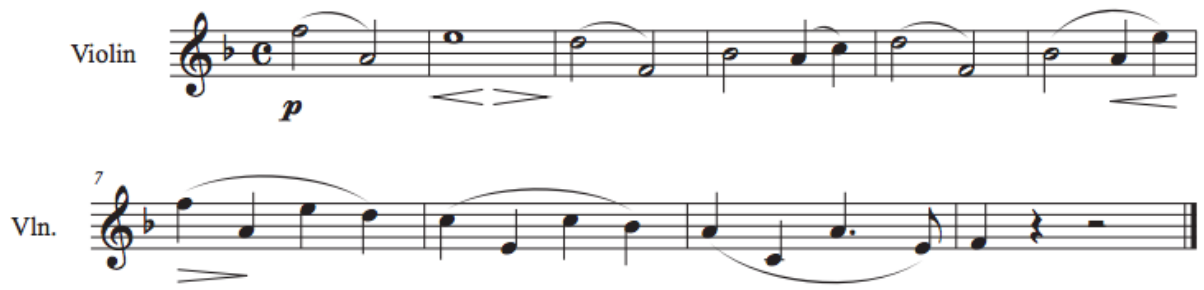
might prove pedagogically useful from a purely technical standpoint could be replaced by any number of other orchestral excerpts, sonatas, or études. However, I would like to suggest the mindset necessary to deal with the "unorthodox" in this piece is something that many other pieces in standard violin repertoire do not provide. In the same way that teachers push their students to learn works that stretch their techniques beyond that which they are likely to encounter in the field (unless they are pursuing a career as a soloist), it seems reasonable that, in a similar spirit to the *werktreu* of the 19th century, in order to challenge their skills as faithful interpreters of the old masters, assigning such a work would stretch their intellectual approach and change the way in which they would go on to approach more standard repertoire.

Most canonical works for the violin exist in a plethora of published editions with a variety of fingerings and bowings and in the modern era, with easily accessible, high quality performances on YouTube, the 21st century violin student has a plethora of resources outside of their teacher's studio to guide them to fingering and bowing possibilities outside of what is printed. However, assigning a work such as the Third Sonata presents a useful opportunity for the student to learn through discovery and experimentation. Presently, there are only two published editions of the work, the majority of violin teachers will have likely never played it, and there are currently only a few video performances from which to draw. This, combined with the need for "unorthodox fingerings" and bowings will force a student, with proper guidance and input from their teacher, into the process of experimentation necessary to find fingerings and bowing that not only fits their technical approach to the instrument, but one which also makes sense musically. In studying this piece myself, I found it necessary to frequently implement "bad" fingerings or bowings that disregarded known technical conventions in favor of comfortability and immediacy of playability. While I understood the reasoning behind

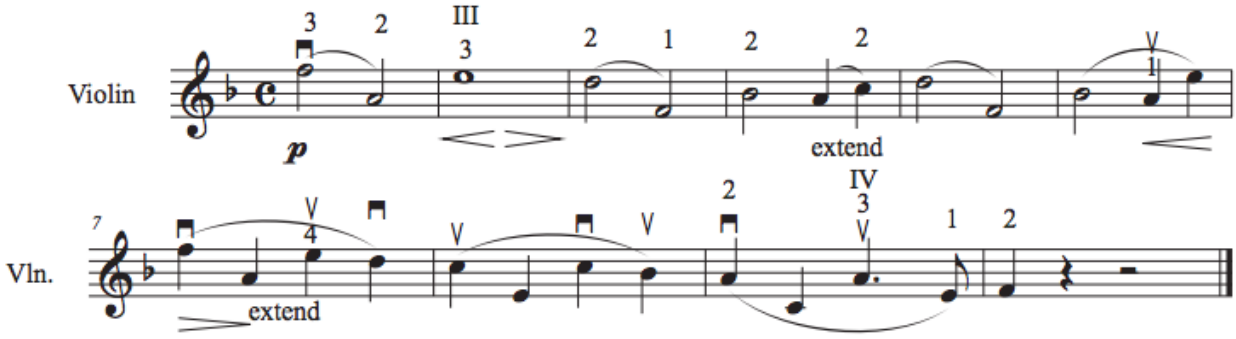
suggestions given by the editors of the violin parts, based on my own physical approach to the instrument, I was frequently dissatisfied with their suggestions, but, due to the unorthodox nature of the writing, also had to spend considerably more time than I usually might coming up with solutions of my own. I also had to consider, based on my knowledge of violin playing in general, stylistic consideration in 19th-century music, and the history of the piece itself, whether or not I thought it appropriate to deliberately edit the composer's markings (primarily slurs) to create the musical effect that I felt like the composer was after.

The opening phrase of the second movement provides a perfect example for such a situation. On the one hand, this simple melody could theoretically be played by a beginner entirely in first position without any shifts whatsoever. However, no professional or even intermediate player would consider playing it this way as the frequent string crossings and resulting change of timbre disrupt from the feeling of legato which is suggested by the slurs, rhythms, and expressive markings indicated by the composer. Particularly due to the prevalence of string crossings and fifths, which require the player to either have to use an open string without vibrato or stop two strings at once with one finger causing potential intonation difficulties, a fingering which captures the musical essence of the phrase is not necessarily immediate.

