CHAPTER I

NICCOLÒ PAGANINI

Op. 1

TWENTY-FOUR CAPRICES FOR VIOLIN SOLO

Dedicated to the Artists

"These perennial companions to the violinist, together with the 6 Sonatas and Partitas of J.S. Bach, form the foundation of the violinist's manual, both Old and New Testament",

Yehudi Menuhin writes in his preface to the facsimile edition of the manuscript of Paganini's 24 Caprices. ¹

This "New Testament of the Violinist" was first published in 1820, creating a sensation in musical circles. With the Caprices, Paganini's contribution to the repertoire can now be seen as one of unchallengeable importance, both violinistically and musically. The Caprices stimulated creative exploration in violin playing by extending the limits of the instrument and encouraged the elaboration of new pedagogical approaches. They still exert their influence on the instruction of violinists of all countries. There is no conservatorium student who has not become acquainted, at least didactically, with this fundamental work (even when dully defined as "required repertoire"). In Poland and some other countries, the Caprices have made their appearance in the syllabus of secondary schools and are increasingly often played by violin students under fourteen years of age.²

¹Facsimile of the autograph manuscript of Paganini's 24 Caprices, ed. by Federico Mompellio, Milano, Ricordi, 1974, p.5.
²See Tadeusz Wronski's preface to his edition of the 24 Caprices, Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzykowe, 1977, p.3.
Thanks to many recent performances and recordings, the listener too has become familiar with the Caprices, enjoying these products of a remarkable period in the evolution of Italian music above all for their musical content. However, questions about their origins and history still remain, not to mention the enigma of their extraordinary inspirational powers exerted on composers up to the present time. There is also an influence which can be traced in literature, poetry and fine arts (Heine, Goethe, Stendhal, Ugo Foscolo, Ludwig Peter Lyser, Eugène Delacroix, Théophile Gautier, Franz Grillparzer, Félix Ziem, Louise de Vilmorin, Frantisek Tichy, etc.). A long-standing controversy about the Caprices and Paganini’s music in general also needs clarification. While Paganini’s contribution to the development of instrumental technique is acknowledged una voce, his true worth as a musician (as opposed to a technical “wizard”) and his real stature as a composer have often been questioned. This applies particularly to the Caprices which are not infrequently looked upon simply as studies of advanced technique, indispensable for the highest development of the mechanism, but devoid of “real musical content”. This attitude, interestingly enough, is essentially that of violinists and violin teachers. Thus, each Caprice is seen as possessing specific therapeutic virtues and is selected for study as a cure for certain technical deficiencies or in order to develop one aspect of the mechanism or the other. The twenty-four Caprices, each in itself a particular technical discipline, constitute undoubtedly a masterly practical lesson of instrumental playing. But this would not suffice to explain their uncommon inspirational potential and the tremendous creative impetus they have given - and still give - to violinists and composers (notably Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, Frédéric Chopin, Johannes Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Ferruccio Busoni, George Rochberg), all of whom considered them as masterpieces.

Virtuosity and Music

The very concept of virtuosity is central to this controversy. The true nature of this particular manifestation of musical expression, which obviously plays a
key role in Paganini’s works, is regrettably often misunderstood. As Franz Liszt wrote:

"Virtuosity, far from being a monstrous excrescence, is an indispensable element of musical composition."³

Virtuosity is seen here as one of the parameters of musical composition, standing on equal terms with other co-ordinates such as harmony, melody, counterpoint, timbre, and structures such as variation, fugue, all of them having in turn characterised various periods in musical history. There are principles ruling each of these parameters which have been determined and developed by great composers through the ages. One could say that Paganini contributed to the definition of the laws of virtuosity. By exploring the extreme possibilities of the violin he not only extended the limits of the instrument, but, as Claudio Casini points out, he opened up a new dimension in musical language.⁴ Paganini’s compositions are founded on one precise structural criterion: the exploitation of the instrumental resources of the violin. One could say that everything in his flamboyant compositions is subordinated to this criterion; but melody, rhythm, harmony, ideas and form, are all vivified by a breathtaking technical brilliance and by an unconstrained poetical and lyrical inventiveness.

A lesson to be learned from the history of music is not to use the words "invented" or "discovered" too readily. Anne Penesco, in her still unpublished work L’apport de Paganini à la technique du violon⁵ has convincingly demonstrated that most aspects of violin technique developed by Paganini existed before his time. However, he systematically exploited and extended the use of elements which had appeared only in a limited, sporadic way. In doing so, he pioneered new avenues for the development of instrumental virtuosity and, with his admirably structured and coherent set of

⁴"Paganini ha impresso un’evoluzione al linguaggio musicale o, se si preferisce, ha creato in esso una dimensione nuova” Casini, Claudio, Paganini, Milan: Electa 1982, p.63
twenty-four Caprices, he made a significant contribution to the evolution of musical composition. The Caprices can be compared to several great collections of compositions where one co-ordinate of the musical language assumes "archetypal" functions. A famous example is Das Wohltemperierte Klavier of J.S. Bach which is entirely founded on the application of the laws of harmony and counterpoint and explores the interaction of these two forces, the vertical with the horizontal. The concertos of Antonio Vivaldi constitute another example: in Il Cimento dell' Armonia con l' Invenzione, the confrontation between harmony and melodic invention - as the title proclaims - is at the origin of the Venetian priest's remarkable musical discoveries. In works such as Das Wohltemperierte Klavier or Il Cimento dell' Armonia con l'Invenzione, the composers chose to select one or a few aspects of musical language and succeeded in integrating the totality of their expression. Something similar happened with Paganini and his twenty-four Caprices. There, one dimension of musical language, virtuosity, is systematically explored: the musical ideas, their syntactic and structural treatment, everything is, as it were, submitted to its laws. As a result, the work, far from giving the impression of a one-sided perspective, reveals the power of suggestion of the virtuoso gesture and, beyond it, or maybe at the very origin of it, a pure form of poetical insight. One could say by analogy that Paganini's approach was similar to that of painters who select a specific quality on which the general logic of their work will depend (e.g. colour for impressionists, geometry for cubists, etc...). Paganini's brilliant intuition about a fundamental aspect of musical composition, and the clarity and coherence with which he formulated it in his twenty-four Caprices, had profound repercussions in the conception of instrumental playing and repertoire in the Romantic era. The attention of the musical world was drawn to the significance of virtuosity as an element in Art.

6 One could perhaps say that technique - instrumental as well as compositional - is the means which enables the musician to deliver his message. Virtuosity could be thus defined as the adequation of a great message and the perfection of its expression. In an homage to Paganini, Paul Valery wrote that: "Le virtuose est celui qui, par excellence, donne vie et présence réelle à ce qui n'était qu'une écriture livrée à l'ignorance, à la maladresse, à l'insuffisante compréhension de qui que ce soit. Le virtuose incarne l'œuvre." (Esquisse d'un Éloge de la Virtuosité, Nice, 1940, p.5).
Artiste or Charlatan?

In Paganini’s posthumous celebrity, three elements have played - and are still playing - a role: the legend, the glamour of an exceptional destiny, the artistic event. The first two have often tyrannised the third. Paganini’s extraordinary technique, his charismatic personality, to say nothing of the commercial success of his concert tours, cast a shadow on the deeper, more lasting aspects of his work:

“As for no other musician [Sergio Martinotti writes], any critical discourse on Paganini should move away from his singular personal life, sift out a large corpus of more or less bad literature, pass many fictionalised episodes through the sieve...in order to arrive at his secret signature as a composer and to understand his art”[^7] [trl. PXB]

The creation of the Istituto di Studi Paganiniani[^8] in 1972 has given fresh stimulus to biographers and musicologists and, with the publication of the Catalogo Tematico delle Musiche di Niccolò Paganini[^9], a fair evaluation of Paganini’s contribution to the field of musical composition is now possible. Next to the masterworks such as the 24 Caprices [M.S.25], the Three String Quartets [M.S.20], the Concerto in E flat Major [M.S.21] that place Paganini among the innovators of the early nineteenth century in Italian music, there is also the “utility” music he wrote and performed in large quantities to satisfy the demands of the public at large. It consists mostly of pieces in mezzo carattere style (“pots-pourris”, variations on a single string, etc.) where the violin emulates, as it were, and even surpasses, the prowess of a coloratura singer. Often based on themes taken from the operatic repertoire of the time, the violin may sound like a coloratura singer in its virtuosity.

[^7]: “Come per nessun altro musicista, ogni discorso critico su Paganini dovrà muoversi dalla sua vita singolare, vagliare tanta più o meno cattiva letteratura, tanto dettaglio romanizzato...per raggiungere la sua cifra di compositore, la sua arte.” Martinotti, Sergio, *Ottocento Strumentale Italiano*, Bologna, Forni, 1972, p.276.

[^8]: The Institute of Paganinian Studies (Istituto di Studi Paganiniani) was founded in Genoa on June 22, 1972. Founding members: Dr Alma Brughera Capaldo, Dr. Pietro Berri, Federico M. Boero, Mario Cifatte, Gino Contilli, Luigi Cortese, Enrico Costa, Dr. Edward Neill, Prof. Salvatore Pintacuda (Conservatorium of Palermo), Dr. Carlo Marcello Rietmann. Director: Prof. Dr. Alma Brughera Capaldo.

[^9]: Catalogo Tematico delle Musiche di Niccolò Paganini compiled by Maria Rosa Moretti and Anna Sorrento, Genoa, Comune di Genova, 1982. This publication constitutes the most complete classification of Paganini’s compositions to date. The works are arranged in chronological order in groups entitled: I. Datable works, II. Undatable works, III. Sketches, IV. Lost works, V. Works of dubious origin, VI. Works erroneously attributed. All the works classified under I and II are distinguished by catalogue numbers preceded by the initials M.S. (for Moretti and Sorrento), which will be mentioned in further references.
these compositions received an enthusiastic reception by the Italian public, but, taken out of their historical/musical context, they may have offered a pretext to those who tried to minimise Paganini's stature as a composer. There is also a large corpus of chamber music works, in which the guitar has a significant presence (solo pieces, duets, trios and quartets). Last but not least, there are the works that one may define as "experimental": short preludes, Caprices, or exercises often written on the spur of the moment for students, friends or admirers. Among these pieces - in which special instrumental and compositional techniques are employed - one could mention the Sonata a Violino e Viola [M.S.108], the Capriccio a Quattro Corde dedicated to Maurice Dietrichstein [M.S. 54], the Sei Preludi for 2 violins and cello, the Scala per pianoforte dedicated to Clara Wieck, the Preludio per Violino dated Leipzig 16 October 1829, and the Scala obliqua e contraria per Chitarra dated Prague 4 January 1829. The many facets of Paganini's output reflect a very rich artistic personality which does not readily submit to definition. There have been and there still are many different - and often conflicting - interpretations of his contribution. The composer and music critic François Joseph Fétis accused Paganini of being a "charlatan", an impostor who wrote unplayable music. He later changed his mind and called him the greatest of living violinists. For Robert Schumann, the sixth Caprice alone was "sufficient in itself to assure Paganini's position as one of the first Italian composers." Louis Spohr, who found in Paganini's compositions "a strange mixture of consummate genius, childishness and lack of taste", was alternately "charmed and repelled" by his style of playing. Heinrich Heine, more perhaps than any literary and music critic of his time, was preoccupied by the problem of virtuosity in relation to both musical and poetical expression. In a most interesting passage of Lutetia, he wrote that he had "never heard anyone play better but also, at times, play worse than Paganini." Hector Berlioz, the

10 "...Mr Fétis, qui, en vertu des principes infaillibles de l'école à laquelle il appartient, avait accusé Paganini de charlatanisme, vient, toujours en vertu des mêmes principes, de le proclamer un grand violoniste" Imbert de Laphalèque, G. Notice sur le célèbre violoniste Nicolo Paganini. Paris E.Guyot,1830, p.61.


13 "Ich habe niemand besser, aber auch zuzeiten niemand schlechter spielen gehört als Paganini..." Heine, Heinrich. Sämtliche Schriften, Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979,
author of the *Traité d’Instrumentation*, maintained that:

“It would take a book to enumerate all the new effects that Paganini has found in his works, the ingenious devices, the grand and noble forms, the orchestral combinations never, before him, employed or dreamed of... His harmony is always clear and of extraordinary sonority.” 14

Yet, quite the opposite view is held by the musicologist Leon Plantiga who patronizingly describes Paganini concertos as being “decidedly pedestrian in harmony and instrumentation”.15 A recent article in *La Nazione* was dedicated to the memory of the great Italian violinist Gioconda di Vito16 who died last October in Rome. For her, Paganini was not an interpreter but a creator: “Interprete? Paganini non fu un interprete. Fu un creatore come tutti i grandissimi”.17 Gioconda de Vito was introduced to the Caprices by her teacher Remy Principe who required all his advanced students to study and master them. In Paganini, Principe wrote, the technique of the violin has reached its highest point.18 His students were reminded that the word technique came from the Greek τέχνη which signifies art. To understand Paganini musical message, Federico Mompellio writes, one should first concentrate on the study of the Caprices, which were dedicated to the “Artists”:

“In Paganini, one now wants to find the authentic figure of the musician. In such research, the Caprices could be of safe reference value in reaching meditated conclusions. With such work, the author is already well worthy of appearing in the musical Parnassus...”19

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16 De Vito, Gioconda. (1907- October 1994) (>Principe).
19 Mompellio, Federico (editor). *Facsimile of the manuscript of Paganini’s 24 Caprices.* Milan:Ricordi, 1974, introduction.
Origin of the Caprices

There is still a good deal of confusion regarding the exact date of composition of the Caprices and many hypotheses have been formulated. The fact that Paganini's correspondence does not contain any mention of the Caprices until 1836 adds to the mystery which surrounds their origin. It might be opportune to remember here Karol Lipinski's statement concerning the Caprices. The Polish violinist, who met with Paganini in Piacenza in 1818, told Schumann that the Caprices were originally written as gifts for friends. He said that later, when Giovanni Ricordi requested them for publication, Paganini reconstructed them from memory "in a great hurry and frenzy". However, such an assumption has been defined as improbable by several musicologists, including Edward Neill. Among the reasons invoked, is the fact that Lipinski, when writing his recollections of Paganini, confused places, dates and facts. Besides, there is no trace left of any copy of the Caprices prior to the manuscript handed in to Giovanni Ricordi (still in the possession of the Ricordi Publishing House, Milan). Another reason is given by Edward Neill, in the general introduction to his Urtext edition of the Caprices. The Genoa-based musicologist convincingly points out that the study of the manuscript owned by Ricordi irresistibly suggests an integrated collection linked "by a remarkable thread of continuity" rather than a grouping of pieces written in different places and at different times. However, there could well be a grain of truth in Lipinski's statement, and the hypothesis that Paganini could have specifically designated friends and fellow-violinists as dedicatees of one or

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1See: Schumann, Robert, Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker. Berlin: Wegweiser Verlag, 1922, p.164, note ***. See also infra, pp. 57-58. From a letter that Paganini wrote to L.G. Germi (1st July 1818) it appears that Lipinski often played with him (in particular the quartets with guitar). Lipinski may well have had the opportunity to glance through Paganini's music and manuscripts: "Un certo Lipinski polacco, professore di violin, venne dalla Polonia in Italia espressamente per sentirmi; mi ritrovò a Piacenza e stava quasi sempre con me, adorandomi. Lo stesso ha eseguito il Quartetto di Carrega, della Raggi, e di Germi perfettissimamente bene; ora se ne ritorna in Polonia per studiare qualche anno sul mio genere e dice di non volere sentire nessun altro professore di tale strumento." (PE 19) "A certain Lipinski, a Pole, professor of the violin, came to Italy from Poland expressly to hear me...He met with me in Piacenza and hardly ever left my side; he adores me. He played the Carrega, the Raggi, and the Germi Quartets extremely well...Now he is returning to Poland to study my method and he says he never wants to hear another professor of this instrument." [tr. FXB]


3Paganini, Niccolò, Capricci op.1, ed. by Edward Neill and Salvatore Accardo, Milan: Ricordi, 1988, pp. III and VII.
another of his Caprices cannot be entirely discarded.\textsuperscript{4} The only certitude concerning the date of composition of the Caprices is the \textit{terminus ad quem}: upon receipt of the manuscript, Signor Tomaso, an employee of the firm Ricordi, entered the date of 24 November 1817 (the inscription appears on the bottom left-hand corner of the title-page and reads: \textit{St Tomaso, li 24 9bre 1817}). As for the \textit{terminus a quo}, different dates have been suggested, but all remain speculative. The earliest date proposed originates from Paganini's declaration to Lichtenthal that, upon his return to Genoa in 1796, "he composed difficult music and worked continuously at difficult problems of his own invention".\textsuperscript{5} The slightly later date of 1799-1800 is suggested by I.M. Yampolski, who attributes Paganini's initial inspiration to his discovery of Locatelli's music at the library of Marquis Di Negro, and to the concomitant influence of the "heroic and rebellious spirit of the Risorgimento period".\textsuperscript{6}

