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PAGANINI 24 Caprices, Op. 1

Ilya Kaler, Violin



Nicolò Paganini (1782 - 1840)

Twenty-Four Caprices, Op. 1

Paganini's popular reputation rested always on his phenomenal technique as a violinist, coupled with a showman's ability to dominate an audience and to stupefy those who heard him by astonishing feats of virtuosity. His playing served as an inspiration to other performers in the nineteenth century, suggesting to Chopin, in Warsaw, the piano Etudes, and to Liszt the material of the Paganini studies that he wrote in 1838. The very appearance of Paganini impressed people. His gaunt aquiline features, his suggestion of hunched shoulders, his sombre clothing, gave rise to legends of association with the Devil, the alleged source of his power, an association supported by the frequent appearance by his side on his travels of his secretary, one Harris, thought by some to be a familiar spirit or a Mephistopheles watching over his Faust. Stories of a pact with the Devil were denied by Paganini himself, who, with characteristic understanding of the value of public relations in a more credulous age, told of an angelic visitation to his mother, in a dream, foretelling his birth and his genius.

Paganini was born in Genoa in 1782 and was taught the violin first by his father, an amateur, and then by a violinist in the theatre orchestra and by the better known violinist Giacomo Costa, under whose tuition he gave a public performance in 1794. The following year he played to the violinist and teacher Alessandro Rolla in Parma, and on the latter's suggestion studied composition there under Paer. After a return to Genoa and removal during the Napoleonic invasion, he settled in 1801 in Lucca, where, after 1805, he became solo violinist to the new ruler of Lucca, Princess Elisa Baciocchi, sister of Napoleon. At the end of 1809 he left to travel, during the next eighteen years, throughout Italy, winning a very considerable popular reputation. It was not until 1828 that he made his first concert tour abroad, visiting Vienna, Prague and then the major cities of Germany, followed by Paris and London in 1831. His international career as a virtuoso ended in 1834, when, after an unsatisfactory

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tour of England, he returned again to Italy, to Parma. A return to the concert-hall in Nice and then, with considerable success, in Marseilles was followed by an unsuccessful business venture in Paris, the Casino Paganini, which was intended to provide facilities equally for gambling and for music. With increasing ill health, he retired to Nice, where he died in 1840.

Paganini published relatively little of his music, most of which was kept for his own exclusive use during his career as a travelling virtuoso. The Twenty-Four Caprices for solo violin, however, were published in Milan in 1820 as the composer's Opus 1. They were written very much earlier, probably in 1805, the year of Paganini's first employment under the newly installed Princess Elisa Baciocchi at Lucca. The Caprices are a remarkable compendium of Paganini's technique as a performer, while avoiding the excesses that he found necessary in front of audiences that expected vulgar tricks better suited to the Music Hall.

The first Caprice is a display of balzato (leaping) bowing in arpeggiated figuration, followed by a second demanding wide stretches and extensions in left-hand technique. The third Caprice opens with an E minor introduction in octaves, fingered in a way peculiar to Paganini at this time and calling again for extension of the fingers of the left hand. The introductory passage, repeated in conclusion, frames a more rapid middle section. A display of double stopping of various kinds in the fourth caprice leads to a fifth introduced and ended by a rapid cadenza, framing a central demonstration of spiccato bowing. Caprice No. 6 offers a melody over a tremolo accompaniment and the seventh opens with a passage in octaves, followed by the demands of flying staccato. Much of Caprice No. 8 is given over to passages in thirds, while No. 9 opens with a passage in imitation of the flute, to be played by the bow over the fingerboard of the instrument, followed by an imitation of the French horn, in register and choice of intervals. Bowed martellato, the hammered stroke, is used in Caprice No. 10, and a central section of rapid virtuosity is framed, in No. 11, by a chordal Andante. Caprice No. 12 includes passages of rapid tenths, played across the strings, and a chromatic passage in descending thirds introduces and follows a guick central section played at the point of the bow. Caprice No. 14 is an

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energetic march, and the octaves that begin No. 15 lead to high register arpeggios and passages of flying staccato. No. 16 in G minor is in rapid semiguavers, involving contrasts of register, followed by No. 17. with its roulades interrupting a simple tune in sixths, leading to an extended central passage in octaves. Caprice No. 18 starts with a fanfare figure on the lowest string of the violin framing a middle section in rapid thirds. Caprice No. 19 calls for considerable control in bowing of the string and No. 20 has outer sections in widely spaced double and triple stopping. An operatic Amoroso melody in sixths introduces No. 21 followed by a quicker passage that again calls for Paganini's technique of flying staccato, and No. 22 demands bowed martellato in a middle section, surrounded by a grandiose display of double stopping. The varied display of No. 23 leads to the best known of all the Caprices. No. 24, a theme and twelve variations. The melody itself was used elsewhere by Paganini, as well as by Brahms in two books of piano variations and by Rachmaninov in his Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. The ninth variation calls for another speciality of Paganini, of which Spohr for one expressed some disapproval, the alternation of bowed notes and notes plucked with the left hand