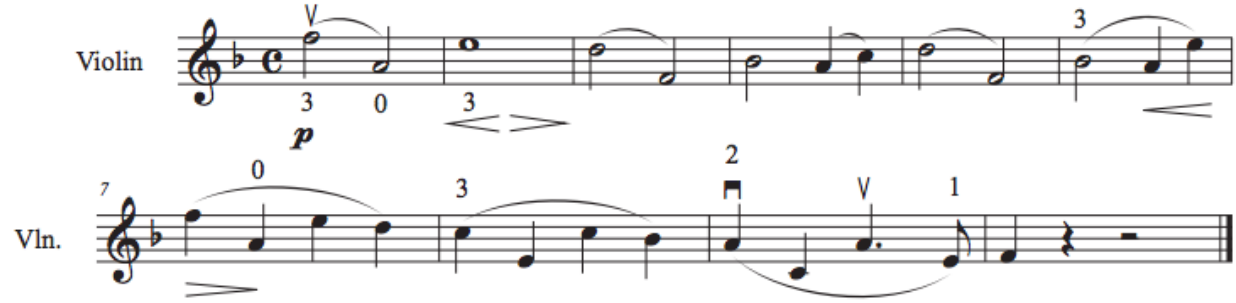
More than in a lyrical passage in which a comfortable fingering is obvious, finding solutions to these technical difficulties forces the performer to carefully consider the effect of the music itself. Below, I have included, in conjunction with the phrase as originally notated, solutions in both fingerings and bowings that highlight different inherent qualities within the phrase that I hear as musically viable.



Example 3.1 Schumann, Third Violin Sonata, second movement, mm. 3-12. Original notation.



Example 3.2 Outwardly expressive fingerings and bowing options.[39]



Example 3.3 More introverted fingerings and bowings.

The first of these, I would consider to be a more outwardly expressive option. Here, I have included a fingering that favors the more intense timbres produced by playing in higher

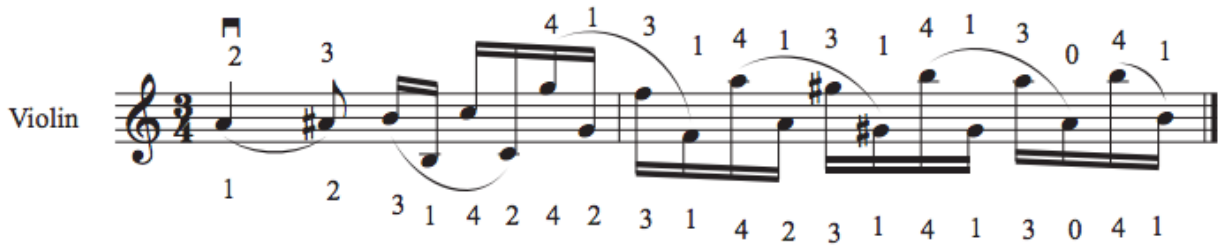
[39] In these examples, finger numbers are provided when a change of position occurs. Once a finger number is given, it is implied that one should remain in that position until there is a new number.

positions, avoids string crossings to achieve the highest degree of unity in timbre possible, and uses a considerable amount of portamento. I have also suggested some extensions to facilitate the use of stronger fingers on expressive notes and to avoid string crossings whilst simultaneously avoiding an excessive use of portmento. Additionally, in the latter half of the phrase I have changed the bowing to place an emphasis on the second half of the measure. This is based on the note grouping theory of James Morgan Thurmond which asserts that emphasizing, "the arsis or weak note (upbeat) of the motive or measure (in an iambic meter)" gives the music a greater feeling of motion and momentum and "is more expressive musically than the thesis (downbeat), and that by stressing the arsis ever so slightly, the performance of music can be made more satisfying and musical."[40]

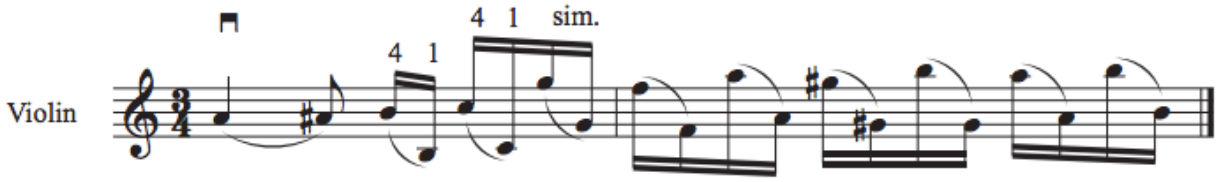
The second fingering yields a more placid, simple, and calm interpretation. This fingering allows for the tasteful use of the open A string, favors the lower, less intense positions, and uses less portamento. More string crossings are necessary with this fingering, but not to a degree where I find the changes in timbre within note groupings disturbing. Here, I have kept the bowings almost precisely as written by Schumann. Only in the last measure have I split the slur in half, as with the rubato that most musicians would naturally take at this cadence point, it would be difficult to make a good sound for the entire measure without running out of bow.