In 1799, life in Genoa had become precarious. As a consequence of the British blockade, the arrival of grain was uncertain and irregular, bringing the threat of famine and epidemic. The situation prompted the Paganini family to move to San Biagio in the Polcevera Valley (San Quirico) where they had a country property. This stay may have provided Paganini with the calm needed to write important compositions. According to Yampolski, the young violinist also made furtive trips to Genoa at night, where

"he studied till dawn the works of Corelli, Vivaldi, Tartini, Locatelli and other masters of the ancient Italian School in the library of the palazzo of his protector, Marquis Di Negro".\textsuperscript{7}

While retaining the idea that the Caprices could have been sketched during the stay at Romairone, the biographer Claudio Casini is inclined to think that

\textsuperscript{4}See Chapter II: Rosenthal's "intriguing" copy of the Caprices.
\textsuperscript{5}Autobiography, \textit{AMZ}, May 1830, N°20, p. 325.
\textsuperscript{6}Mostras, Konstantin G. \textit{24 Kaprisa dla skripki solo N. Paganini}, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikal'noe Izdatel'stvo 1959, preface by I.M. Yampolski, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{7}По ночам, тайком от отца, Паганини пробирался в Геную. Эти опасные поездки в разгар военных действий, когда его могли принять за вражеского газутику, совершались им со смелостью кабардина. Здесь, в парадо его покровителя маркиза Ди Негро, в богатой музыкальной библиотеке, Паганини часто просиживал до рассвета над произведениями корелли, Вивальди, Тартини, Локателли, и других мастеров старой итальянской скрипичной школы." Mostras, Konstantin, op.cit., p.8 (I.M. Yampolski's preface). Yampolski's arresting hypothesis is examined in Chapter 3.
they must have been written over a considerable period of time. Another hypothesis is that Paganini worked on a final version of the Caprices after leaving the court of Lucca, sometime between 1812 and 1817. The prospect of a potential income from royalties may have prompted him to elaborate existing material into an organic, publishable collection. There is also Edward Neill's suggestion that the Caprices probably followed the *Three String Quartets* [M.S. 20] dated 1815, and were, therefore probably written around 1816. Be that as it may, Paganini's decision to publish the Caprices was, to a significant extent, a strategic one: he had long been planning a great tour of Europe and intended the Caprices to be his musical visiting card. Acting as his own impresario - and an able one - he wanted the publication to coincide with his début abroad.

**Metternich's violin**

Paganini saw a real possibility of putting his plan into effect during a stay in Rome, where he had been invited to play at two official functions given in honour of the Austrian Emperor (Teatro Tordinone, 20 April and 4 May 1819). The day before the first performance, obviously pleased by the fee offered, he wrote to Germi:

"Tomorrow evening this government will give a function in honour of His Majesty at the Tordinone (or Apollo's) Theatre. There will be illumination *a giorno* and a concert of Paganini. I shall give another concert in a fortnight. The fee for these concerts has already been fixed at 2500 Scudi Colonnati which I shall remit to Chevalier Carli of Milano, so that he can add them to the 22,000 Milanese liras he holds already."

Prince Kaunitz von Rittenberg, Austrian ambassador to the Holy See, was very impressed by Paganini's performance and immediately engaged him to play at

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10This might account for the difference between the date of receipt by Ricordi and the actual date of publication which seems to have been "manipulated" by Paganini.  
11"Domani sera questo Governo darà un trattenimento a S.M. nel Teatro Tordinone o d'Appolo con illuminazione a giorno e un'Accademia di Paganini: una seconda ne devo dare nella seconda settimana entrante. Il prodotto di queste Accademie è già fissato in Scudi Colonnati 2500, i quali rimetterò al Cav. Carli di Milano, perchè li aggiunga alle 22 mila lire milanesi che tiene[...]" (*PE* 38).
a private reception, this time in honour of both the Emperor and Metternich. A first-hand description of this soirée, written by August Kestner, has escaped the attention of Paganini's biographers. It suggests that, one year before the publication of the Caprices, the 37 years old violinist was still comparatively little known:

"By virtue of this experience, I am trying to illustrate the emotional state that affected me when I first heard the violinist Paganini, a stirring of emotions the like of which I have never experienced before or after in my life. It was in 1819 in Rome at a soirée given by Prince Kaunitz in honour of the Emperor Franz. The violinist, who was later the object of admiration, appeared here as a hitherto unknown newcomer. His name was only mentioned as a talent that had recently appeared. He began with a violin concerto by Rode in C (or D) minor."12

Metternich, suffering from a passing indisposition, did not attend the reception, but his daughter, Countess Esterhazy, gave such an enthusiastic description of Paganini's performance that the next morning, notwithstanding his condition, Metternich sent for Paganini. The Maestro soon arrived, but without his instrument, making it clear that he was responding to a flattering invitation, not to a summons to perform. However, feeling immediately at ease with the great diplomat and succumbing to Princess Esterhazy's charm and gracious compliments, he spontaneously seized Metternich's violin and played for his hosts. Metternich's enthusiasm knew no bounds. He invited Paganini to join an informal gathering of members of the Emperor's entourage the same evening, and was insistent that he go abroad and play in Vienna.13 Seeing now the opportunity to embark on a concert tour with the

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advantage of prestigious recommendations, Paganini promised Metternich that he would give the Viennese the privilege of his first concerts outside Italy. Several Italian commentators have disapproved of Paganini's promise, interpreting it as "a mark of subservience to the conquistadors and spoilers of his country". However, Geraldine de Courcy shrewdly remarks that Paganini, with his modest family background "was first of all a plebeian and had none of the aristocrat's fierce pride before the conqueror". Paganini may be accused of calculating self-interest, but one can safely assume that his musical preoccupations had precedence over the political. The complexity of the two men's personalities must also be taken into account: Metternich, the powerful statesman, was also an able violinist who often played at soirées with Vienna's best musicians. There is no doubt that between Metternich and Paganini there existed a genuine sharing of interest and a mutual esteem which transcended personal or political considerations.

Milan, 1820: publication of the Caprices

The publication of the first edition of the Caprices by Giovanni Ricordi in 1820 created a sensation. The success was immediate and copies spread rapidly from Milan throughout Europe. Contemporary virtuosos were stimulated to emulation, trying to find the key to these musical enigmas. Many (and not just the lesser ones) capitulated, with the excuse that Paganini had written

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15 ibid.
16 At the Congress of Vienna, Metternich conducted the orchestra in concertos and symphonies, and successfully held his part in a string quartet.
17 Ricordi, Giovanni (1785-1853), Italian music publisher. Trained as a violinist, he was for some time leader of the orchestra of the Fiando Theatre in Milan. Around 1804 he started a copisteria beneath the portico of the Palazzo della Ragione. In 1807, he spent several months in Leipzig studying the techniques of Breitkopf & Härtel, and, after returning to Milan, on 16 January 1808, he formed a publishing partnership with the engraver and music seller Felice Festa. Their first, and probably only joint publication, was a duet from Farinelli's Calliroe. The partnership was terminated on 26 June 1808, and about the same time Ricordi took a shop at 4068 Contrada di Pescaria Vecchia, from which address his plate number 1 ( Antonio Nava's *Le Quattro Stagioni*) was issued: the firm *RICORDI* was founded. The firm's earliest editions were printed from engraved plates, and this remained the normal practice until the 1870's, when chromolithographic and offset processes were introduced.
18 They soon became available in Norway where the eleven year old Ole Bull obtained a copy of them.
unplayable music. In Paris, Habeneck attempted to play them but finally laid down his bow. 19 Even Baillot was frightened: the great violinist is said to have exclaimed: "Omnes vulnerant, ultimus necat!" Others saw, beyond the technical challenge, new musical horizons to explore, and their artistic pursuits were given a fresh impulse. All things considered, the publication had fulfilled its purpose. In addition to the dithyrambic concert reports by travellers and foreign correspondents in Italy, there were now lively discussions about the 24 Caprices. Europe was ready to hear the Italian virtuoso. But illness struck, upsetting Paganini’s plans. Professor Borda 20 , one of Italy’s foremost physicians, suspected syphilis and applied a treatment which was then classical. But the mercury and the opium prescribed in dosi micidiali 21 (Paganini’s words) had a disastrous effect on him:

"Fortunate is he who can depart for the other world without depending upon doctors. I am alive by pure miracle. An American doctor has saved me. He says that Borda has tried the mercury and the five bleedings just to find out what was causing my cough. Now, I am asking if tests of this sort should be made just as an experiment as if I were simply a body sold to him... Eventually, he gave me opium in large quantities and though this relieved my cough a little, I found myself deprived of all my faculties." 22 [trl. PXB]

For a long period, Paganini had to suspend all concert activities and eight years were to pass before he could consider carrying out his old project. In the meantime, the novelty of the Caprices, far from having waned, had increasingly aroused the interest of musicians in Europe, and his concert appearances abroad were awaited with ever-increasing impatience.

20 Siro Borda (1761-1825), Professor of medicine at the University of Pavia. Used bleedings for diagnostic purposes as did all the followers of the theory of the counterstimulants whose motto proclaimed: ex juvantibus et nocentibus, ‘from what helps and what harms’ (details kindly given by Dr D. Thébaud of Lausanne).
21 “in murderous doses”
22 Fortunato a chi vien dato di partire per l’altro mondo senza dipendere dai medici. Io sono vivo per un vero miracolo. Un medico americano mi ha salvato. Borda, al suo dire, tentò la cura mercuriale, quanto li cinque emissioni di sangue, me le ha ordinate per indagare la causa della tosse. Ora dimando se per sola indagine si debba fare tali prove, come a un corpo a lui venduto...In ultimo mi dava dell’oppio in quantità; e questo assopendo alquanto la tosse, mi trovai privo di tutte le facoltà..." (PE 68)
It was in Vienna, to keep the promise made to Metternich, that Paganini, aged 46, inaugurated his grand European tour. There he gave a total of 14 concerts, assisted by an orchestra of the first order (conducted by Hildenbrand, Schuppanzigh and Fradl). Vienna's best-known violinists congregated for the opening concert: Benesch, Böhm, Jansa, Mayseder, Slavik, Saint-Lubin, Panny, Ernst, all anxious to form an estimate of what the author of the Caprices was really capable of. Also present were Franz Grillparzer, who drew inspiration for one of his most astonishing poems; Franz Schubert who, in the Adagio, "heard the singing of an angel"; the Duke of Reichstadt, accompanied by his tutor, Maurice Dietrichstein. The success was colossal: the Emperor bestowed on Paganini the honorary title of Chamber Virtuoso, the city of Vienna presented him with the medal of S. Salvator (in recompense for a charity concert he gave for the benefit of St Mark's Almshouses) as well as a silver medal especially created in his honour, with the motto "Perituris sonis non peritura gloria". This medal, engraved by Joseph Lang, is of particular interest because Paganini's "transitional" bow and Guarneri del Gesù violin are represented on one of its sides. In addition to the great concerts with orchestra, Paganini played at the reception given on the occasion of Metternich's 55th birthday. It is quite significant that the impact of his playing was not in any way lessened in that sort of context. Adverse acoustic conditions, absence of accompaniment (orchestra or piano) etc., did not seemed to affect him in any way. On the contrary, it was in intimate circles that the magnetism of his artistic personality and playing seem to have produced its most powerful effect, especially on young musicians (notably Thalberg, Chopin and Liszt).

25Dietrichstein helped Paganini in the organisation of the concerts (See Chapter 4).
26"With sounds doomed to perish, imperishable glory"
The impact of Paganini's playing

1. Vienna 1828: Paganini and Thalberg

The 16 year old Sigismond Thalberg (Liszt's future rival) not only attended Metternich's birthday party on May 15, but his name figured next to Paganini's on the musical program prepared by Marie Antoinette Leykam, the 55 year old Prince's young wife:

"She had prepared several surprises, though they were not all equally successful. First came a short concert, Paganini playing for the first time at a private party. Everyone was extremely eager to see this strange figure and hear his demonic playing at close quarters...Before he appeared, Maurice Dietrichstein led a blond young man to the pianoforte, but just as he began to play, refreshments were passed round which distracted the attention of the company. Suddenly Dietrichstein called out angrily: 'Stop playing! Nobody is listening to you!' And it took a great deal of coaxing before the young man could be persuaded to resume the interrupted sonata. This embryo virtuoso was ...Thalberg! Paganini then followed with Le Streghe..."[trl. de Courcy]

The familiar apostrophe "Stop playing! Nobody is listening to you!" is better understood if one knows that Thalberg was in fact Dietrichstein's (illegitimate) son. Sigismond Thalberg, who was born at the Paquis near Geneva on 8 January 1812, had studied composition with Sechter in Vienna and piano with Hummel. His encounter with Paganini had profound repercussions on his development as a virtuoso pianist. He was particularly impressed by the way Paganini created the illusion of several instruments. In particular, the arpeggios in the Caprice Nel cor più non mi sento exerted a real fascination on the young pianist. He committed himself to the task of adapting this procedure for the piano and perfected a technique which made him famous: he had the idea of bringing out the melody with the thumbs, in the middle register, and surrounding it with sweeping arpeggios, thus creating the illusion of three hands. He employed this technique with extraordinary effect in his Prière de Moïse:

2It is supposed that Thalberg's mother was the Baroness von Weltzar, a pianist. Dietrichstein made arrangements with a certain Joseph Thalberg from Frankfurt who temporarily assumed the paternity. But as soon as circumstances became favourable, he took his son back with him to Vienna.
This piece won universal acclaim and even Berlioz, who otherwise showed little interest in piano, admired it without reservation. Franz Liszt saw in Thalberg a dangerous rival and did not spare him attacks and criticisms. But, commenting on the Prière de Moïse - and tracing the origin of its inspiration - he said:

"Thalberg is the only man who plays the violin on the piano."3

This penetrating remark was an indirect allusion to Paganini's influence which can be traced in other works, such as the God save the King, and the Caprices op.15/19. There is also his late treatise L'Art du Chant appliqué au Piano, an attempt at applying the principles of bel canto to piano playing, with special consideration given to prosody and articulation. The concept of the "suonare parlante" is discussed. The far-reaching influence of Paganini can be felt in the present-day Neapolitan school of piano playing of which Thalberg, who settled in Posilippo in 1858, is considered the founder.4 This can be verified by establishing the following teacher-pupil "genealogical trees": Vincenzo Vitale (>Sigismondo Cesi >Beniamino Cesi >Sigismond Thalberg) was, in turn, the teacher of Michele Campanella, Bruno Canino and Riccardo Muti.5 The musical ascendency of Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli can also be traced back to Thalberg (>Anfossi >Martucci >Cesi >Thalberg).6


5Vincenzo Vitale also studied with Florestano Rossomandi (>Beniamino Cesi >SigismondThalberg).

6Data kindly confirmed by M° L. Stocchino, Rome.
Paganini went to Warsaw to give one or two concerts, and eventually stayed to give ten. He had been invited there to perform at the festivities held on the occasion of Nicholas I's coronation as King of Poland. Most of these concerts took place at the National Theatre with Karol Lipinski leading the orchestra. Paganini also played at the royal palace for the Czar, after the coronation ceremony at the cathedral (24 May 1829). The Emperor of all the Russias presented him with a diamond ring and invited him to play in St. Petersburg.

The concerts held at the National Theatre were distinguished by the presence of Frédérick Chopin in the audience. The impressions made upon the young pianist were deep and lasting; to the end of his life Chopin spoke with enthusiasm of Paganini's playing in Warsaw, which he described as "absolute perfection". As a token of admiration, he wrote a set of variations for piano solo entitled *Souvenir de Paganini*. *Souvenir de Paganini* is written over an ostinato bass in 6/8 quavers, and continues throughout in the same mood, with an elaborate and brilliant writing for the right hand. The atmosphere is that of a real *Gondoliera*.

Inspired by Paganini's famous variations on the "Carnaval de Venise", the *Souvenir de Paganini* is written over an ostinato bass in 6/8 quavers, and continues throughout in the same mood, with an elaborate and brilliant writing for the right hand. The atmosphere is that of a real *Gondoliera*.