Ilya Kaler

The Russian violinist Ilya Kaler was born in 1963 in Moscow and studied there at the Conservatory under Leonid Kogan and Victor Tretyakov. In 1981 he won the Grand Prize at the Genoa Paganini Competition and in 1985 the Gold Medal at the Sibelius Competition in Helsinki, with a Special Prize for his performance of the Sibelius Violin Concerto. The following year he won the Gold Medal at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition. He has appeared as a soloist with the most distinguished Russian orchestras and abroad with orchestras of Eastern and Western Europe and in the United States, while as a recitalist he has performed in the major cities of Europe, in the Far East and throughout the former Soviet Union.

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Niccolò Paganini

Capricen für Violine solo op. 1

Hätte es ihn nicht gegeben, die phantasievollen Schriftsteller der Romantik hätten ihn erfinden müssen: Niccolò Paganini, den Teufelsgeiger, Herzensbrecher und Hexenmeister, dem halb Europa zu Füßen lag und den die Gerüchteküche zu einer ihrer Lieblingsspeisen erwählte.

In Wahrheit sah alles ganz anders aus: Am 27. Februar 1782 wurde Niccolò Paganini in Genua geboren. Seinen ersten Musikunterricht erteilte ihm sein Vater - allerdings auf der Mandoline (die Geige folgte erst an zweiter Stelle). Bald schon hatte die Familie erkannt, daß der überaus musikalische Knabe wohl einiges zum kargen Brot der Familie hinzuverdienen könne; er wurde am mehrere Lehrer weitergereicht, lernte hier einiges an den wesentlichen Grundkenntnissen - die eigentlichen Fähigkeiten aber, mit denen er später Furore machen sollte, verdankte er seinem eigenen Fleiß.

Mit elf Jahren gab es den ersten öffentlichen Auftritt, doch es verging noch einige Zeit, ehe er sich 1805 auch solistisch hören ließ. 1806 wurde er von der Fürstin von Lucca fest angestellt; die Jahre 1809 bis 1813 verbrachte er als reisender Geiger. Und endlich kam der Durchbruch, als er in Mailand erfolgreich auftrat. Hier beginnen der internationale Siegeszug und die romantische Legendenbildung. Sein extravagantes Äußeres und Benehmen, sein undurchsichtiges Privatleben, sein epochales Violinspiel resultierten in einem Bild, das der Wirklichkeit ebensowenig entsprach wie der Geiz, den man ihm andichtete: Immer wieder machte er großzügige Schenkungen, und wenn er nicht auf der Bühne stand, verlief sein Leben eigentlich in eher alltäglichen Bahnen.

Niccolò Paganini starb am 27. Mai 1840 in Nizza - ein hochgeehrter Meister seines Instruments und ein Wegweiser in die Zukunft der Musik: Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms gehören zu den Komponisten der jüngeren Generationen, denen das Virtuosentum des Teufelsgeigers Anregung zur Steigerung ihrer klaviertechnischen Raffinessen waren.

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STEREO

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PAGANINI

Playing Time: 79'18"

(4:52)

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24 Caprices, Op. 1 Ilya Kaler, Violin

1	No. 1 in E Major	(1:55)	13	No. 13 in B Flat Major	(2:23)
2	No. 2 in B Minor	(2:46)	14	No. 14 in E Flat Major	(1:12)
3	No. 3 in E Minor	(3:43)	15	No. 15 in E Minor	(2:50)
4	No. 4 in C Minor	(7:27)	16	No. 16 in G Minor	(1:36)
5	No. 5 in A Minor	(2:31)	17	No. 17 in E Flat Major	(3:39)
6	No. 6 in G Minor	(6:23)	18	No. 18 in C Major	(2:39)
7	No. 7 in A Minor	(3:39)	19	No. 19 in E Flat Major	(3:01)
8	No. 8 in E Flat Major	(2:31)	20	No. 20 in D Major	(3:31)
9	No. 9 in E Major	(2:48)	21	No. 21 in A Major	(3:19)
10	No. 10 in G Minor	(2:06)	22	No. 22 in F Major	(2:35)
11	No. 11 in C Major	(4:15)	23	No. 23 in E Flat Major	(3:36)

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Music Notes: Keith Anderson

from 19th to 22nd October, 1992.

No. 12 in A Flat Major (3:00)

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Cover Painting: Paganini by Kersting



No. 24 in A Minor