While sections such as this require thoughtful consideration to play in a musically convincing matter, others require it simply for execution. One such passage occurs at measure 26 in the first movement, just before the Allegro.

[40] James Morgan Thurmond, *Note Grouping* (Detroit: Harlo Press 1982), 29.



Example 4.1 Schumann, Third Violin Sonata, mm. 26-27. Upper fingerings by Edinger, lower by Seitz.[41] [42]



Example 4.2 Fingerings and bowings by the author.

This passage consists of broken octaves and the way they are written (with two pairs of broken octaves going from top note to lower note under a slur) makes it difficult to execute without audible shifts. In both of the available editions of the works, the editors have suggested the use of fingered octaves.[43] This is an absolutely viable solution, but perhaps a simpler one would be to split up the slurs into groups of two. This allows the violinist to shift during the bow change and hide the shift. With careful practice of the strings crossings in this new bowing, the legato that seems to be indicated by the composer's original slurs will not be disturbed.

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[41] Robert Schumann, *Sonata no. 3 for Violin and Piano in A minor,* ed. by Oliver Neighbour, (London: Schott 1956). Violin part edited by Gerhard Seitz.

[42] Robert Schumann, *Schumann: Sonaten für Violin und Klavier, Band 2* (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition 2007). Violin Part Edited by Christiane Edinger.

[43] "Fingered octaves" extend the hand frame with the octave being covered by fingers 1 and 3 or 2 and 4 rather than the more typical 1 and 4.

Additionally, the increased number of bows can more easily facilitate the marked crescendo. This is precisely the kind of minor detail that, had the composer lived long enough to perhaps collaborate with Joachim in editing the violin part, could have been ironed out and wouldn't come across as so awkward. Another solution would be to play the bowing written, use normal octaves with fingers one and four, lighten the fingers on the shift to hide the shifts to the greatest degree possible, but accept that some glissando will be heard. Shifting can be heard in the recordings and performances of great artists and the desire to hide them constantly has more to do with contemporary violin aesthetics than that of the 19th century. I would tend to suggest one of the other solutions, but, due to the nature of this passage, if I heard it performed with somewhat audible shifts, I would not find it offensive.

A similar passage occurs in measure 42 of the last movement. With the way in which the violin is tuned, this combination of half steps, tri-tones, and major sevenths yield seemingly awkward string crossings and fingerings (particularly since the violinist is essentially forced to rely on the typically weaker fourth finger), but, once again, searching for unorthodox solutions can make the passage quite manageable.[44] In my own experience from studying this work, I found it extremely useful to have both available editions, as I ended up coming up with a hybrid of fingerings derived from both the solutions given by Christiane Edinger in the Wiener Urtext Edition and Gerhard Seitz in the Schott edition.[45] From a pedagogical view, this made me realize that, were I to teach this piece, I would either strongly suggest that the student purchase both editions, or make copies of each available for them.

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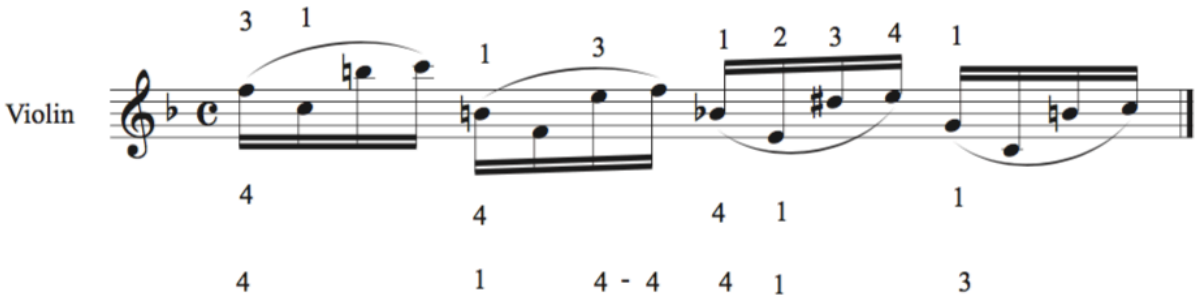
[44] Since the violin is tuned in fifths, in terms of fingerings the interval of a tritone is "a half-step" away on the string above or below.

[45] Robert Schumann, *Sonata no. 3 for Violin and Piano in A minor,* ed. by Oliver Neighbour, (London: Schott 1956).