1 "La perfection même" (Correspondence, 1830) [Letter to his parents]
2 Written in 1829, just after Paganini's concerts, it was not published till 1872 (in the supplement of the journal "WARSAW ECHO MUSYCHNE")
3 Théophile Gautier, like Chopin, was inspired by Paganini's treatment of the theme. Here is a passage of his poem *Variations sur le Carnaval de Venise*: "Paganini le fantastique / Un soir, comme avec un crochet / A ramassé le thème antique / Du bout de son divin archet." (Émaux et Camées)
Although very seldom performed, it is one of Chopin's most poetical early compositions. It finds an echo in later works like the Berceuse, the 13th Prelude and, indeed, the famous Barcarolle op.60, in which the same rhythm is employed in a most evocative way:

![Berceuse op.57](image)

![Barcarolle op.60](image)

It has often been said that the Études op.10, like the Souvenir de Paganini, were written under the immediate influence of Paganini's playing. There is no doubt today that several of these studies were already composed in 1829. But there is also evidence to suggest that Chopin knew the Caprices (which were available from the library of the Warsaw Conservatoire) well before Paganini's visit to Poland. Józef Elsner, Chopin's teacher at the Conservatoire, was - as paradoxical as it may seem - a violinist, not a pianist. Being a friend of Ferdinando Paër (Paganini composition's teacher) and a declared admirer of his School, Elsner kept well informed of Italy's latest

4The characteristic rhythm of the barcarolle which so appealed to Chopin appears in three of Paganini's Caprices (2, 7, and 15).

5Ksawery Józef Jozeph Elsner (1769-1854), in turn first violin in Brno, and then conductor at Lwów, (Lenberg) before becoming director of the Opera and subsequently of the Conservatoire, in Warsaw. Wrote twenty-three operas, masses symphonies, etc...

6Ferdinando Paër (1771-1839) was, before Rossini's advent, one of the leading representatives of the Italian operatic school, "an admirable craftsman with a pronounced lyrical gift". As a teacher of counterpoint and composition, he had a number of successful students (notably Liszt and Paganini).
musical events, and there is little doubt that he would have discussed the merits of Paganini's 24 Caprices with his students. Chopin's early acquaintance with Paganini's compositional style may well explain his extraordinary receptivity to the live performances, which were, in the words of Camille Bourniquel, "l'étincelle aux poudres". There is also the fact that Elsner, in his capacity as Director of the Warsaw Conservatorium, organised a personal meeting with Paganini for some of his most promising students (including the violin prodigy Apollinaire de Kontzki and Frédéric Chopin) and one can safely assume that instrumental and compositional matters were at the centre of the debate. Be that as it may, Chopin's 24 Études were to become the Magna Carta of Romantic piano technique just as Paganini's 24 Caprices had become the "New Testament of violinists". One can find here a truly striking parallel: the same highly individual approach to instrumental playing, the same way of "exorcising difficulty by difficulty itself" and, above all, the shared aspiration to a fusion of bravura technique and poetic expression. In his incisive and well-documented book on Chopin, Camille Bourniquel outlines Paganini's influence:

"It is always difficult to talk of the 'novelty' of a work, and to know how the public of the time 'heard' it. Beethoven's last sonatas opened a breach in traditional technique; but with Beethoven it was still 'the orchestra at the piano, rather than a new virtuosity'. The necessary rupture was, in fact, caused by a young Polish pianist who emerged fully armed from Minerva's head. Paganini's concerts in Warsaw had set the first spark to the powder. For Chopin, Paganini was not a kind of a meteoric Kreisler as conceived in the imagination of Hoffmann, but a genius completely identified with his instrument. What Paganini had been for the violin, Chopin was to become for the piano. Whoever speaks of magic, speaks the right formula; Paganini is, then, the key to this transcendent universe. His virtuosity seems to make light of difficulties and exaggerated concern for style; it is the conquest of a new dimension - space. It is claimed that the first Études were written as a result of this shock. They are, indeed, a miracle of precocity, but even more the passion of the apprentice who wants to know how far he can go."

7 Paganini carefully noted in his Libro Rosso: "M. Chopin, giovine pianista".
8 Camille Bourniquel, Chopin. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957, pp.162-163: "Il est toujours difficile de parler de la "nouveauté" d'une œuvre, et de savoir comment celle-ci a été "entendue" par les contemporains. Les dernières sonates de Beethoven ouvrent une brèche dans la technique traditionnelle; mais Beethoven c'est encore "l'orchestre au piano, plutôt qu'une virtuosité nouvelle" (L. Aguetant). Ce nécessaire éclatement sera donc l'œuvre du jeune pianiste polonais sorti tout armé de la tête de Minerve. Les concerts de Paganini à Varsovie ont été l'étincelle aux
Much would be gained from a comparative analysis of the Caprices and the Études. However, it must be made clear that Chopin did not take the Caprices as models in the narrow sense of the term. The idea of imitation was alien to Chopin's independent mind and T.S. Eliot's suggestion that influence "introduces one to oneself" seems to perfectly illustrate the case. It would be difficult, for example, to isolate individual aspects of Chopin's playing that could be directly attributed to Paganini's influence. In this, Chopin differed from Thalberg, Schumann and Liszt, who attempted to reproduce (at times almost literally) the effects that Paganini was achieving on his violin. The impact of the Caprices, in Chopin's case, was of a wider inspirational order. They were a liberating influence, not a constraining model. Chopin considered the standard books of exercises by Czerny and Cramer to be outdated: what he had in mind was a sort of fusion of bravura technique and poetic expression which would not sacrifice formal clarity. Paganini offered him evidence of the feasibility of such a project and gave him confidence in his own powers. He learned from the Caprices that freedom of expression was perfectly compatible with formal perfection and unity. Virtuosity was the very tool he needed to accommodate all his musical ideas within a short "discourse space". He soon found how to integrate his own striking pianistic innovations within the concise, well-defined structure of an Étude. While retaining a high degree of formal finish, Chopin's music possesses all the freedom of Romantic music.

9Eliot, T.S. To criticize the critic. London: Faber & Faber and Valerie Eliot, 1965, p. 22. ("...that intense excitement and sense of enlargement and liberation which comes from a discovery which is also a discovery of oneself: but that is an experience which can only happen once.")

10Like the Caprices, many of the Chopin Études are based on the song form (A-B-A) with the middle section containing a development of the principal section. As in the Caprices (and as in his own later Preludes), a single idea is carried through to the end, and all its potentialities are explored.
The "Italianism" of Chopin

"This great Slav, Italian by education...", Maurice Ravel wrote of Chopin. This definition raises the question of the sources of Chopin's cultural and musical affinities. What can explain the extraordinary receptivity of the Polish pianist to Paganini's compositions? What was the role of Italian music in Chopin's early musical training? It is a fact that the influence of Italy had always been noticeable in the domain of the arts in Poland and that, in the 1820's, Italian opera was very much in vogue in Warsaw. His natural inclination for Italian music was strongly encouraged by his teacher Józef Elsner, a fervent admirer of Paër and his operatic School.

Elsner had been awaiting with impatience the arrival of Paganini (Paër's illustrious pupil) and did everything to make him feel at home. A warm friendship ensued and Paganini showed his gratitude by writing the Suonata Varsavia for violin and orchestra, a set of variations on a mazurka theme by Elsner himself:

The Introduction comprises two original melodic episodes, the second of which has been defined as "of compelling, priceless, almost Chopinian lyricism".

11 The Jagellon and Saxon kings called in many artists and architects from Italy.
12 From the opera Król Lokietek czyli Wisiłczanki [King Lokietek, or the women of Wisićka] (1818).
As already mentioned, Elsner arranged for Chopin and a few other students to meet with Paganini at the Conservatoire. Two years later, when Chopin went to Paris, he immediately made contact with Paër and Rossini who welcomed him on the grounds of Elsner’s recommendation and Paganini’s appreciation, and he soon became an habitué of the Théâtre des Italiens. Later in life, on his return from Majorca, Chopin stayed briefly in Genoa (1839). Reminiscences of the Paganini concerts came back and his interest in Italian traditional music was renewed. Two forms particularly attracted him - the South Italian tarantella and the Venetian barcarola. Two important works resulted, the Tarantella in Ab, Op.43 and the Barcarolle in F#,op.60, in which the suggestive rhythm of the early Souvenir de Paganini reappears with a touch of nostalgia:

He also spent some weeks in Marseilles. Paganini, very ill, was at about the same time travelling from Marseilles to Genoa (September 1839). It is possible that the two great artists had then an opportunity to meet for the last time.
3. Frankfurt 1830, Paganini and Schumann

On Easter Sunday 1830, Schumann, at that time a law-student at Heidelberg University, went to Frankfurt to hear Paganini. He had long looked forward to attending a concert of the artist who was so highly regarded by his piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck.\(^1\) The year before (October 1829), Wieck, accompanied by his 10 year old daughter Clara, had visited Paganini in Leipzig:

"I had to play my Polonaise in E flat on an old piano with black keys that some student had left behind [Clara Wieck wrote]. Paganini was immensely pleased, father telling him meanwhile that I have a bent for music because I have feeling, sensitivity. He at once gave us permission to attend all his rehearsals, which we did."\(^2\) [trl. de Courcy]

Paganini became fond of young Clara and wrote in her autograph book a chromatic scale for piano harmonised in contrary motion, which she kept and valued till the end of her life:\(^3\)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Al merito singolare di madamigella Clara Wieck} \\
&\text{N. Paganini}
\end{align*}
\]

Friedrich Wieck’s impression was that “no singer had ever moved him so deeply as an Adagio played by Paganini”. Schumann therefore arrived in Frankfurt with understandably high expectations. However he was

\(^1\) Friedrich Wieck (1785-1873), noted professor of the piano. His daughter Clara (future wife of Schumann) became one of the greatest pianist of her time.


\(^3\) She said later that it was for her “a souvenir of the greatest artist who had ever been in Leipzig”. Clara Schumann’s album containing Paganini’s scale is now in the possession of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek Dresden. See infra, Chapter IV, (3. Chromaticism and 4. Chordal playing).
overwhelmed by surprise and emotion. After the concert, he noted in his diary:

"Easter Sunday! In the evening Paganini; was it not ecstatic? Under his hands the driest exercises flame up like Pythian pronouncements!"

Schumann diplomatically announced to his mother that he had decided to abandon his law studies. As a direct outcome of the Frankfurt concert, he set to the task of adapting some of the Paganini Caprices for the piano. He saw in them so many gems ("so viel Demanthaltiges") that he decided to transcribe several of them "in order to preserve them, to set them and make them shine". 4 In a first set (6 Studien nach Capricen von Paganini op.3), he closely adhered to Paganini's text, concentrating on the task of fitting these violin solos into the idiom of the keyboard. The preface to that opus, practically a piano method in itself, contains a theory of fingering as well as a definition of the Caprice which sheds light on the importance accorded to this genre by Romantic composers:

"To no other type of musical compositions are poetic liberties as beautifully suited as to the Caprice. But if, beyond the lightness and the humour which should characterise it, profundity and depth of study also appear, then this is really true mastery."5

The second set (6 Concert-Etüden nach Capricen von Paganini op.10), while still an attempt to translate Paganini's music from one instrumental medium to another, goes a step further:

"...In an earlier publication of a book of studies after Paganini, I copied -perhaps only to its detriment - the original almost note for note, and merely filled in the harmony. But in the present case, I broke loose from the pedantry of the literal translation and wanted to give the

impression of an original composition for the piano which, without sacrificing the underlying poetic idea, would allow one to forget its violinistic origin. It must be understood that to achieve this I was obliged sometimes to alter, entirely eliminate, or add - particularly in regard to harmony and form; but this was always done with the consideration demanded by so powerful and honored a spirit.⁶

To exemplify this process of assimilation and re-creation, the opening bars of op.10 No. 2 (after Paganini's 6th Caprice) and of op.10 No. 4 (after Paganini's 4th Caprice) will suffice:

Paganini's Caprices remained Schumann's companions throughout his life. Their performance and transcription by other artists always aroused his interest, and, shortly before his death, he provided the original violin part with a piano accompaniment for the practical use of concert violinists.⁷

One can observe that certain developments in Romantic piano technique have their origin in Paganini’s op.1. For example, Schumann, followed by Mendelssohn, Liszt and others, made frequent use of the reciprocating arpeggios found in Caprice 1:

A striking reference to Paganini is found in Carnaval op.9. Here the violinist appears as one of the "characters" of the piece, together with Florestan and Eusebius, Chiarina (for Clara Wieck), Estrella (for Ernestine) and Chopin:

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7This piano accompaniment was published by Peters (Leipzig, 1941) with the addition of an excellent Urtext edition of the original violin part by Georg Schünemann.
8Completed in 1835, and dedicated to Karol Lipinski.
9Fictitious members of the Davidsbund, a friendly and musical association invented by Schumann. The Davidsbündler set out to combat the musical "Philistines", hence the title of the finale of the Carnaval.
The intensity of this lightning musical portrait calls to mind the sharp contours of etchings by Goya (Los Caprichos). Here, Schumann has captured a characteristic feature of Paganini's style. The density of the texture in presto semiquavers is enhanced and dynamised by the persistent syncopation. This can perhaps be seen in relation to the modern linguistic concept of intense latching.\textsuperscript{10} The last bars are charged with symbolic overtones. The ominous reiteration of the F minor chord, followed by the luminous emergence of $V^7$ of VII in harmonics is of magical effect:

This rare use of harmonics in piano literature requires a pedal technique 	extit{sui generis}. Of great interest is the instruction \textit{messa di voce (< >) for the final chord. This is part of a whole series of effects that Schumann experimented with after hearing Paganini.}

\textsuperscript{10}The maximisation of the exploitation of discourse space.

Paganini could hardly have chosen a better time for his first appearance in Paris. He had long postponed this trip, not only on account of the atmosphere highly charged with revolution in France, but also because he was apprehensive of the Parisian public. He well knew from Spohr and other colleagues that "it was always a hazardous undertaking for a foreign artist to make a public appearance in Paris since the Parisians were possessed with the notion that they had the finest violinists in the world." However, when he arrived in the capital in February 1831, the circumstances proved propitious both artistically and politically. Just one year before, Victor Hugo and the young Romantics had won the *bataille d'Hernani* (25 February 1830), and since the July Revolution and the installation of Louis Philippe, there was a feeling of liberty and of excitement in the air. The *roi-citoyen* was busy organising his regime along egalitarian lines and the young Romantics were ready "to glorify anyone who, in attitude, audacity, or achievements, personified their ideals". Another favourable circumstance derived from the recent privatisation of the Opera. Previously operated under direct control of the King, the Paris Opera had just been let out as a commercial concession to the entrepreneur Louis Véron. Facing unexpected difficulties of concert bookings, Véron saw in Paganini's arrival the ideal solution to his problems and immediately engaged the Maestro for ten concerts (9, 13, 20, 23, 27 March and 1, 3, 8, 15, 24 April).

A Romantic constellation

On 9 March 1831, the orchestra, conducted by Habeneck, opened the program with Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*. For this "Soirée des Gourmets" (as advertised in the Paris journals), an extraordinary parterre of celebrities had

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3 Until he accepted Louis Philippe's invitation to run the Opera for a period of six years "à ses risques et périls", Véron had been chief editor of the progressive literary journal *La Revue de Paris*, opening its columns to the young Romantics.
4 Dates kindly confirmed by archives of the Opéra de Paris.
5 On Paganini's special request, a work by Beethoven had to be played at each concert.
assembled in the auditorium of the Paris Opera, awaiting Paganini's entrance. Among those known to have been present one can mention: Eugène Delacroix, Victor Hugo, Charles Nodier, Théophile Gautier, Jules Janin, Alphonse Karr, Alfred de Musset, Alfred de Vigny, George Sand ("habillée en homme"), Émile de Girardin, Ludwig Boerne, Charles de Bériot, Maria Malibran, Rossini, Dionysio Aguado, Castil-Blaze, Sainte-Beuve, Troupenas, Honoré de Balzac, Pierre Baillot, Gaetano Donizetti, Auber, Cherubini, Pacini, Halévy, and Liszt.6

Franz Liszt, aged 20, was at a crucial point of his life. After a love affair with his pupil Caroline de Saint-Cricq, he had suffered a nervous breakdown and was seriously considering giving up his musical career to enter a religious order, spending hours in discussion with the religious philosopher, the Abbé de Lamennais. Paganini’s performance seemed to cure him of his depression. Not only did he recommence practising intensively but, like Schumann one year before, he set about transcribing several of Paganini’s Caprices. Alan Walker writes that "during the years 1831-38, he literally lived with these pieces".7 Consideration must also be given to the fact that Liszt knew Paganini’s music through the published edition of the Caprices well before 1831 and therefore had been well prepared to receive Paganini’s performance. Carl Czerny,8 his former piano teacher in Vienna, had spoken enthusiastically about Paganini’s playing, and Ferdinando Paër, his composition teacher in Paris from 1823 had drawn his attention to the Caprices, the first French edition of which had been published by Richault around 1824.9 Musically, Paër certainly constitutes a vital link between Paganini and Liszt. Both - some twenty-seven years apart - had studied

6The reception accorded to Paganini’s performance by the public, and the rapturous enthusiasm of the critics are described in: Neill, Edward, Paganini, il Cavaliere Filarmonico, Genoa: De Ferrari, 1990, pp. 215-218.
8Czerny, Carl (1791-1857) (>Beethoven). Austrian pianist and pedagogue. A series of brilliant students passed through his hands, including Franz Liszt. In 1828, after hearing Paganini in Vienna Czerny wrote his Grandes Variations brillantes on a theme by Paganini which he dedicated to the great violinist [BN Vm12 G 940].
9Paganini, Niccolò. 24 Caprices ou Études pour le Violon dédiés aux Artistes, ed. by Henry Auteur, Paris: Richault, c.1824.
composition with him and therefore shared the same traditional, solid training in theory and counterpoint. This may in part explain Liszt’s remarkable receptivity to Paganini’s ideas. Liszt seems to have assimilated Paganini’s influence more rapidly and more easily than any other, including Berlioz’s, Chopin’s and Wagner’s. However, it took him several years of work to achieve what he considered to be publishable results. Initiated in 1831, the transcription of the Caprices occupied Liszt until 1851, date of the publication of the final version entitled Grandes Études de Paganini transcrites pour le piano et dédiées à Clara Schumann. The three successive versions of Caprice 1 offer a good example of this self-imposed task of musical translation. The evolution of Liszt’s views about the same piece is of great interest. Here is Paganini original text:

Andante

Andante quasi allegretto

10Alfred Cortot, in his edition of the Paganini Études (Paris: Salabert, 1949), provides the following details: “...Liszt spécifie formellement que seule la version de ces études parue en 1851 sous le titre de Grandes Études de Paganini transcrites pour le piano doit être considérée comme valable et munie de son approbation; cette restriction mettant implicitement en cause la collection des Études d’exécution transcendante d’après Paganini - dites également Grandes Études de bravoure - esquissées dès 1832 et gravées en 1840 - et, à fortiori, l’étonnante Grande Fantaisie di Bravura sur la clochette de Paganini, rédigée en 1831 sous le coup de la foudroyante impression déterminée par les concerts parisiens du violoniste-magicien et dont les exemplaires devenus rarissimes, portent la date de 1834.”
The second version, generally considered unplayable, illustrates Liszt’s juvenile ambition to "push back the frontiers of the unbelievable", "reculer les limites de l’incroyable", as, according to a Parisian critic, Paganini had done:

In the re-exposition in E minor, Liszt plays his trump card: the left hand introduces in counterpoint a quotation of Paganini’s 24th Caprice:

In the third (and final) version Liszt, returning to Paganini’s original text, not only reproduced it practically note for note, but also adopted the violin notation on one stave:
Liszt attended several of Paganini's concerts between 1831-33, and, interestingly enough, with ever increasing enthusiasm. He also met Paganini in private circles on at least two occasions and had the opportunity to observe his playing at close quarters. The commonly held belief that he had heard Paganini only on one occasion seems to be invalid. The often quoted letter Liszt wrote to Pierre Wolff of Geneva is dated 2 May 1832 and refers to the charity concert that Paganini gave at the Opera for the benefit of the victims of cholera on 22 April 1832, thus almost one year after he heard him for the first time:

"For the whole fortnight my mind and fingers have been working like two damned souls; Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them with fury; what is more, I practise four to five hours of exercises (thirds, sixths, octaves, tremolo, repeated notes, cadences, etc...) Ah! so long as I don't go mad, you will find an artist in me! Yes, an artist such as you ask for, such as we need today. "And I too am a painter!" exclaimed Michelangelo the first time he saw a masterpiece. Though insignificant and poor, your friend has not ceased to repeat the words of the great man ever since Paganini's last concert."

When he wrote this letter, Liszt was working on the first version of his

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11 At a soirée given by the music publisher Troupenas and also in the salons of the Baron de Rothschild (see: Neill, Edward, op. cit., p. 216; and Revue Musicale de Suisse Romande, N°2, June 1993, p.81).

12 It has been have erroneously suggested that this letter referred to the concert of 9 March 1831.

13 "Voici quinze jours que mon esprit et mes doigts travaillent comme deux damnés; Homère, la Bible, Platon, Locke, Byron, Hugo. Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber sont tous à l'entour de moi. Je les étudie, les médite, les dévore avec fureur; de plus, je travaille quatre à cinq heures d'exercices (tierces, sixtes, octaves, trémolos, notes répétées, cadences, etc.) Ah! Pourvu que je ne devienne pas fou, tu retrouveras un artiste en moi. Oui, un artiste tel que tu les demandes, tel qu'il en faut aujourd'hui. «Et moi aussi je suis peintre», s'écria Michel-Ange la première fois qu'il vit un chef-d'œuvre... Quoique petit et pauvre, ton ami ne cesse de répéter les paroles du grand homme depuis la dernière représentation de Paganini. " La Mara (editor), Franz Liszts Briefe, Leipzig, 1893-1905, vol. I, p.7, Letter to Pierre Wolff of 2 May, 1832.
Paganini Studies which he entitled Études d'Exécution Transcendante d'après Paganini. "Transcendental virtuosity" was the expression he forged to define the new world of musical invention and freedom which Paganini's violin had revealed to him. Trans-scendere, i.e. go beyond, surmount or pass through. As Jeffrey Pulver writes:

"Liszt was under no illusions as to the provenance of Paganini's facile perfection ....And that he realized how literally the soul had to pass through the fires of purgatory before it conquered the difficulties that beset its passage, is shown in the words he wrote to a friend: 'What a man! what a violin, what an artist! Heavens! What suffering and misery, what tortures in those four strings!'"

After the Études d'Exécution Transcendante of Liszt, a steady stream of compositions, directly or indirectly influenced by Paganini, was produced. This movement, initiated by Thalberg, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt, can be traced through Felix Mendelssohn, Clara Wieck, Hector Berlioz, Henri Vieuxtemps, Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, Johannes Brahms, Claude Debussy, Ferruccio Busoni, Maurice Ravel, Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, Karol Szymanowski, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Arnold Schoenberg, to contemporary composers such as Witold Lutoslawski, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Manuel Rosenthal, Václav Kucera, George Rochberg, Luigi Dallapiccola, Salvatore Sciarrino, and Alfred Schnittke. All have drawn inspiration from the Caprices, bearing witness to the "gem-like qualities" recognised by Schumann. Each of them, in his or her own way, has contributed to perpetuate Paganini's artistic legacy.

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14Pulver, Jeffrey, Paganini, the Romantic Virtuoso, New-York: Da Capo Press, 1970, p. 216. Pulver's quotation is also taken from the letter to Pierre Wolff of 2 May 1832 ("Quel homme, quel violon, quel artiste! Dieu, que de souffrances, de misère, de tortures dans ces quatre cordes!"). See Chapter 4, p.118.
1733: Locatelli, *L'Arte del Violino*

1820: Paganini, *24 Capricci* per Violino *dedicati alli Artisti*

1829: Chopin, *Souvenir de Paganini*
1831: Hummel, *Souvenirs de Paganini*
1833: Schumann, *Studien für das Pianoforte nach Capricen von Paganini*, op.3
1833: Chopin, *12 Études*, op.10
1835: Schumann, *6 Concert-Études composées nach Capricen von Paganini*, op.10
1838: Liszt, first version of the *Grandes Études de Paganini*
1838: Mendelssohn, sketch of the *Violin Concerto*, op.64
1840: Berlioz, *Roméo et Juliette* (dedicated to Paganini)
1841: Liszt, *Études d’Exécution Transcendante d’après Paganini*
1846: Vieuxtemps, *Hommage à Paganini*, op.9
1851: Schumann, Piano accompaniment to the Caprices
1851: Liszt, *Grandes Études de Paganini* transcriées pour le piano
1854: Ernst, *Romeo et Juliette* (dedicated to Paganini)
1855: Liszt, *6 Polyphonic Studies*
1909: Busoni, *Introduzione e Capriccio* [in the fascicle An die Jugend] (cap.11&15)
1910: Liapounov, *12 Études d’Exécution Transcendante pour le piano*, op.11
1918: Szymanowski, *Three Paganini Caprices* (violin and piano)
1924: Ravel, *Tzigane*
1925: Ysaye, *Paganini Variations*
1927: Milhaud, *Trois Caprices de Paganini* traités en duos concertants
1935: Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Capriccio diabolico* (Omaggio a Paganini)
1940: Rachmaninoff, *Rhapsodie sur un thème de Paganini*, op.43 (piano and orchestra)
1941: Lutoslawski, *Wariacje na temat Paganiniego* (two pianos)
1942: Dallapiccola, *Sonatina canonica su Capricci di Paganini* (piano)
1942: Casella, *Paganiniana* (for orchestra)
1947: Blacher, *Variations pour Orchestre* [on the theme of the 24th Caprice]
1954: Milstein, *Paganiniana* (violin)
1970: Rochberg, *Caprice Variations* (violin)
1974: Berio, *Sequenza VIII* (violin)
1976: Sciarrino, *6 Capricci per violino* (violin)
1978: Gasser, *Paganini-Variationen* (piano)
1980: Pietro Grossi, a computer version of the 24 Caprices
1982: Václav Kucera, *Capriccio pro housle a kytaru* (hommage à Paganini)
CHAPTER II

"ALLI ARTISTI"

INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF AN HISTORIC DEDICATION

The title page of the autograph manuscript of the Caprices handed in to the Milanese publisher Giovanni Ricordi around 1817 bears the following inscriptions:

No. 24 Capricci per Violino
di
Niccolò Paganini

Dedicati alli Artisti

The dedication "to the Artists" which also appears on the front cover of the first Ricordi edition was in itself an innovation. While certain works may in the past have been dedicated to a fellow-composer or a friend, the usual practice was to dedicate compositions to noblemen or noble ladies, to aristocratic patrons, to Dukes, Princes, Kings, or Emperors. Earlier in his career, Paganini too had complied with this usage - although perhaps less effusively than his predecessors - and had dedicated a few pieces to Elise Baciocchi and to her imperial brother (e.g. the Napoleon Sonata for the G string).2

1 This dedication is regrettably missing in many modern editions of the Caprices. However, the front cover of Dounis's edition (London, the Strad, 1949) bears the inscription, in English: "Twenty-four Caprices for Violin solo dedicated to the Artists", whereas E. Neill, in the introduction of his Urtext edition (Milan, Ricordi, 1988) not only mentions and comments on the dedication, but also inserts a photostat of the title page of Paganini's manuscript.

2 [M.S. 5] Written for Napoleon's birthday (25 August 1807)
"Alli Artisti" marks the emergence of the artist as an independent, significant member of society. Such a dedication would probably have been inconceivable before 1800 in Italy and at the time of the publication of the Caprices it still appeared provocative:

Paganini's perception of the role of the artist was lucid, that is both idealistic and pragmatic. With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that he contributed, perhaps more than any other performing composer of his time, to the elevation of the status of the "artista". Aristocratic patronage was progressively disappearing and the artists alluded to in the dedication belonged to a new class of musicians: free-lance soloists who derived their livelihoods from playing their own music before paying audiences in concert halls of ever-increasing dimensions. Beethoven had entertained very high and romantic views about the mission of the musician as a free artist - a kind of Promethean figure in society. However, for the majority, the reality was not so exalting. In fact, the concept of the independent musician, of the free artist, had been born out of necessity, since a secure, financially tenable position under the old patronage system had become a rarely available option. Now that livelihood depended more and more upon public success, artistic freedom was endangered by the constraints of public demand. While the demands of the new public were different from those made before on the church or court-musician, they did not prove less restrictive than the patronage of any prince. The "liberated composer" was confronted with a new dilemma: for whom was he going to write his music? For himself and an enlightened circle of connoisseurs? For posterity? Or for the public whose approval meant - if not artistic - at least financial independence? Paganini's

3Something similar happened in literature with Diderot's famous novel and its -at that time - rather provocative title: Jacques le Fataliste (et son maître), published in France in 1796.
unrestricted answer reveals commitment to his art coupled with a fine psychological understanding of his listeners' need. For the public at large, which was "clamouring for something new and surprising", he wrote works in *mezzo carattere* style (variations with orchestra, "pots-pourris", variations on a single string, etc.), providing to a supreme degree technical innovation, dazzling feats of virtuosity and brilliance. Another body of work, the most important quantitatively and by far the least known, was in the form of quartets, trios duets, chamber music with guitar, i.e. music for friends, students and amateurs, to be played *en famille*. It is a very engaging side of Paganini's personality that he would frequently join in private circles with non-professional musicians for the sheer enjoyment of playing. And not simply his own music, for he had a marked predilection for the works of Mozart and Beethoven. However, as Henry Raynor perceptively remarks,

"...he had to keep his devotion to Beethoven's concerto and chamber music out of sight, for such music would not have given him any occasion for the pyrotechnics his audience expected."6

To his colleagues, the professional musicians or *Artisti*, he dedicated the 24 Caprices, confronting them with a doubly challenging proposition: high instrumental virtuosity had become a necessity to achieve public success, but, it could and should also be a tool for greater artistic achievements. The expression "*Alti Artisti*" was employed not only in contrast to "*Alle Amatrici*" (to the Amateurs).7 While the term "*Artisti*" implied the conventional distinction between amateurs and professionals, it did not mean that the dedication addressed all the professional musicians. The "*Artists*" of the Caprices were those among composers and performers who were willing to go further into the *arcanum of art*. Alfred Cortot once very pointedly illustrated the issue saying that the Paganini Caprices, like the Chopin *Études* or Liszt's *Transcendental Studies* "are inaccessible to the musician without virtuosity as they are to the virtuoso without musicianship."8

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5*Musica di mezzo carattere*: music the style of which is part-serious part-comic. The term finds its origin in operatic parlance but is also applied to instrumental music, especially for works influenced by the operatic style.
7The quartets with guitar op.4 and op. 5 which were published the same year as the Caprices bear the dedication "*Alle Amatrici*".
8Boss, Roger (Cortot), *Conversations with P.B.* St-Blaise, June 1994.
The Courtier

It may be remembered here that Paganini had experienced the life of a court musician. For almost seven years he had been at the service of Princess Elise Baciocchi, (sister of Napoleon I), Duchess of Piombino and Lucca. In 1805, Paganini had been appointed to her court at Lucca, first as a member of the orchestra (2nd desk), later as a quartet leader and teacher of Prince Felix Baciocchi. The relationship between the young violinist and his patrons (Princess Elise and her husband) seems to have been much less formal than was usual at other European courts of comparative size and importance. Unlike Liszt, he never became embittered by the social prejudices of the day, and in his youth he readily accepted being

"un musicien aux gages des grands seigneurs, patronisé et salarié par eux à l'égal
d'un jongleur"\textsuperscript{10}

His personality certainly protected Paganini from "the insolence of the great".\textsuperscript{11} However, many years later, he admitted that he had to suffer "many a vexation" while he was in Elise's service\textsuperscript{12}. This was probably in relation to the curtailment of certain of his liberties at court. There were numerous occasions when he had to "ask permission". For example, to give a private ball at the house of his friends, the Bucchianeris, he had to apply six weeks in advance.\textsuperscript{13} Moreover, his duties at court did not always fulfil his artistic aspirations. Music to order, ("Gebrauchsmusik" or utility music as it is called), was performed once, and then put away and forgotten. The quality and style of such music depended often as much on the patron as on the composer. Two documents are worthy of mention here, for they constitute

\textsuperscript{9}Felix [Pasquale] Baciocchi came from an old Genoese family. Napoleon made him change his Christian name, apparently because "Pasquale", in the language of Italian comic opera, had a negative connotation.

\textsuperscript{10}Liszt's phrase (quoted by G. de Courcy, op. cit., vol. I, p.19).

\textsuperscript{11}Paganini liked to say:"I grandi non temo, gli umili non sdego.", and often wrote this motto as a accompanying note to musical autographs and portraits.