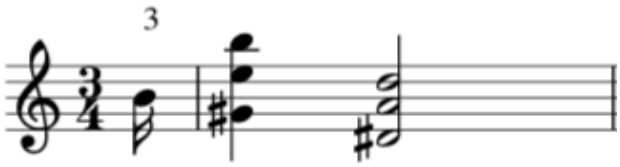
Example 5 Schumann, Third Violin Sonata, third movement, m. 42. Top fingering by Edinger, lower by Seitz, bottom by the author.[46] [47]

The problem in this occurs in smoothly getting from one group of sixteenth notes to the next. Between the first and second groups, the violinist must decide whether they would prefer to stretch back and reach this B-natural in first position on the A string, or stay in position and cross over the A string and play this second position on the D string.[48] A similar dilemma then occurs between the second and third groups of sixteenths. The fifth between the F-natural sixteenth note of the second group and the B-flat of the third means that the violinist will either have to shift, extend back, or cross strings. I added an unorthodox fingering of my own in the last group as I found it both easier and more effective to stay in first position and cross over the D string from the C on G string to the B on the A string rather than shift to third position on the G at the beginning of the grouping as suggested in both editions. This requires silently crossing over the

[46] Schumann, *Schumann: Sonaten für Violin und Klavier, Band 2.*
[47] Schumann, *Sonata no. 3 for Violin and Piano in A minor.*
[48] Crossing over a string like that would generally be considered "bad" as there can be noise from the unplayed string and the greater distance needed to travel can disrupt the legato if not executed carefully.

D string under a slur, but, at this tempo, I didn't find it to cause an audible disruption of the legato.

In some passages, there is no elegant solution and the performer must simply manage the inherent discomfort through practice. Such an example occurs in the eighth measure of the work.

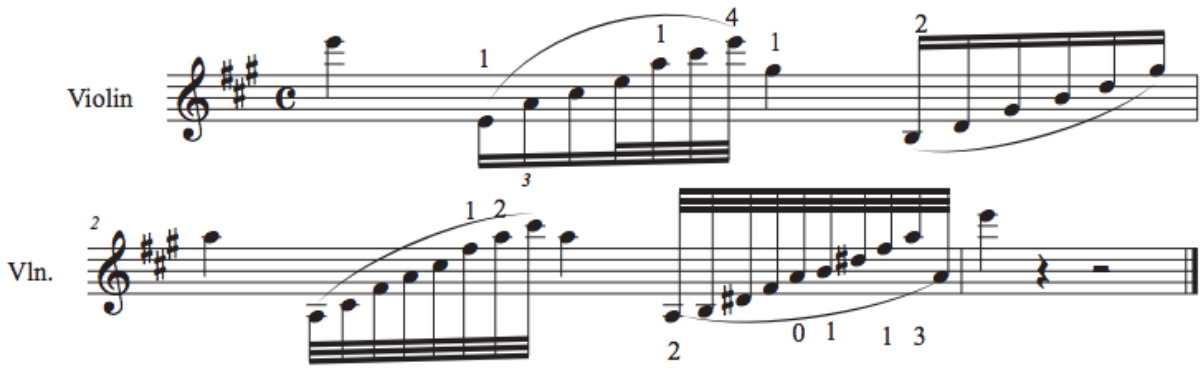


Example 8 Schumann, Third Violin Sonata, first movement, m.8.

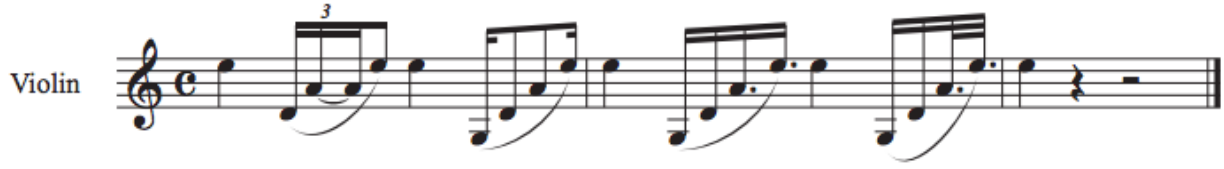
Here, the half-note chord is relatively uncomfortable, regardless of the chord that precedes it, due to the fact that this stack of tri-tones, across three strings, require the violinist to cramp their first three fingers into two half steps. Other than using fingers 2, 3, and 4 instead, which is equally uncomfortable, there is no real alternative. This is another example of where, had they the chance, Joachim could have perhaps suggested an alternate voicing which would be equally effective musically, but more comfortable for the violinist.

In addition to searching for unorthodox fingerings and bowings, the virtuosic scales and arpeggios in the finale previously discussed will be most effectively learned if practiced in a particularly methodical, detached way. Due to the speed of the notes, the challenges of the left hand might seem to be the most obvious issue. However, these scales and arpeggios actually sit quite comfortably in the hand. It is the frequently abrupt string crossings that makes this passage quite challenging for the bow arm. Of course, while slow practice is advocated by most teachers, going beyond that, I would suggest that the isolation of the bow with open strings (based on the strings used with whatever fingering is chosen) at a slower tempo will yield the fastest result for

this section of the work. If the teacher felt it necessary, she could even have the student write out the rhythms of the open strings as an exercise. Such an exercise can be seen, in conjunction with the original notation, below. Due to Schumann's imprecise notation, the durations in the open string exercises are likewise approximate. If the student practices such a passage with open strings, aiming for smoothness of string crossing, both physically and sonically, the left hand will be much more easily facilitated. The entirety of the arpeggios found in the work's last two pages can be practiced in this way.