\textsuperscript{12}Harrys, George, Paganini in seinen redseligen Stunden in gesellschaftlichen Zirkeln und seinen Konzerten, Brunswick, F. Vieweg, 1830.

not only a valuable - and colourful - account of the life at court, but also offer a better understanding of the kind and extent of Paganini's professional duties at that time. The first of them is in Paganini's own words:

"I had to conduct every time the royal family went to the opera, play three times a week at court, and every fortnight give a big concert at the formal soirees, but Princess Elise did not always attend or else did not remain all through the concert, because my music placed too great a strain on her nerves. However, another charming lady who was attracted to me - or at least so it seemed - never missed them, while I had admired her for a long time. Our interest in each other gradually increased, but had to be concealed, which only intensified it. One day I promised her a surprise at the next concert - a little musical prank having reference to our relations. At the same time I announced to the court an amusing novelty entitled "Scena Amorosa". Everyone was very curious till I finally appeared with my violin, from which I had removed the two inner strings, leaving only the E and the G strings. The first string represented the girl, the second the man, and I then began a sort of dialogue depicting little quarrels and reconciliations between my two lovers. The strings first scolded, then sighed, moaned, expressed delight, and finally ecstasy. It concluded with a reconciliation and the lovers performed a pas de deux, closing with a brilliant coda... The "Scena Amorosa" received great applause. The lady for whom it was intended rewarded me with the most friendly glances; as for the Princess, she was extremely gracious, overwhelming me with compliments and at last saying: "Since you have already performed something so beautiful on two strings, couldn't you let us hear something on one string?" I at once consented, the idea appealing to my fancy, and since the Emperor's birthday occurred a few weeks later [25 August 1807], I wrote the Napoleon Sonata for the G string, which I then played before the assembled court with such applause that a Cimarosa cantata that immediately followed was thrown completely into the shade and made no impression whatsoever."
In 1809, the young Jacques Boucher de Perthes was on duty in the French customs office in Leghorn, from where he wrote to his father:

"Prince Baciocchi is an enthusiastic amateur of the violin. We play quartets together. A Genoese by the name of Paganini plays first violin in the quartets and also plays the guitar..."  

At the end of the same year, Paganini is again alluded to in Boucher de Perthes's correspondence:

Letter to the Chamberlain [Florence], December 25, 1809. "Yes, I declare before heaven and hell that I owe my obesity to the royal dinners that we had with the Prince and to the bad quartets that followed, for one does not preclude the other, and one can be the pearl of men and even the pearl of princes - as the maestro di cappella Paganini says - and have the pearl of chefs without being the pearl of violinists... Paganini is also a royal highness in his way and, if he would only cut up fewer capers and renounce the role of grand clown of the violinists, he would be the grand duke, even the emperor, and could exclaim like another virtuoso: 'I'd rather be the emperor of the violin than the violin of the emperor!' Do you know why this chap pleased me so much right from the start? Was it because of his violin, his guitar, his esprit, his originality? Not at all! It is because he is so thin! His being so dreadfully skinny consoled me and when I carefully took him all in, I seemed to be almost corpulent. Further, when he plays and draws that enormous volume of tone from his instrument, I have to ask myself whether it's him or his instrument I'm hearing; I'm inclined to think it's him. Certainly he's the drier of the two and when he comes anywhere near the fire I'm always afraid that he'll catch on fire, for please take note, his very members crackle! Therefore, always have a pail of water handy. My compliments to you, to him, and to all the quartet."
Paganini certainly felt more and more constrained in his artistic pursuits as well as in his personal life: in 1812, he decided to free himself from his duties at court and to become an independent artist. Much has been written about the incident which led to his rupture with Elise18. Was the Grand Duchess "growing too old to attract him on sentimental grounds", as certain biographers insinuate?19 Was her court becoming too unstable to afford him a safe asylum?20 His longing for freedom and artistic fulfilment is probably the answer: "Libertas optima rerum" as he frequently quoted... Now, as a freelance musician he felt that he had full liberty to write and to perform music according to his own artistic criteria (e.g. the twenty-four Caprices). At the court of Lucca, considerations other than purely artistic ones might have influenced the elaboration of some of his compositions. In the Caprices, there would be no place for complacency or compromise: "Alli Artisti" reveals his ambition to present his fellow musicians (the Artists) with a work of genuine musical significance and artistic integrity. As Robert Schumann remarked:

"With this charmingly brief dedication, Paganini probably wanted to say: "I am accessible only to artists."

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18For the details of his "insubordination", see Fétis, p.37-38
20In 1812, things were not going too well for Elise's brother. Napoleon's seizure of Oldenburg caused Alexander to put his army on alert; in June, the French army crossed the Niemen; in September Borodino was fought; then came the flames of Moscow and the retreat that began too late: "Mon mauvais génie m'apparut et m'annonça ma fin, que j'ai trouvée à l'île d'Elbe"...
There have been through the ages a number of musical manifestos in the form of written declarations by composers who felt the need to justify their music or their views on musical philosophy. One could mention for example L'Essai sur l'Origine des Langues of Rousseau (1760), in which the author defends the idea that song existed before the language of words; Gluck's Preface to Alceste (1767), a eulogy of simplicity in music; Hanslick's Vom Musikalisch-Schönen (1854); Pratella's Manifesto dei Musicisti Futuristi (1910); Marinetti's À bas le tango et Parsifal (1914), a pamphlet directed against Wagner and his opera Parsifal (defined as "une fabrique coopérative de tristesse et de désespoir")¹; the Manifeste de la Jeune France (1936), in which Messiaen, Daniel-Lesur, Jolivet and Baudrier declare that they will follow in Berlioz's steps; Schönberg's Satires (1925); Charles Ives's prolix Essay before a Sonata (1947); Boulez's provocative Schönberg is dead (1952); Texier's Manifeste de musique architecturale (1977). However, of much more lasting significance and impact than these texts are the works that the French musicologist Danièle Pistone has called Œuvres-manifestes such as the Eroica Symphony, the Rite of Spring, Pelléas, and indeed the 24 Caprices. These are works of grand and novel inspiration, which need no preface or appendix, no further declaration or justification than their sheer musical content and power of evocation. The Œuvres-manifestes, an ideal manifestation of art, have capacity not only to express ideas, emotions, to captivate the senses, but also to address the imagination, astonish, take the listener by surprise. "L'art a une fonction de rupture" says film-maker Emma Politti.² This is la valeur contestataire de l'art alluded to by Danièle Pistone in her hopeful - if aporetic - conclusion of her brilliant Dossier Manifestes et Musique en France:

"If the questioning, indeed challenging value of art, this futuristic instrument, and if the spontaneous force of affirmation of music had sheltered it forever from aestheticising theoretical supports?"³ [In.PXB]

¹ "a co-operative factory of sadness and despair"
² Politti, Emma. Interview on Espace 2, Geneva: Radio Suisse Romande, June 1994. ["L'art a une fonction de rupture - intellectuelle, géographique, politique..."]
An early Romantic Manifesto

But no genuinely creative artist would wish to have the last word: the dedication *alli Artisti* was an invitation to share compositional and violinistic discoveries and to further explore a new musical dimension. Their enthusiastic reception by leading figures of musical Romanticism shows that the Caprices pioneered novel artistic and compositional approaches. Their strong creative impact on composers is a major point of interest for the present study. The Caprices may have had a paralysing effect on some violinists who considered them "unplayable", but certainly not on creative artists. On the contrary, they gave tremendous stimulus to many Romantic composers whose interest was aroused by the technical challenge and the prospective application of virtuosity as a compositional tool not *per se* but rather as a means to achieve greater freedom of invention and artistic expression. It is precisely because of the unique inspirational quality and liberating implications of the 24 Caprices that Russian musicologist Israil M. Yampolski sees in Paganini one of the initiators of the Romantic movement in music:

"Created at the dawn of the 19th century, the Caprices marked the beginning of a new trend in instrumental music and performance. Later, Victor Hugo, in a similar way, set the aesthetical principles of Romanticism in literature by his famous foreword to the Cromwell drama."\(^4\) [trl. I. Kortchnoi]

Other authors have linked the names of Victor Hugo and Paganini: one could mention for example Georges de Saint-Foix who compares the effect of ___

\(^4\) Этим произведением, созданным на заре нового XIX века, Паганини положил начало романтическому направлению в инструментальной музыке и исполнительстве, подобно тому, как позднее Гюго своим знаменитым предисловием к драме "Кромвель", утвердил эстетические принципы литературного романтизма." Мострас, Константин Г. 24 Kaprira dla skripki solo N. Paganini. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikal'noe Izdatel'stvo 1959, p.3 (I.M. Yampolski's preface). I am indebted to Mr Igor Kortchnoi of Geneva for his translation of the preface and to Dr Michail Negnevitsky of Hobart for kindly proof-reading the final version.
Paganini's concerts with that of the first performance of Hernani:

"We are rather surprised that the historians of this Romanticism, always so rich and so difficult to place, haven't thought to include Paganini amongst its most authentic representatives. We shall not hesitate to compare the concerts given by the astounding artist at the height of the cholera epidemic of 1832 (which the best known Jeunes Frances could not fail to have attended, and to have proclaimed a miracle) to something which very closely resembles the premiere of Hernani." 5[trl. PXB & L.O.]

Both parallels are thought-provoking. Of special interest is Yampolski's proposition that the Caprices - with their dedication "Alli Artisti" - constituted a sort of early manifesto of musical Romanticism. There is also the implication that ideas developed later by Victor Hugo in the Préface de Cromwell (1827) and in the Préface des Orientales (1829) were in some way already embodied in Paganini's music. The problem is of challenging importance because it raises the issue of the possibility of rendering in words the intellectual and emotional implications of music (synaesthesia). Here, an answer can only be speculative since Paganini never attempted any written justification of his work. The laconic inscription "Alli Artisti" only implicitly signals his perception of his role as a musician and the novelty of his artistic approach. Be that as it may, several passages of the Préface des Orientales in which Hugo vigorously defends freedom in Art are congenial with Paganini's philosophy:

"The poet is free. Let's put ourselves in his shoes and let's see. The author insists upon these ideas, however obvious they may seem, because a number of Aristarques still do not admit them as such. He himself, however small a place he holds in contemporary literature, has been the victim of the critics' misjudgement. It often happened that instead of simply telling him: 'Your book is bad', he has been told: 'Why did you write this book? Don't you see that the theme is horrible, grotesque, absurd (whatever!) and that the topic oversteps the limits of art? That's not pretty, that's not gracious. Why don't you treat subjects which please us and appeal to us?"

5 "Nous nous étonnons volontiers que les historiens de ce romantisme, toujours si riche et si difficile à situer, n'aient pas songé à faire figurer Paganini parmi ses plus authentiques représentants. Nous n'hésiterons pas à comparer les concerts donnés par l'étonnant artiste, en pleine épidémie du choléra de 1832, où les «Jeunes Frances» les plus en vue n'ont pu manquer d'assister et de crier au miracle, à quelque chose qui ressemble furieusement à la première d'Hernani...." Georges de Saint-Foix, préface to: Paganini à Marseille 1837-1839, by Bérenger de Miramon Fitz-James, Marseille: à la Librairie Fuéri, 1841, p.6.
What strange caprices you've got there! etc., etc. To which he has always firmly replied: that these caprices were his caprices, that he did not know of what the limits of Art consist, that he did not know the precise geography of the intellectual world, that he had not yet seen the road maps of art, with the frontiers of the possible and of the impossible drawn in red and blue; that, in the end, he had done it because he simply did it.6

A little later, Hugo gives a definition of the poet which is an apt description of Paganini:

"...the poet, man of fantasy and of caprice, but also of conviction and probity."7

The subversive element in Paganini's compositional style and instrumental playing

In rendering previous constraints impotent, the creative artist is engaged in what can be seen as a subversive role. Paganini's redefinition of violin technique, his trespassing beyond conventional limits (those dictated by the Schools, not by the tradition) led him to redefine the laws of instrumental virtuosity (in the words of Franz Liszt, transcendent virtuosity). In his first years of study, Paganini had shown some reluctance to follow instructions and rules à la lettre. He had a compelling need to work out things in his own way and he must have proved a thorn in the side of his teacher, Giacomo Costa:

6"Le poète est libre. Mettons-nous à son point de vue, et voyons..." ibid., p.2.

7"...le poète, homme de fantaisie et de caprice, mais aussi de conviction et de probité" (ibid., p.6).
"I think back with pleasure on the painstaking interest of good Costa [Paganini told Schottky], to whom, however I was no great delight since his principles often seemed unnatural to me, and I showed no inclination to adopt his bowing."

His independent and exploring spirit compelled him to constantly experiment in the area of instrumental technique:

"I was enthusiastic about my instrument and studied it constantly in order to discover new and hitherto unprecedented positions which would give a sonority that would astound people."

There is undoubtedly an element of the provocative in Paganini's approach, in his desire to astonish, to bewilder his listeners. As a performer and consummate showman, he seems to have developed special techniques - deliberately calculated strategies - to induce temporary suspension of judgement, and to maximise the receptiveness of his audience to his music. The profound silence he obtained (even in crowded halls) was legendary and made a great impression on music critics who often mentioned it:

"They listened so intently that the necessary beating of their hearts disturbed and angered them."

It is striking that the more illustrious his listeners, the more enthralled they seemed to become. They sometimes seemed to be lost in astonishment, with their rational faculties temporarily suspended. In the cases of Schumann and Liszt already mentioned, the effect was akin to some kind of mystic revelation. The eighty-year old Goethe, after having heard Paganini in Weimar (October

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8 "...Mit Vergnügen errinnere ich mich an die Sorgfalt des guten Costa, dem ich jedoch insofern kein sonderliches Vergnügen machen mochte, als mir seine Gesetze nicht selten widernatürlich erschienen, und ich keine Lust bezeigte, seine Bogenführung zu der meinigen zu machen."

Schottky, op.cit., p. 253.

9 "Ero entusiasta dello strumento e studiavo senza posa... per scoprire posizioni del tutto nuove e no mai vedute, che dessero sonorità da far stupire la gente" ibid. p. 250.

10 Ludwig Boerne, the Francfort correspondent in Paris, writing about Paganini's concert at the Opéra de Paris, on 9 March 1831. Boerne, a former physician, was regarded as the ideological leader of the movement known as "Junge Deutschland". His Letters from Paris are important contemporary documents.
30, 1829) was extremely troubled, and it took him some time before he could "arrive at an intelligent estimate of all these wonders":

"Now I too have heard Paganini...As regards what is generally called enjoyment - and which in my case always hovers between sensuality and reason - I lack a basis for this column-like eruption of flames and clouds. I only heard something meteoric and then could not account for it further."11 [trl. PXB]

Paganini's extraordinariness both as a man and as a performer was noted also by Mary Shelley:

"Paganini threw me into hysterics. I delight in him more than I can express - his wild ethereal figure, rapt look - and the sounds he draws from his instrument are all superhuman"12

Wilhelm Speyer13, who had been a pupil of Baillot in Paris, attended Paganini's first concerts in Germany:

"And now to give you my impressions of Paganini. I heard him first at rehearsal, then in several concerts, and last of all in a private company where he played Beethoven's F Major sonata with a lady. Although I was keyed up to the very highest expectations, the first impression in the rehearsal was that I had never heard anything like that in my life. Frey, from Mannheim, who sat alongside me swam in a sea of tears. The mysterious dusk of the stage, the remarkable personality of this man, the unusual enthusiasm of the orchestra, which broke every minute in a stormy flourish of trumpets, all these things may very well have heightened the sensitivity of the nerves. But the main thing - his playing, his interpretation, even his musical tricks, the astounding ease and perfection with which he performed the difficulties (incomprehensible especially to a violinist) aroused the greatest admiration. The cantabile passages and the Adagio he sings in a melancholy, deeply moving and albeit eloquent way such as I have never heard from any instrumentalist - about as I heard Crescentini sing fifteen years ago in Paris."14 [trl. G. de Courcy]

11"Paganini hab ich denn auch gehört...Mir fehlt zu dem, was man Genuss nennt und was bei mir immer zwischen Sinnlichkeit und Verstand schwiebt, eine Basis zu dieser Flammen und Wolkensaule... ich hörte nur etwas Meteorisches und wusste mir weiter keine Rechenschaft zu geben."Goethe, Letter to Zelter, 9 November 1829, Goethes Briefwechsel mit Zelter, Leipzig, 1924, p.415.
13Speyer, Wilhelm, (1790-1878) (>Baillot), violinist and composer.
And Honoré de Balzac:

"...The Napoleon of the genre... What is the secret of artistic creation? What might have been the trajectory of the force which animates this puny, sickly man? And this strength, where did it come from? The most extraordinary miracle that surprises me at the present time is the one that Paganini knows how to perform. Don't believe that it is a matter of bowing, of fingering, or the fantastic sounds he draws from his violin... There is without doubt something mysterious in this man."\footnote{Balzac, Honoré de, Correspondence, Letter to S.H.Berthoud, 18 March 1831.}

Paganini's extraordinary hold on the imagination of his listeners extended to the members of the orchestra who not infrequently stopped playing in amazement and grouped themselves on the stage to watch the Maestro's solo performance:

"I saw him play only once, at his first concert at the former Paris Grand Opera. The whole orchestra, composed of great artists, led by the illustrious Habeneck, were so dumbfounded, astounded by what they heard, that, one by one, they all stopped playing for a moment: silence from the orchestra and all the faces raised in genuine admiration. Paganini looked at them, and such triumph imprinted on his lips an unforgettable smile."\footnote{Pirondi, Pirus, Letter to Alberto Bachmann, Marseille, 30 April 1905, reproduced in: Bachmann Alberto, "Niccolò Paganini", Bulletin Français de la S.I.M., p. 23.}

In many pictorial representations of Paganini with an orchestra, one can verify that he is the only one who is performing. The other musicians, completely oblivious of their orchestral duties, are watching him with an expression of incredulous amazement.\footnote{A well-known example is the sketch executed by D. Maclise at a performance in the King's Theatre at the Haymarket, London, June 1831.}

"Suona bene, ma non sorprende"

("He plays well, but does not astonish")

When a report reached Paganini in Genoa in January 1816 that Charles-Philippe Lafont was to give two concerts in Milan, he rushed off to Lombardy, anxious to hear his famous colleague. Lafont,¹⁸ Paganini's senior by one year, was a pure product of the French School, trained at the Paris Conservatoire under Rodolphe Kreutzer and Pierre Rode. He had been chamber virtuoso of the Czar at St Petersburg, Violon du Roi in the Chapel of Louis XVIII, (distinctions carrying certainly more prestige than a position at the provincial court of Lucca), and, at that time, could claim wider recognition than his Italian colleague whose career had not yet extended beyond Italy. It was essential for Paganini, who was planning a concert tour of Europe, to form an estimate of Lafont's playing: he was aware that his Italian style, with the addition of all his personal ingredients, differed considerably from that of the then prevalent Paris School, and was anxious to hear one of its best exponents before going abroad. Paganini wrote to his friend Germi immediately after Lafont's first concert in Milan. Here is the laconic report:

"...Yesterday evening we had a concert at the Scala by Monsieur Lafont. This worthy professor has found no indication that anyone wishes to hear him again. He plays well, but does not astonish."¹⁹ [tr. PXB]

"Suona bene, ma non sorprende": i.e. as far as violin playing is concerned, Lafont's performance was irreproachable ("he plays well"). But Paganini implicitly admits a personal advantage over Lafont in the form of a better understanding of the listeners' psychology. Lafont's failure to captivate the audience originates in the predictable character of his pure, classical style ("he does not astonish").

¹⁸Charles-Philippe Lafont (1781-1839) (>Berthaume, Kreutzer and Rode).
¹⁹"...Ieri sera abbiamo avuto al Teatro della Scala un'Accademia di Monsieur Lafont. Questo bravo professore non ha incontrato al segno di volerlo risentire. Suona bene, ma non soprende..."Paganini, Niccolò, Letter to Germi, Milan, 3 February 1816 [PE 4].
For Gudrun Weidmann, the Sondershausen-based German musicologist, the quest for the disconcerting, the unexpected (das Unerwartete) - the deliberate violation of expectations - is a characteristic attitude in Romantic art in general, and in Romantic virtuosism in particular, which resolutely departs from earlier Classical ideals:

"Whereas Classicism, with its pronounced philosophy of beauty, loves only the moderation of the form, the balance of forces, Romanticism rejects this very evenness and seeks to amaze and shock through the unexpected."\(^20\) [trl. PXB]

The Romantic virtuoso was possessed by the urge to create a dramatic effect, but the public too was "clamouring for innovation and brilliance", and wanted to see the artist as possessing extraordinary faculties (the artist as a "Romantic hero"). Paganini, better perhaps than any of his contemporaries perceived this evolution:

"Paganini understood the psyche of his contemporaries who wanted to see in the artist also an extraordinary human being. Only the irrational could captivate them. Consequently it was not so much the work of art itself which interested the Romantics as the creative process which it revealed. The reason he believed in improvisation was because it most closely reflected his ideal of creation born out of the moment. Thus, the virtuoso, embodied *par excellence* by Paganini, is the typical representative of Romanticism."\(^{21}\) [trl. PXB]

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\(^20\)"...Liebt die Klassik mit ihrer ausgeprägten Philosophie des Schönen nur die maßvolle Form, das Gleichgewicht der Kräfte, so verneint die Romantik geradezu dieses Ebenmass und sucht durch das Unerwartete zu verblüffen und zu erschrecken..."Weidmann, Gudrun. Die Violintechnik Pagarunis, PhD diss.Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, 1951, p. 2.

\(^{21}\)"Paganini kannte die Psyche seiner Zeitgenossen, die im Künstler auch den aussergewöhnliche Menschen sehen wollten. Das Irrationale nur vermochte sie zu fesseln. Daher interessierte den Romantiker weniger das Kunstwerk selbst, als der schöpferische Vorgang, der sich in diesem offenbart. Darum glaubte er an die Improvisation, weil sie seinem Ideal des aus dem Augenblick geborenen Schaffens am nächsten kam. So ist gerade der Virtuose, den Paganini *par excellence* verkörpert, der typische Vertreter der Romantik..." (ibidem).
In this perspective, virtuosity can be seen as the ability of instantaneously giving form to the creative impulse. Paganini’s improvisatory style fascinated his listeners because he gave them the impression that the original creative process was unfolding before their eyes and ears:

"the performance did not follow, but rather instantly translated the spirit of creation as a result of his immediate yet thoughtful self-identification with the music. This was one of the strongest - and perhaps most awe-inspiring - aspirations in Romantic art." [tr. PXB]

Such an extempore translation of the poetic idea into a coherent piece of music requires from the composer a considerable musical and technical knowledge, and, from the performer, a high degree of instrumental skill and preparation which is commonly called "virtuosity". In defining (or re-defining) the laws of virtuosity and in illustrating their application, Paganini provided the "Artists" with a tool which would facilitate the access to artistic freedom. His brilliant formulation found an enthusiastic response among the young romantic musicians and the Caprices became a sort of text-book of virtuosity for the rest of the 19th Century. An impassioned striving for freedom marked the social, political and artistic movements of the time. Beyond their divergences, the French revolutionaries, the Risorgimento heroes and the young Romantics shared the ideal of Liberté. Paganini’s fundamental intuition about virtuosity - an aspect of musical language particularly suited to convey the ideas of liberty and emancipation of the self-proved premonitory:

"Virtuosity [Susan Bernstein writes] is both a product and a property of the nineteenth century... and the virtuoso - a figure reminiscent of the rhapsode, the sophist and the actor - is yet historically specific within a 19th century musical context." 23

Albi Rosenthal's "intriguing copy" of the Caprices

A very intriguing copy of Ricordi's first edition of the Caprices must be mentioned as an important piece of information in relation to both the dedication "Alli Artisti" and Karol Lipinski's statement that the Caprices were originally written for friends. This copy, in the possession of the London antiquarian Albi Rosenthal was shown at the Convegno Internazionale Niccolò Paganini e il suo tempo held in 1982 at Genoa. In his highly interesting communication to the Paganini Congress, Mr Rosenthal described in detail the particularities of this copy: at the head of each caprice, a name is written in brown ink in a hand contemporary with Paganini. Here is the list of the Caprices with their respective dedicatees, according to Mr Rosenthal's reading:


In addition, the title page bears the inscription "Proprietà di Niccolò Paganini" (property of Niccolò Paganini) and, on the inside of the original paper cover, there is a list of musicians prefaced with the words "A Parigi l'inverno" (In Paris, in winter) which suggests that Paganini annotated his copy some time between 1832 and 1840. Assuming that the inscriptions are really in Paganini's hand, one may presume that he was preparing a new edition of the work, possibly for one of the Parisian music publisher he knew, i.e. Pacini or Troupenas. However, a close examination of the list of the dedicatees could provide a reliable reference tool when trying to reach conclusions. Little is known about Austri [Caprice 2], Herrmann [Caprice 9] Dhuler [Caprice 13], and there is also the problem of Caprice 24 with its enigmatic self-dedication. Otherwise, it appears that all the dedicatees were close acquaintances or had connections with Paganini and, as Mr Rosenthal pointed out, this applies particularly - and most significantly - to the lesser known, such as Alliani, Bignami and Bohrer.

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Luigi Alliani [Caprice 22], was a violinist and conductor at Vicenza. There was a bond of friendship between Alliani and Paganini who corresponded from 1828 until Paganini’s final illness. The Paganini Epistolario contains three letters addressed to Alliani (PE 113, 222, 338), each of them bearing witness to their mutual esteem and affection.

Carlo Bignami (1808-1848) [Caprice 20] had the distinction of being considered by Paganini one of Italy’s best violinists and to be chosen by him to lead the Parma orchestra. The Paganini Epistolario includes five letters addressed to Bignami (PE 239, 244, 246, 250, 339).

Antoine Bohrer (1783-1852) [Caprice 18] was born in Hanover and studied in Paris with Rodolphe Kreutzer. Among his compositions for the violin are 18 Caprices ou Études published by Schlesinger in Berlin (c. 1820):

Bohrer was introduced to Paganini by Hector Berlioz, who admired him as a fine interpreter of Beethoven’s quartets:

"A. Bohrer is one of those men who strike me as best able to understand such of Beethoven's works as are commonly reputed eccentric and unintelligible...One evening, in one of those superhuman adagios where Beethoven's genius soars upwards, immense and solitary as the colossal bird of the snowy heights of Chimborazo, Bohrer's violin, whilst singing the sublime melody, seemed animated by epic inspiration; his tone acquired a twofold power of expression and broke forth in accents unknown even to himself; inspiration shone out on the countenance of the virtuoso. We held our breath with swelling hearts when Antoine, suddenly stopping short, laid down his fiery bow, and rushed into an adjoining room. Madame Bohrer followed anxiously, but Max said, still smiling: «It is nothing; he could not contain himself. We will leave him for a little to get calm and the begin again. We must excuse him.» Excuse him! Beloved artist!"² [cit. R.E. Holmes, 1884]

² "A. Bohrer est l'un des hommes qui m'ont paru le mieux comprendre et sentir celles des œuvres de Beethoven réputées excentriques et inintelligibles... Un soir, dans un de ces adagios
Franz Liszt (1811-1886) [Caprice 7] and Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871) [Caprice 11] were the two greatest piano virtuosos of the time. Details of their close personal artistic relationship with Paganini are given in Chapter 1.

Henri Vieuxtemps (1820-1881) [Caprice 1.] studied under Charles de Bériot at the Brussels Conservatorium and developed rapidly into a virtuoso of the highest rank. In 1833, aged thirteen, he started a tour of Europe. The first concerts of an enormous series took place in Germany where he met Carl Guhr, Louis Spohr, Bernhard Molique and other prominent German violinists of the time. In Dresden, Schumann welcomed him in an article of his Neue Zeitschrift, hailing him as a genius:

"...If one speaks of Vieuxtemps, one might also think of Paganini... On hearing Paganini for the first time, I expected him to begin with a tone such as had never been heard before. But how thin and small was the tone with which he commenced! Then, little by little, he began to throw his magnetic chains into the audience; they oscillated above and around. Then the links gradually became stronger and more intricate; even the audience seemed to contract. He tightened the chains until the audience was gradually fused into a single entity - one with the master himself, all counterbalancing each other with sympathetic influence. Other magicians, other spells. What fascinated in Vieuxtemps's case were not isolated gems which we could grasp; neither was it that gradual contraction as in Paganini's case...From the first to the last tone we stood, taken by surprise, as if in a magic circle, the beginning and end of which were hidden from us."3

It was in London, in the spring of 1834, that Vieuxtemps heard and met Paganini (27 April). The encounter was significantly coincidental: Paganini was then playing the viola in public for the first time in his career. He had just finished writing his Sonata per la Gran Viola [M.S.70]: the date of 27 April 1834 which appears on the orchestral parts shows that they were copied out the very day of the concert. To hear the viola as a solo instrument and, besides, played by Paganini in person, was a revelation to the young Vieuxtemps. The special affection he had for the viola dates from that time. Among the works he subsequently wrote for this instrument one must mention the Elegy (op.30) and, of course, the wonderful, moving Capriccio (no. 9 of the posth. op.):

Lento, con molta espressione

H. Vieuxtemps (Capriccio pour Al1D seul)

Henri Vieuxtemps was by far the youngest of all dedicatees listed in Albi Rosenthal's copy and it appears that Paganini had not met him prior to the London concert of 27 April 1834. One may therefore conclude that the Rosenthal copy was annotated after this date. Among the other young dedicatees are Alexandre Artöt (1815-1845) [Caprice 17], Delphin Alard (1815-1888) [Caprice 8] and Antonio Bazzini (1818-1897) [Caprice 2], all of them promising talents of the time. Paganini had always taken a keen interest in his young colleagues, dispensing much praise and encouragement. It is therefore not surprising to find their names next to those of such established celebrities as Kreutzer, Spohr and Rode.6

6The Times, 28 April 1834: "Last night, Signor Paganini introduced a performance on the viola, which was the first time he played this instrument in public."

In 1796-97, Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831) [Caprice 16] was touring Italy and it is during a brief stay in Genoa that he met the fifteen year old Paganini who amazed him by his extraordinary sight-reading powers. Kreutzer had published his 40 Études just the year before (1796), and it is likely that he would have discussed their interpretation with the young Italian violinist who, perhaps, knew them already, since Marquis Di Negro, his Genoese Maecenas, had one of Italy's most extensive private music libraries.

Whether Paganini ever made the personal acquaintance of Jacques Pierre Rode (1744-1830) [caprice 14] is not known. However, from a letter he wrote to Germi one may infer that he had the opportunity to hear the French virtuoso:

"My opinion is that Rode is attempting to make a contribution to Italy, being a very acquisitive man who can never have enough money. In the waiting-room of Paradise one cannot play better than he does; he may not know much about variety, but just hear him and you'll be amazed".

Paganini played Rode's concertos - with some additions and embellishments of his own - until comparatively late in his career. In the first years of his activity as a touring violinist, he had relied on a repertoire of concertos by Rode, Kreutzer and Viotti and his own grand concertos for violin and orchestra took long years of reflection and maturation. He had a special liking for one of the Rode's concertos, which he often played in the opening of his programmes. As regards Rode's famous 24 Caprices en forme d'Études (first published in 1813) it is not sure that Paganini knew them before having his own 24 Capricci published by Ricordi in 1820. Nevertheless, the fact that he had access to Rode's concertos (with all the accompanying orchestral material implied) suggests that he would have no special difficulty in obtaining a copy of the 24 Caprices en forme d'Études.

6Since Rosenthal's copy was probably annotated after April 1834, the dedications to Kreutzer (+1831) and to Jacques Pierre Rode (+1830) were made posthumously.

7Tibaldi-Chiesa, Maria, Paganini, la vita e l'opera, Milan: Garzanti, 1940, p.24

8The modern editions of Kreutzer's Etudes comprise 42 instead of the 40 original studies. No 13 and 24 were added by a French reviser in the 1850s.

9"...Io sono d'opinione che Rode tenti di dare una contribuzione all'Italia, essendo uomo molto interessato, e mai sazio della fortuna. Nell'anticamera del Paradiso non si può suonare meglio di lui; forse non conoscerà troppo il regno della varietà; ma sentilo e stupirai..." Letter to Germi, 27 Oct. 1820 (PE 49).