Example 9.1 Schumann, Third Violin Sonata, fourth movement



Example 9.2 Exercise for practicing example 9.1 created by the author.

While there are certainly many other passages in the work that require thoughtful attention, these were a few that struck me as being particularly awkward and requiring unorthodox solutions. As stated previously, it may well be that another violinist would find these totally agreeable and find other passages not addressed here worrisome.

EPILOGUE

Of course, it will fall upon individual listeners and performers to decide whether or not they find this music compelling. However, as a violinist I have never bought into generalizations about "bad writing for the instrument." While there are certainly technical considertations that must be confronted, rather than use this as a case against Schumann, I feel like it's incumbent upon the violinist to deal with these issues. If the music truly does sound broken as Tunbridge suggests, if the violinist is thoughtful in his or her preparation and management of technical difficulties, I do not believe this brokenness should result from technical issues in the writing for the violin.

The real question should be whether or not one finds the music compelling and, if so, to find a way to manage any technical difficulties. If the final result is compelling, it seems that, if anything, we should conceptualize this as "good" writing for the instrument. Surely Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst's famous "Grand Caprice on Schubert's Der Erlkonig" (written in 1854, only one year after Schumann's Third Sonata) is a highly awkward piece to learn and perform, but it is unlikely that one would ever refer to it as problematic because we accept its difficulties under the terms of its own musical goals. Therefore, while it has not been my intent to enter into apologetics, through my examination I have come to find that the awkwardness in passages in Schumann's Third Sonata are entirely manageable and, with careful and thoughtful practice, these minor discomforts can be largely eliminated and should not detract from Schumann's musical goals. Additionally, considering the lack of resources and general knowledge of the

work, guiding a student on how to manage these problems makes the work a useful pedagogical tool.

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APPENDIX A: LECTURE SCRIPT

(All musical examples from main body of paper were presented in slide form in the lecture. Similarly, citations are removed in this edited version of the paper.)

Good afternoon. The topic of this afternoon's talk is the Third Violin Sonata of Robert Schumann. Written in 1854, at the very end of Schumann's career, this is a largely unknown and rarely performed work. In this talk I am going to address the work's writing for the violin. First this will require providing a historical context for the work and examining how Schumann's aesthetic may have influenced his writing for the instrument. Then we will look at some potential problems in the writing for violin and discuss how to these issues can be managed and how the work might be used as a pedagogical tool.

Tackling the late works of Robert Schumann comes with a number of challenges. Most of all, as Laura Tunbridge points out in her book *Schumann's Late Style*, "we tend to filter the late music through knowledge of the composer's biography, especially our awareness of his illness, however vague and unscientific it may be." The equation of Schumann's final mental illness with the quality of his late works has complicated both their reception and performance since the composer's death. In addition to formal aspects of the late works which may be difficult to digest, the writing for violin has also been seen as problematic. Tunbridge claims that "the difficulty of this piece lies not so much in its vaunted virtuosity, as in its writing for the

instrument, which contributes to the music's feeling of brokenness," and that it "suffers from the Violin Concerto's problem that its virtuosic writing, while not impossible to play, does not sit easily under the fingers… the body of the performer, her fingers and arms, are contorted and stretched into 'unnatural positions'," bringing "us back to the alleged weakness of Schumann's late music, to the master broken at, or maybe by his instrument."

Reading these claims as a violinist, many questions immediately arise. What precisely is occurring in the music to cause the performer to have to perform such contortions? What means do performers have to manage these potential issues? Being the work of a composer who saw Niccolo Paganini, the greatest violin virtuoso of his time, perform live, is the writing truly that taxing in comparison with Paganini's music? How do these technical difficulties relate to the composer's musical goals, both within the work itself and to his overall aesthetics? Tunbridge's claims may be entirely justified, but require unpacking. In addition to evaluating these claims, it also seems worth considering that a singular pedagogical opportunity is presented in interpreting a work that has little to no performance tradition, few recordings to draw from for example, and requires historic knowledge to intelligently approach. In particular, honing the intellectual approach required to confront the difficulties presented such a work certainly has pedagogical applicability. (Slide change)

However, evaluating the quality of writing for an instrument and whether or not it is idiomatic is in itself problematic. Simply isolating passages and making subjective claims about their comfortability is insufficient. In an everyday sense, it might be reasonable to make claims about a work's or a passage's comfortability based on general truisms, but, from a more thorough, critical viewpoint, establishing the veracity of any such claims is difficult and the usefulness of such an approach seems dubious.