10Probably the concerto in D minor (see Kestner, A. Römische Studien, Berlin: Verlag der Decker-Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei, 1850, pp. 34 and 42.
Karol Jósef Lipinski (1790-1861) [Caprice 6] studied the elements of violin playing with his father but otherwise was self-taught. In his tenth year, he felt attracted by the sonority of the 'cello which he began to practise with such assiduity that he was soon able to play some of Romberg's concertos. He felt that the study of the 'cello not only strengthened the fingers of his left hand but also helped him to acquire breadth and power of tone on the violin. In 1810 he became the leader of the Orchestra at Lwów (Lenberg). In 1817 he went to Italy chiefly with the hope of hearing Paganini. After vainly wandering from one place to another he finally found him in Piacenza in the spring of 1818.11 He had arrived there just in time for a concert:

"...the public cheered and shouted in frenzied ecstasies over the brilliant fireworks of that violin-sorcerer; when, however, Paganini had finished an adagio in that wonderful singing style, entirely his own, Lipinski was the only person who applauded. This attracted the attention of those around him, and when he told them of the long journey he had undertaken to hear Paganini, they took him straightway and introduced him to the Maestro".12

Paganini soon recognised the talent of his young admirer. He played chamber music with him daily and even performed with him in concert on 17th April 1818.13 Almost five months had elapsed since the manuscript of the Caprices had been handed to Ricordi's engraver Signor Tomaso (24 November 1817). Paganini, still preoccupied by problems pertaining to the publication, discussed the matter with Lipinski, who later reported the conversation to Schumann:

"...One has to know how the Caprices were written and how speedily the process of publication took place in order to excuse quite a few things in the original: According to Mr Lipinski they were written at different times and places, and given by Paganini to his friends in manuscript form as gifts. When later the publisher Ricordi requested to publish the entire collection, Paganini is said to have hastily written them down from memory."14

11PE 19: "Un certo Lipinski polacco, professore di violino, venne dalla Polonia in Italia espressamente per sentirmi; mi ritrovò a Piacenza e stava quasi sempre con me, adorandomi."
"A certain Lipinski, a Pole, professor of the violin, came to Italy from Poland expressly to hear me...He met with me in Piacenza and hardly ever left my side; he worshipped me."

12Straeten, E. van der, op. cit. p.379.


14"Man muss wissen, auf welche Weise die Etüden entstanden, und wie schnell sie zum Druck befördert wurden, um manches im Original zu Entschuldigen. Herr Lipinski erzählte daß sie in verschiedenen Zeiten und Orten geschrieben und von P. an seine Freunde im Manuskripte
The phrases "in order to excuse quite a few things in the original" and "how speedily the process of publication took place" deserve special comment. The manuscript handed to Ricordi, although showing remarkable compositional fluency, reveals a degree of haste. Besides, it contains errors which also appeared in the printed version, faithfully copied by Ricordi's engraver who added some of his own as well. These mistakes subsequently crept into the first German edition (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1823) and the first French edition (Paris: Richault, 1826). They have proliferated even in some modern editions. In others, some have been corrected, while others were added... The reason given by Alberto Cantù is that Paganini did not read proofs for the first edition.  

On his homeward journey, Lipinski went to Trieste where he visited (presumably on Paganini's suggestion) - the ninety years old Dr Massarana, a surviving pupil of Tartini. Massarana did not like Lipinski's rendition of one of Tartini's sonatas and asked him to read carefully the poem written under the music, explaining that Tartini always tried to embody a poetical idea in his interpretations, thereby infusing his playing with a twofold power of expression (the "suonare parlante"). In 1828 - eleven years after the Piacenza episode - Lipinski and Paganini met again, this time in Warsaw, during the festivities held on the occasion of Czar Nicholas' coronation as King of Poland (see Chapter 1).
Theodor Haumann (1808-1878) [Caprice 10] had violin lessons from Joseph François Snel in Brussels, but was destined for the career of a lawyer. After two years at the University of Louvain, he abandoned his law studies and went to Paris against the will of his parents (1827). There, he played with varying success in a number of concerts. He possessed a big powerful tone and an exuberant artistic temperament but was handicapped by a lack of systematic musical and instrumental training. He decided to return to University where he obtained the degree of Doctor of Law in 1830, but his love for the violin surfaced again. He underwent a two-year course of intensive training, practising up to ten hours a day and, when he made a new appearance in Paris in the winter of 1832, he was rewarded with far greater success. During 1833, he met with Paganini who took a friendly interest in him. Haumann played as a soloist at the memorable concert given by Berlioz on 22 December 1833. It was on that occasion that Paganini, who had come primarily to encourage his "protégé", heard the Symphonie fantastique. After the concert, he went backstage to congratulate the composer. Here is Berlioz's account:

"...Lastly, my happiness was crowned when the public had all gone, and a man stopped me in the passage - a man with long hair, piercing eyes, a strange and haggard face - a genius, a Titan among the giants, whom I had never seen before, and at first sight of whom I was deeply moved; this man pressed my hand, and overwhelmed me with burning eulogies that set both my heart and brain on fire. It was Paganini (22nd December, 1833)."

Contemporary reports about Haumann's playing do not seem to have been consistently favourable. In spite of an excellent technique, he apparently had a strong inclination to mannerism and, according to Edmund van der Straeten, he took all movements too slowly because he had noticed that "his power of tone and breadth of style constituted the chief attraction". Heinrich Heine

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20 "Enfin pour comble de bonheur, un homme, quand le public fut sorti, un homme à la longue chevelure, à l'œil perçant, à la figure étrange et ravagée, un possédé du génie, un colosse parmi les géants, que je n'avais jamais vu, et dont le premier aspect me troubla profondément, m'attendit seul dans la salle, m'arrêta au passage pour me serrer la main, m'accabla d'éloges brûlants qui m'incendièrent le coeur et la tête; c'était Paganini! (22 décembre 1833)." Berlioz, Hector. op.cit., p.264.
was particularly vitriolic in his criticism of Haumann, ranking him as the prototype of the "empty virtuoso", a mere caricature of violinists like Paganini or Ernst:

"Haumann, the son of the Brussel pirate publisher, conducts on his violin the business of his father. What he plays is nothing but a duplicate of the best violinists, with occasional embellishments of the text by way of superfluous notes of his own and some addition of brilliant typographical errors."22 [trl. PXB]

Haumann, unlike most of the virtuosos of the time, was not a performing composer. He only played the music of others. Heine's impression was that in his role as an interpreter, rather than effacing himself in speaking the language of another, Haumann tended to digress from the composer's intention by adding "embellishments" and other brilliant flourishes of his own which were irrelevant to the original text. In Heine's literary metaphor, the interpreter is seen as performing the many roles of a typescript, editor, printer and publisher all at once. His severity towards Haumann perhaps stemmed from a personal susceptibility to over-editing and transgression of copyrights.

The German school of violin playing owes much to the influence of Louis Spohr (1784-1859) [Caprice 15]. An outstanding violinist in his youth, he consciously modelled his playing on the style of Jacques Pierre Rode whom he heard for the first time in Brunswick in 1803. Eventually tired of the life of a touring virtuoso, he preferred to devote his energies to composition and teaching. As a pedagogue, his philosophy became the very antithesis of that of the then prevalent French school (and probably of his own as a former virtuoso). Now, his bowing followed different principles from those of the French and Italian masters (he was preoccupied with Paganini's success and did what he could to demonstrate the superiority of his personal, more

21 Straeten, Edmund van der. op.cit. p.138.
"serious" approach). Nothing was done to excite applause: "flying staccato, springbow, spiccato, sautille, etc., he condemned as trivial effects, and played all quick passages with detached bows".23 His style was noble and dignified, the tone broad, and all trace of sentimentality severely eliminated. Through his active influence, German violinists were encouraged to favour earnestness in artistic effort and to avoid "empty" brilliance.24 Paganini and Spohr met for the first time in Venice in 1816 and on a number of occasions in subsequent years. Although their personal and artistic relationships have been copiously documented elsewhere, the following passage from Spohr's autobiography is worth mentioning:

"In June 1830 Paganini came to Cassel and gave two concerts in the theatre, which I heard with great interest. His left hand, and his constantly pure intonation were to me astonishing. But in his compositions and his execution I found a strange mixture of the highly genial and childishly tasteless, by which one felt alternately charmed and disappointed, so that the impression left as a whole, after frequent hearing, by no means satisfactory to me. As his visit took place just on Whitsunday, I took him the next day to Wilhelmsbőhe, where he dined with me, and was very lively, indeed somewhat extravagantly so."25

In spite of Spohr's somewhat lofty attitude, Paganini had a sincere admiration for his German colleague, both as a violinist and as a composer and often expressed it publicly or in his letters.26 It is therefore not surprising to find his name among the dedicatees of A. Rosenthal's copy.

Ernesto Camillo Sivori (1815-1894) [Caprice 3] received his first formal musical education from Giacomo Costa, a worthy representative of the Classical school of violin playing who operated at Genoa.27 In 1823, Paganini, himself a former pupil of Costa, took the boy under his personal care and gave him systematic instruction for a period of about sixth months. Sivori rapidly

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26See: PE 85, 146, 310.
acquired a phenomenal technique which he combined with a limpid, silvery tone, and perfect intonation. Whether Paganini really developed a course of study for the violin differing from that used by other schools is a highly controversial question. In his conversations with Max Julius Schottky (Prague, Dec. 1828), he insisted that he had worked out such a plan and claimed that he used it in part when he instructed Sivori. Schottky writes that Paganini repeatedly assured him that, with his method, a young man could be fully trained in three years to a degree of proficiency usually attained after ten years of study. Although several violinists benefited directly from Paganini's example and advice (Lipinski, Ernst, Bull, Bazzini, Ciandelli and Agostino Robbio - who, incidentally, migrated to Australia28), he had only two pupils who received their higher schooling from him: Catterina Calcagno who had a brilliant but ephemeral career, and Camillo Sivori. From the conversations that David Laurie had with Sivori, it appears that Paganini was very strict and that he insisted that his pupil would practise daily scales, but nothing really substantial is revealed about his pedagogical methods.29 There is no doubt, however, that Paganini, who took a genuine and almost fatherly interest in his young student, was a dedicated teacher. During the comparatively short period of instruction, he wrote for Sivori an impressive number of works which the boy had to play before an audience (what we now call "performance practice"). The guitar part was played by Paganini himself and distinguished Genoese artists, willing to encourage the apprentice virtuoso, were the other members of the ad hoc chamber ensemble. Among the pieces dedicated to Sivori are 6 Quartets for violin, guitar, viola and 'cello [N.5 of op.perd.], 12 Cantabili e Valtz for violin and guitar [M.S. 45 and N.6 of op.perd.], a Sonata con variazioni [N.8 of op.perd.], and a Concertino [N.4 of op.perd.].30 According to Edmund van der Straeten, Sivori preserved the manuscripts of these pieces "as his most precious treasures".31 Unfortunately, they are now

29Laurie, David Reminiscences of a Fiddle Dealer, London, 1924, p. 60 seq.
30op.p. stands for opere perdute (lost works) and the corresponding numbers refer to section IV of the Catalogo Tematico delle Musiche di Niccolò Paganini (p.330-341)
31Straeten, Edmund van der. op.cit. (Evan der Straeten had made personal acquaintance with Sivori therefore his biographical note, although it contains inexactitudes, is worth special attention).
all lost, with the exception of the *Cantabile e Valtz* in E major. The manuscript of this piece,\(^{32}\) which bears the dedication "al Bravo Ragazzino Sig. Camillo Sivori da Nicola Paganini" is of special interest because the violin part is carefully fingered and annotated in Paganini's hand. Here is a diplomatic transcript of the first bars:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Quasi Adagio} & \quad \text{N. Paganini, Cantabile e Valtz [M.S.45]} \\
\text{Cantabile} & \quad \text{(Paganini's original fingerings)}
\end{align*}
\]

The *Epistolario* shows that Paganini was anxious to have the latest news of his pupil.\(^{33}\) During his final illness, he asked Sivori to come and play for him (autumn 1840) and subsequently bequeathed to him one of his most precious violins (the copy of his own Guarneri made by Vuillaume). In a letter to Vincenzo degli Antoni,\(^{34}\) Paganini wrote that Sivori was the only one who could truly call himself his pupil. Among the few who, in turn, received instruction from Sivori, are Henri Marteau (1874-1930)\(^{35}\) and Zino Francescatti's father. The compositions of Camillo Sivori are now largely forgotten. However, a new edition of the twelve *Etudes Caprices* op.25 would complement the standard works of advanced technique. Of special interest are N°4 (preparation to Paganini's ninth Caprice), N°9 (a very beautiful and lively Italian *saltarello*) and N° 12 (a challenging and rare piece for the study of unison):

\(^{32}\)Now in possession of Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome (call n° mus.ms. Cas. 5622 and M.S. 45 of the Catalogo tematico).

\(^{33}\)PF. 72, 74, 85, 88, 111, 136, 144,189, 368, etc.

\(^{34}\)This letter, dated 2 March 1828, which has not been reproduced in the *Paganini Epistolario*, is presently in the possession of Mr. Jean Werro of Berne (Switzerland).

\(^{35}\)Dates kindly confirmed by Mr. Hartmut Lindemann of Sydney (>Schroeder).
Charles Philippe Lafont (1781-1839) [Caprice 13] studied under Berthame, Kreutzer and Rode. Considered one of the finest representatives of the Paris school of violin playing, he had also a fine singing voice and appeared on a number of occasions at the Théâtre Feydeau as a singer of French ballads. In 1808 he succeeded his teacher Rode as solo violinist to the Czar at St Petersburg and in 1815 he was named Violon du Roi in the chapel of Louis XVIII. In 1816 he went to Italy and gave concerts at La Scala, Milan, where Paganini heard him for the first time (see supra). Lafont suggested that they should play together and on March 16 of the same year, the two violinists gave a joint concert, also at La Scala. The event, which gave rise to a famous controversy, was extensively commented upon by the music critics of the time, by Paganini and Lafont themselves and by their respective biographers. The real cause of the rivalry between the two men, however, was neither of an artistic nor of a professional order. The acerbic remarks which appear in Paganini’s letters apropos Madame Lafont are symptomatic of an existing malaise in that Paganini, who did not easily indulge in tactless criticism, would otherwise never have descended to gossip:

Paganini to Germi, February 23, 1816
"Lafont played the second time at a concert of a pianist at La Scala; but there were not even three hundred people. However, he pleased more that second time. It is well known in Milan that his wife is one [of the courtesans] at the Palais Royal in Paris and that she has received there one hundred sequins from the one and twenty from another."38

Paganini to Germi, Leipzig 16 October 1829
"...They write me from Paris that Mr Lafont, upon learning that I am about to arrive there, is leaving to spend the winter in Russia. To which I retorted that I would readily forgo the pleasure of seeing him for his own good, knowing how well they recompense virtue over there..."39

37The court “red light district”.
38“Lafont ha suonato per la seconda volta ad un’Accademia di un Pianofortista alla Scala; ma non v’erano trecento uditori; piacque però più la seconda volta. E notorio a Milano che la moglie di questo fosse una del Palazzo Reale a Parigi, e che abbia ricevuto qua da uno cento zecchini, e da un altro venti...” (PE 5).
39“Da Parigi mi dicono che Mr Lafont nel sentire che sto per colà giungere, se ne va passare l’inverno in Russia; al che risposi che sacrificherò il piacere di vederlo per il suo meglio, conoscendo quanto colà si sa premiare la virtù...” (PE 143)
On a strictly artistic level, however, the relationship between the two men became more and more characterised by mutual esteem, Paganini finding Lafont "unquestionably a very distinguished artist", and, conversely, Lafont trying to progressively incorporate into his own playing the virtuoso techniques he had observed in his Italian colleague. Paganini survived Lafont by a few months, his fellow violinist, rival, and friend having met with death in a carriage accident while on tour, on August 9, 1839.