However, in viewing violinistic truisms through a combination of historical and aesthetic lenses, the exact nature of a work's relationship with the instrument for which it was written may be more clearly understood. In the case of Schumann's Third Violin Sonata, perhaps the most important of these are establishing the historical context surrounding the work's composition and understanding Schumannian aesthetics. This way we can look at the kinds of techniques and styles of playing that he employed, and establish whether or not his writing for the violin was effective within the parameters of his own musical goals. (SLIDE CHANGE)

To begin this examination, I am going to start with a historical contextualization. The Third Violin Sonata started as a part of a musical joke: the so-called F.A.E. Sonata. This sonata was composed in collaboration with the young composers Johannes Brahms and Albert Dietrich as a surprise for violinist Joseph Joachim. Schumann's contributions were the second and fourth movements. The F.A.E. motto, which was used as pitch inspiration by Dietrich and Schumann, came from Joachim's personal motto *"Frei aber Einsam"* (Free but Lonely). After Schumann's death, the sonata was more or less forgotten. However, the posthumous publishing of Brahms's scherzo movement as in 1906 renewed interest in the work as a whole and the whole sonata was then published 1935.

Evidently, the completion of the F.A.E. sonata in 1853 inspired Schumann to expand the two movements he contributed into a complete violin sonata of his own. After receiving the score, Joachim wrote Schumann that, "The additional parts of the Sonata, with concentrated energy, match the other movements splendidly. But the whole thing has become something different!" However, the work was, like several other works composed in close proximity to his admission to the mental institution in 1854, withheld from publication after the composer's death. Schumann's wife Clara, was evidently willing to submit at least two of the movements for

publication, but asked Joachim to look at these movements beforehand. Though he had been initially enthusiastic about the work in 1853, he advised her against publication and she withdrew the offer. It was not published until 1956, one hundred years after the composer's death.

Historical details such as these are important in evaluating the work, even from a violinistic perspective. As one of the most important violinists of the 19th century, simply dismissing Joachim's evaluation of the work is not an option. Tunbridge uses Joachim's advice to Clara as proof of the work's poor violin writing saying "Indeed, the greatest strain between the work and the performer in the Third Violin Sonata is probably its rejection by the virtuoso for whom it was written." However, based on his correspondence with Schumann while the composer was still alive, referring to Joachim's advice as rejection may be an overstatement. Similarly, based on Schumann's correspondence with Joachim about the Violin Concerto also written in 1853, it seems perfectly clear that he was open to suggestions for revising sections that may have been seen as problematic. However, after the composer's death, Joachim may have felt uneasy about editing his works. In an effort to protect the composer's legacy, any passages he did identify as impracticable may have served as a red flag to withhold the piece from publication. Had the composer lived to see the work through to publication, he may have perfectly willing to make revisions to the work which would make it more immediately accessible. Historical factors such as this paint a complex picture of the work and make it difficult to evaluate precisely. (SLIDE CHANGE)

However, another important facet that can help in evaluating Schumann's writing for the violin in the Third Sonata is his overall musical aesthetic, especially in regard to virtuosity.

The role of virtuosity and the virtuoso in musical life was of immense importance during Schumann's lifetime. Defining the exact role that virtuosity should play in the musical world of the day was a point of contention and something that Schumann and his contemporaries struggled with. On the one hand, they saw it as a superficial display which threatened music as a serious art form and, on the other, saw its potential power in communicating Romantic ideals.

If we look specifically at where this virtuosity discourse stood in the 1850s when the Third Sonata was written, we see a distinct shift from the image of Paganini or Liszt inducing a trance-like state upon their audience with dazzling pyrotechnics. Alexander Stefaniak points out that the musical culture of 1850s was beginning to synthesize virtuosity and the work concept. This work concept, or *Werktreue, w*as as Stefaniak defines it is, "a multi-faceted ideal that is central to nineteenth-century musical aesthetics. At its heart was the belief that musical life should revolve first around the composition, performance, discussion – and, potentially, the veneration – of musical works." Therefore, the virtuoso was no longer simply a performer with pyrotechnical abilities, but must also be a thoughtful interpreter of canonical works. Stefaniak points out that, "the ideology of the musical work also shaped original showpieces. Composers of such music could present themselves not only as scriptwriters for astonishing performances, but as architects who exerted compositional mastery over the virtuosic spectacle, created idealized musical works, and jockeyed for a place within the canonic edition." Schumann's aim in the Third Sonata may have been just that.

While Schumann's aesthetics of virtuosity in the 1850s may have been distinct from Paganini's image, from a technical viewpoint it feels absolutely necessary to appeal to him. Schumann would have been acutely aware of the precise techniques which Paganini helped more fully integrate into the violinist's technical vocabulary such as left-hand pizzicato, ricochet,

flying (up-bow) staccato, double harmonics, *scordotura,* etc. It seems reasonable to claim then that a post-Paganinian composer such as Schumann, familiar with these techniques and writing with the intent of creating a virtuosic effect, would employ some of these, but none of these techniques appear in Third Sonata. Still, I would concede that there is one passage in the work which seems indisputably virtuosic. While it does not employ any of the virtuosic techniques listed above, the sweeping 16th and 32nd note arpeggios, dramatic leaps from low to high notes, and trills featured at the end of the last movement certainly give the impression of virtuosity. However, Schumann understood the potential of a virtuosic display to have a variety of musical effects on listeners and it seems the more nuanced outlook towards virtuosity Schumann likely held in the 1850s would allow for some degree of technical display in a chamber work.

Perhaps even more important to understanding Schumann's aesthetics and musical goals is to understand his poetic ideology of music. While he was opposed to strictly programmatic music as he believed it restricted the imagination of the listener, he accepted that "the exterior world, bright today and darkening tomorrow, often touches the inner being of poets and musicians." Joachim's performance and personal persona influenced Schumann's composition of works for the violin in 1853. We know this not only due to lasting influence the "F.A.E. surprise" must have held on the entirety of the Third Sonata, but in Schumann's writings to Joachim about his other violin work's that year. When he sent him the score of the Concerto he wrote, "Often you were present in my imagination when I wrote it." Similarly, when he presented the Phantasie to Clara as a birthday gift he wrote to Joachim, "I was thinking more of you when I wrote it." (SLIDE CHANGE)

In particular, Joachim's personal connection to Schumann's violin works may help clarify some of what Tunbridge sees as unusual about the sonata. In the first movement of the

Sonata she points out a passage whose figurations, "more than anything… resemble those of the Violin Concerto, with its semiquaver arabesques decorated with mordents; while such embellishment-for-its-own-sake makes sense in a virtuosic showcase piece, it is a little out of place here." Instead of hearing these similar figures as "embellishment-for-its-own-sake" belonging more in a concerto perhaps we can hear them as being connected to Schumann's impression of Joachim's character.

In addition to the mordents, the relationship between these passages is reinforced by the similar sixteenth-note figures which start with a leap of either of sixth or seventh and then continue in descending stepwise motion. This figure connects these passages at least as much as the mordents. Additionally, they occur at such a moderate tempo that, even with decorative mordents, in the shadow of Paganini they cannot really be describe as virtuosic. Both passages appear in moments of tonally instability and the additional meandering feeling lent to by the ascending and descending of the arpeggios gives the music a sense of searching. This feeling of searching or yearning in moments of musical instability could easily be linked with Joachim's "free, but lonely" motto. Additionally, I would argue that the mordents, rather than being purely decorative, lend a trembling, almost vocal quality to these passages which seem totally in this character. (DEMONSTRATE BOTH PASSAGES)

However we might judge Tunbridges evaluation of Schumann's writing for violin on the whole, her point that the part does not sit well under the fingers is well taken. In terms of the violinist's left hand, there are many passages where, upon first glance, a logical fingering does not seem to jump out. The thoughtful violinist must spend some time experimenting. In her "Notes for Interpretation" in the Wiener Urtext edition of the Sonata, violinist Christiane Edinger does not see this as rendering the piece "unviolinistic" saying, "Much seems to be written at odds

with the violin, but is in fact only unorthodox, not unviolinistic. I therefore, also suggest rather unorthodox fingerings. These have been proven in practice, and should on the one hand be an aid, and on the other a stimulus to seek sonic possibilities that are off the beaten track." This idea of searching for sonic possibilities has important implications, both musically and pedagogically.

In studying this piece myself, I found it necessary to frequently implement "bad" fingerings or bowings that disregarded known technical conventions in favor of comfortability and immediacy of playability. I also had to consider, based on my knowledge of violin playing in general, stylistic consideration in 19th century music, and the history of the piece itself, whether or not I thought it appropriate to deliberately edit the composer's markings (primarily slurs) to create the musical effect that I felt like the composer was after. (SLIDE CHANGE)

The opening phrase of the second movements provides a perfect example for such a situation. On the one hand, this simple melody could theoretically be played by a beginner entirely in first position without any shifts whatsoever. However, no professional or even intermediate player would consider playing it this way as the frequent string crossings and resulting change of timbre disrupt from the feeling of legato which is suggested by the slurs, rhythms, and expressive markings indicated by the composer. However, particular due to the prevalence of string crossings and fifths which require the player to either have to use an open string without vibrato or stop two strings at once with one finger and causing potential intonation difficulties, a fingering which captures the musical essence of the phrase is not necessarily immediate.

More than in a lyrical passage in which a comfortable fingering is obvious, finding solutions to these technical difficulties forces the performer to carefully consider the effect of the music itself. I have given some solutions in both fingerings and bowings that highlight different

inherent qualities within the phrase that I hear as musical viable. The first of these, I would consider to be a more outwardly expressive option. Here, I have included a fingering which favors the more intense timbres produced by playing in higher positions, avoids string crossings to achieve the highest degree of unity in timbre possible, and uses a considerable amount of portamento. Additionally, in the latter half of the phrase I have changed the bowing to place an emphasis on the second half of the measure.

(DEMONSTRATE)

The second fingering yields a more placid, simple, and calm interpretation. This fingering allows for a tasteful open A string, favors the lower, less intense positions, and uses less portamento. More string crossings are necessary with this fingering, but not a degree where I find the changes in timbre within note groupings disturbing. Here, I have kept the bowings almost precisely as written by Schumann. Only in the last measure have I split the slur in half, as with the rubato that most musicians would naturally take at this cadence point, it would be difficult to make a good sound for the entire measure without running out of bow.

(DEMONSTRATE)

Finally, it's worth noting that since initially investigating fingering possibility and coming with these two options, I have come up with a third which blends these two and which I will use in the performance that follows this lecture.

While sections such as this require thoughtful consideration to play in a musically convincing matter, others require it simply for execution. (SLIDE CHANGE) One such passage occurs at measure 26 in the first movement, just before the Allegro. This passage consists of broken octaves and the way they are written (with two pairs of broken octaves going from top note to lower note under a slur) makes it difficult to execute without audible shifts. In both of the

available editions of the works, the editors have suggested the use of fingered octaves. This is an absolutely viable solution, but perhaps a simpler one would be to split up the slurs into groups of two. This allows this violinist to shift during the bow change and hide the shift. With careful practice of the strings crossings with this new bowing, the legato that seems to be indicated by the composer's original slurs doesn't seemed to be disturbed. This is precisely the kind of minor detail that, had the composer lived long enough to perhaps collaborate with Joachim in editing the violin part, could have been ironed out and wouldn't come across as so awkward. Another solution would be to play as written, use normal octaves with fingers one and four, lighten the fingers on the shift to hide the shifts to the greatest degree possible, but accept that some glissando will be heard. Shifting can be heard in the recordings and performances of great artists and the desire to hide them constantly has more to do with contemporary violin aesthetics than that of the 19th century. While I would tend to suggest one of the other solutions, due to the nature of this passage I would not find it offensive for the shifts to be somewhat audible. (PLAY PASSAGE TWICE TIMES WITH DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS OF BOWINGS AND FINGERINGS)

A similar passage occurs in measure 42 of the last movement. With the way in which the violin is tuned, this combination of half steps, tri-tones, and major sevenths yield seemingly awkward string crossings and fingerings (particular since the violinist is essentially forced to rely on the typically weaker fourth finger), but, once again, searching for unorthodox solution can make the passage quite manageable. In my own experience with studying this work, I found it extremely useful to have both available editions, as I ended up coming up with a hybrid of fingerings derived from both the solutions given by Christiane Edinger in the Wiener Urtext Edition and Gerhard Seitz in the Schott edition. From a pedagogical view, this made me realize

that, were I to teach this piece, I would either strongly suggest that the student purchase both editions, or make copies of each available for them.

The problem occurs primarily between the groups of sixteenth notes. Between the first and second groups, the violinist must decide whether they'd prefer to stretch back and reach this B-natural in first position on the A string, or stay in position and cross over the A string and play this second position on the D string (crossing over a string like that would generally be considered "bad" as there can be noise from the unplayed string and the greater distance needed to travel can disrupt the legato if not executed carefully). A similar dilemma then occurs between the second and third groups of sixteenths. The fifth between the F-natural sixteenth note of the second group and the B-flat of the third means that the violinist will either have to stretch back or shift. Both fingerings provided in the edition seemed viable, but, in their totality, both felt rather awkward for my own tastes, but I found the combination below successful. I added an unorthodox fingering of my own in the last group as I found it both easier and more effective to stay in first position and cross two strings from C to B rather than shift to third position on the G at the beginning of the grouping as suggested in both editions. This requires crossing over the D string under a slur, but, at this tempo, I didn't find it to cause an audible disruption. (DEMONSTRATE)

In some passages, there is simply no elegant solution and the performer must simply manage the inherent discomfort through practice. Such an example occurs in the eighth-measure of the work. Here, the half-note chord is relatively uncomfortable, regardless of the chord that precedes it, due to the fact that this stack of tri-tones, across three strings, require the violinist to cramp their first three fingers into two half steps. Other than using fingers 2, 3, and 4 instead, which is equally uncomfortable, there is no real alternative. (Demonstrate hand position)

This is an example of where, had they the chance, Joachim could have perhaps suggested an alternate voicing which would be equally effective musically, but more comfortable for the violinist. While there are certainly many other passages in the work that require thoughtful attention, these were a few that struck me as being particularly awkward and requiring unorthodox solutions. As stated previously, it may well be that another violinist would find these totally agreeable and find other passages not addressed here worrisome.

Of course, it will fall upon individual listeners and performers to decide whether or not they find this music compelling. However, as a violinist I have never bought into generalizations about "bad writing for the instrument." If the music truly does sound broken as Tunbridge suggest, if the violinist is thoughtful in her interpretation and preparation, I do not believe this brokenness should result from technical issues in the writing for the violin.

The real question should be whether or not one finds the music compelling and, if so, to find a way to manage these problems. If the final result is compelling, it seems that, if anything, we should conceptualize this as "good" writing for the instrument. While it has not been my intent to enter into apologetics, through my examination I have come to find that the awkwardness in passages in Schumann's Third Sonata are entirely manageable and, with careful and thoughtful practice, these discomforts can be largely eliminated and should not detract from Schumann's musical goals. Additionally, considering the lack of violinistic resources and general knowledge of the work, guiding a student on how to manage these problems on their own in and individualistic way makes the work a useful pedagogical tool.

That concludes the lecture portion. I hope you enjoy this work.