Ole Borneman Bull (1810-1880) studied under Lundholm (>Baillot) at Bergen, but gained most of his violinistic knowledge through observation and experience. At Osterøy, where his parents had a country property, he became acquainted with the tradition of the Hardanger violin. From a peasant Hardanger virtuoso, the young Ole Bull borrowed a long and heavy bow which, being very flexibly haired, gave his tone a silky yet rich and deep quality. The comparatively low tension of the hair also facilitated his chord playing. At about the same time, he managed to secure a copy of Paganini's 24 Caprices (the distribution of which appears to have been remarkably rapid for the time). Armed with his Hardanger bow, the young violinist probably gave an interesting early rendition of the richly polyphonic Caprice 4, the dedicatee of which he was to become. In 1829, Ole Bull had a brief and not entirely satisfactory course of study in Cassel with Louis Spohr. It was not until he went to Paris that his powers as a performer fully developed. The avowed motive of his trip to the French capital was to hear Paganini and it indeed constituted the turning-point in his life. He attended as many of Paganini's concerts as he could, made the personal acquaintance of the master, and immersed himself in the study of advanced virtuoso techniques. An example of the music he wrote at the time is the Fantaisie et Variations de Bravoure sur un thème de Bellini. He is reported to have played the second variation "tutte le corde tenute" that is, without arpeggiating the chords:

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40Schottky, op.cit., p.300.
42The Hardanger violin (Hardingfele) is a folk violin indigenous to South central Norway. It has four underlying metal sympathetic strings (generally tuned to D, E, F#, A) and the conventional strings (generally tuned to A, D, A, E) are also of metal. The bridge is nearly flat, thus facilitating polyphonic playing. The most famous Hardanger violin player was Torgeir Augundson, known as Møllarguen (the Miller Boy). He gave concerts together with Ole Bull.
With his facility in multiple stopping and his ability to sustain three and even four parts simultaneously, Ole Bull was ideally equipped to interpret Paganini's fourth Caprice:

Ole Bull's testimonies and writings about Paganini are documents of great value to the scholar. In the following passage the Caprices are, interestingly enough, referred to as "Studies":

"No one can thoroughly understand Paganini without an educated appreciation of melody and the art of giving life and expression to it. Without a knowledge of the Italian art of singing, it is impossible to properly appreciate his playing. Contemporary with Pasta, Pizzaroni, Rubini and Malibran, Paganini rivalled them, singing on his violin melodies, many of which had been sung by these artists, and astonishing even them more than the public. In fact, his style was so original, and the means by which he produced his stirring effects was so varied and so unexpected, his music so filled with ever new episodes of startling beauty or original quaintness, that the violinists of the day stood confounded. Half the conceited virtuosos would not condescend to study the mysteries of the violin and the soul of the melody, tone and expression,
but called all they could not comprehend and themselves execute "tricks" and "playing for the multitude". Nothing has been produced equalling his twenty-four "Studies" either in beauty, originality or difficulty of performance.43

The great virtuoso, composer and transcriber Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1814-1865) [Caprice 5] was born in Raussnitz (Moravia). He studied in Vienna with Böhm and Mayseder and in Paris with Ch. de Beriot. As a performer on the violin and the viola, he had an extraordinary technique and a warm, colourful tone. He was a great admirer of Paganini, even going so far as to follow him from place to place to observe his technique. He eventually became friendly with his eminent Italian colleague, and so nearly approached his virtuosity that Paganini once half-jokingly remarked: "Il faut se méfier de vous!"44

Joseph Joachim related to Andreas Moser that he once asked Ernst why he had rented a room in Marseilles next to Paganini’s although he had heard him often play in public. Ernst answered that he was anxious to hear him practising. "Yet I did not really succeed", Ernst said. "He did play quite a lot, though mostly mezza voce, and often with a mute... the most he did sometimes was to play one of his Caprices, which he liked to give as encores." "Did he play perfectly?" asked Joachim. "Without a blemish!" Ernst replied, "and still far more astonishingly than in concert." Ernst added that when occasionally a passage did not quite succeed to Paganini’s satisfaction, the second time it came off like a pistolshot ("wie aus der Pistole geschossen") and that he was able to accomplish this by an iron will and an extremely flexible, stretchy and responsive hand whose fingers struck the strings like clappers ("Finger wie Klöppel auf die Saiten schlugen").45

43 Crosby, Dr A.B. The Art of Holding the Violin & Bow as exemplified by Ole Bull. pp.37-38 (Jottings by Ole Bull on violin and violinists)
45 Joachim: 'Sage mir, verehrter Freund, was bezwecktest du eigentlich damit, dich s.Z. neben Paganini einzumieten? Du hast ihn doch oft genug öffentlich gehört?' Ernst: 'Das schon, wenigstens 20 Male; aber mir lag daran, ihn beim Üben zu belauschen. Ich kam jedoch nicht auf meine Rechnung: er geigte zwar ziemlich viel, wenn auch fast immer mezza voce, oft auch mit dem Dämpfer; indessen bereitete er sich stets nur auf die jeweiligen Stücke vor, die auf dem Programm des nächsten Konzertes standen, höchstens daß er hie und da eine seiner Kaprizen vornahm, die er gerne als Zugaben spielte.' Joachim: 'Kriegte er die denn einwandsfrei heraus?' Ernst: ' Aber ohne Tadel! Freilich zu Hause noch weit verblüffender als auf dem Podium. Er muß in seiner Jugend enorm fleißig gewesen sein; denn wenn ihm auch hier und da eine Passage nicht ganz nach Wunsch gelang, bei der Wiederkehr kam sie wie aus der Pistole geschossen heraus.
Heinrich Heine, evoking the question of artistry and instrumental virtuosity drew a fascinating parallel between Ernst and Paganini:

"When it comes to violinists, virtuosity is not entirely the result of mechanical finger dexterity and sheer technique, as it is with pianists. The violin is an instrument which has almost human caprices - it is, as it were, attuned to the mood of the player in a sympathetic rapport: the slightest discomfort, the tiniest inner imbalance, a whiff of sentiment, elicits an immediate resonance, and this could well come from the fact that the violin, so closely pressed against the chest, can perceive our heartbeat. However, this is the case only of artists who truly have a heart that beats, who have anything resembling a soul. The more sober, the more detached the violinist, the more consistently reliable will be his performance, and he can count on the obedience of his fiddle, any time, anywhere. But this greatly overrated assurance is only the result of spiritual limitation and the greatest masters were often dependent on influences from within and without. I have never heard anyone play better, and for that matter, worse than Paganini and I can say the same of Ernst. Ernst, who is perhaps the greatest of present-day violinists, resembles Paganini in his frailty as in his genius."\(^{46}\)

For Heine, the virtuosity of Paganini and Ernst is brought in line with depth of expression rather than with finger dexterity. The heart and the music beat time together, as in Susan Bernstein "ideal figure of adequation".\(^{47}\) The artist and the instrument become one. It was true virtuosity that enabled both Paganini and Ernst to transcend the materiality of their instrument and, in the words of Geminiani "to give Meaning and Expression to Wood and Wire".\(^{48}\)

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Ernst's compositions include six Polyphonic Studies, some of which even exceed the technical requirements of Paganini's Caprices.\(^4^9\) It appears significant, in relation to Albi Rosenthal's copy of the Caprices, that Ernst dedicated each of them to violinist colleagues (Laub, Sainton, Joachim, Hellmesberger, Vieuxtemps and Bazzini). Mr Rosenthal suggests that the idea may have originated with Paganini. The crowning piece of Ernst's art of violin playing is his transcription for solo violin of Schubert's Der Erlkönig, which he entitled Grand Caprice op.26. This work, dedicated "to the Poets - Schubert and Paganini", is one of the most striking demonstrations of the polyphonic resources of the violin ever written, but it is generally considered unplayable:\(^5^0\)

One may perhaps question the legitimacy of this transcription out of respect for the original, but as an unaccompanied piece of violin music, and as a study, it is without parallel in the literature for superiority of dramatic expression. Since it marks a climax in the evolution of the genre of the Caprice, it will later receive special attention.

\(^{49}\)Ernst, Heinrich Wilhelm. *Sechs mehrestimmgige Etüden* (1865)

\(^{50}\)See: Borer, Ph. *Aspects of European Influences on Australian Violin Playing & Teaching*, pp.144-171 (Appendix C).
CHAPTER III

THE STUDENT

Preamble

It has often been suggested that Paganini, who appeared "like a meteor from the sky" in the world of music, was self-taught. This claim, however, is invalidated by the evidence of his all-important early training in music theory and composition with Ghiretti and Paer. The fact that he acquired a knowledge of the tradition of the bel canto directly from Marchesi and Crescentini further substantiates the postulate that he was the true heir of the old masters. Close links with the great Italian tradition also appear in his training as a violinist which was distinguished by a constant study of the works of Marini, Martini, Rossi, Stradella, Torelli, Corelli, Galuppi, Scarlatti, Balduino, Giardini, Tartini, Geminiani, Locatelli (whose Arte del Violino was the catalyst for his own 24 Caprices), Nardini, Jomelli, Lolli, Pugnani, Ghiretti, Giornovichi, Viotti, and others. Paganini's technique, it is true, was not the result of the long and intensive exposure to a curriculum of a conservatorium, and, in many respects, ran counter to scholastic precepts and canons. A free, non-conformist spirit, Paganini certainly needed to work out certain problems in his own way, and he appears to have developed many aspects of his fabulous technique through independent experimenting and thinking. Paganini, who had received his first instruction in violin from his father, made such rapid and startling progress that it became difficult to find an adequate teacher for him, not only in Genoa, but also in the rest of Italy. For several reasons, Italy was not the best place for advanced studies in violin playing any more. In fact, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the

1Van der Straeten's words. See his interesting article on the Italian school in: op.cit.,vol. II, p. 341.
Italian school had fallen into a state of decline. Most of the great masters associated with Italy's "golden age" of the violin had died: Corelli in 1713, Vivaldi in 1743, Veracini in 1750, Geminiani in 1764, Somis in 1763, Locatelli in 1764, Tartini in 1770, and with him his famous "School of the Nations" in Padua. The diminishing influence of the Church had led to the deterioration of its system of musical life and to the decline of the social importance of the musicians. Moreover, the narrow policies applied in music schools and conservatories proved detrimental to instrumentalists. Due to the exclusive penchant for opera in Italy, the emphasis was placed chiefly on the cultivation of native singing talent. Many violinists, and not necessarily the lesser ones, were forced to seek employment outside of Italy. Signs of this impending crisis were already apparent in the mid-eighteenth century. As early as 1750, Tartini was writing letters of recommendation to foreign employers such as Prince Lobkowitz in Wien and Frederic the Great in Potsdam on behalf of some of his best students who could not secure a position in Italy. Giovanni Battista Viotti, generally considered the last great representative of the old Italian school, left his native country in 1780 and settled in Paris in 1782, the year of Paganini's birth. With Viotti, the European centre of violin schooling was transferred from Padua to Paris, and France, so to speak, took over the Italian inheritance. One can safely assume that Paganini's father would have sent his son to Viotti rather than to Rolla, had the former been teaching in Italy. Rolla, although an excellent performer and expert orchestral leader, had not studied with great masters such as Tartini, Nardini, or Pugnani. It is to his credit that he refused to give lessons to Paganini and sent him to Ferdinando Paer, a musician in the wider sense, and a true heir of the great tradition. Thus, Paganini was given the opportunity to fully develop as a musician, that is not only as a great performer on the violin, but also as a master in the craft of composition.

Niccolò Paganini was born in Genoa on October 27, 1782. His parents and elder brother Carlo lived in a modest apartment on the seventh storey of the Casa di Picassino located at 1359 Vico delle Fosse di Colle (later re-named 38 Passo di Gattamora), not far from the house of Christopher Columbus in the Vico Dritto Ponticello. Antonio, the father, worked on the docks in the Porto Franco (the duty free port) as a ligaballe, that is a cargo handler who packed bales for shipment on merchant vessels. He was a musical enthusiast who played the mandolin and the violin, and also bought and sold musical instruments. During the British blockade of the port of Genoa which went into effect at the end of 1794, he had to rely on this activity as a means of livelihood and was listed as a teneur d’amandolines in the Napoleonic census of 1798. From 1787, Antonio Paganini gave his son musical instruction. The first instrument the five year old child learned to play was a mandolin which, according to a description given in the catalogue of the Wilhelm Heyer Museum of Cologne, was of the Neapolitan type, that is tuned to G, D, A, and E, like a violin. This shows real pedagogical insight on the part of Paganini’s father, for when the child made the transition to the violin two years later, the boy was already familiar with the "geography" of the fingerboard and his left hand had been strengthened by hours of practice on an instrument which requires considerable finger pressure on the strings to produce a clear tone. Instrumental ability depends to a large extent on sensory memory. Gifted children often possess a memory coding system that appears to convert sound into mental images of vertical or horizontal lengths or

4In the place of Paganini’s house, unfortunately demolished, a memorial stone has been erected. A declaration of protest against the enforced demolition of this historical edifice is preceded by the inscription "Male non fare paura non avere", one of Paganini’s mottos.
spans. The fretted fingerboard of the mandolin which allows the player to conceptualise, as it were, the distances between notes, induced the young Paganini to develop what is called a visual-kinesthetic memory - a repertoire of lengths and spaces corresponding to intervallic formation.7

A description given by Carl Guhr suggests that Paganini guided his bow with great economy of movement. Furthermore, the way he held his bow as well as the position of his arm were quite idiosyncratic:

"The right arm is kept close to the body, and is hardly ever moved. Only the wrist, which is strongly bent, possesses great mobility; it moves with ease and guides the elastic motions of the bow with admirable dexterity. It is only in chords which are vigorously struck with the lower part of the bow near the heel, that he lifts his elbow and forearm slightly, moving them away from his body." 8

In mandolin playing, a plectrum is used to set the strings in vibration. According to the Italian traditional method, this requires a strongly bent, albeit very loose and mobile wrist, and perfect stillness of the arm. This also may have influenced Paganini’s violin technique. Several contemporary paintings, drawings and sketches show Paganini in what seems to be a favourite pose, i.e. the bow lightly held between the thumb, index, and middle fingers, as if in the act of writing or in holding the plectrum of a mandolin (in Italian, penna, which signifies pen):

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8 Guhr, Carl, L’art de jouer du violon de Paganini, §4, p.4. "Le bras droit est appliqué au corps et ne se meut presque jamais; le poignet seul, fortement fléchi, jouit chez Paganini d’une grande mobilité; il se meut avec aisance, et dirige avec une prestees admirable les mouvements élastiques de l’archet. Seulement dans les accords qu’on attaque vigoureusement avec la partie inférieure de l’archet, près de la hausse, il élève un peu le coude et l’avant bras, en les éloignant du corps."
Two works written by Paganini for the mandolin, the Serenata [M.S.16] and the Minuetto per l'Amandorlino [M.S.106], are still in existence. The latter, written in the key of E major, is of a bright, sunny character and speaks in the idiom of Italian popular music. The concluding E major chord - a mandolinist's version of the famous "Geminiani" chord - has the same arrangement as the one at the head of the Caprices:

Minuetto per l'Amandorlino  

N. Paganini [M.S. 106]

9For mandolin and guitar.
10For mandolin solo. The manuscript is in the possession of the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna.
During the year 1789, Antonio Paganini presented his son aged seven with a little violin and soon realised that the boy had a talent of the first magnitude. He resolved that study and perseverance should develop it. The child made rapid progress, but the extreme severity which characterised his early training contributed to undermine his rather fragile constitution. Here is Paganini's own version of the story, as he related it during his conversations with Julius Max Schottky in Prague in 1828:

"...My father Antonio was a not very well-to-do tradesman and was by no means without musical talent, which, however, was in no way comparable to his love of music. He soon recognized my natural talent and I have him to thank for teaching me the rudiments of the art. His principal passion kept him at home a great deal, trying by certain calculations and combinations to figure out lottery numbers from which he hoped to reap considerable gain. He therefore pondered over the matter a great deal and would not let me leave him, so that I had the violin in my hand from morn till night. It would be hard to conceive of a stricter father. If he didn't think I was industrious enough, he compelled me to redouble my efforts by making me go without food so that I had to endure a great deal physically and my health began to give way. I really didn't require such harsh stimulus because I was enthusiastic about my instrument and studied it unceasingly in order to discover new and hitherto unsuspected effects that would astound people. Even then in the circle of my intimate acquaintances it was generally believed that I would create a great stir, and they were all the more convinced of it owing to a dream of my very pious mother Teresa (née Bocciardo). Through her lively imagination, she fancied that her guardian angel appeared to her in her sleep and she asked that her son might be a great violinist. A sign of acquiescence indicated (she dreamed) that her wish would be granted and now more importance was attributed to my good mother's dream than it warranted. This commendation, which was like music to my ears, heightened my enthusiasm and spurred me to new efforts. Even before I was eight years old, I wrote a sonata under the supervision of my father, but it is no longer in existence, having been torn up like numerous other experimental works of the same kind. My fame in Genoa spread more and more. Nearly every week I played three times in church and at various social affairs, and I often saw my estimable countryman, Francesco Gnecco, who had some influence on my musical training. In my ninth year I soon had an opportunity of playing in public in a big theatre. Marchesi, known throughout Europe as one of the leading male sopranos (with few peers as regards the compass of his voice and interpretative gifts), had arrived in Genoa. This Marchesi, who was then associated with the excellent singer, La Bertinotti, asked my father to allow me to play at his benefit, in return for which he would sing at mine, which I was planning to give shortly. Both took place, I played my own variations on the Carmagnole and Marchesi seemed to be thoroughly pleased with my performance. My father now decided that he could teach me nothing more and therefore placed me in the hands of Genoa's leading violinist, Costa."\(^\text{11}\)

\(^11\) Schottky, J. M., op. cit., p.246-251; quoted by de Courcy, G., op. cit. vol.II, p.368-369, in her English translation. A transcript of the original text in German has been included in the Appendices. Between the two existing versions of Paganini's autobiography (Lichtenthal and Schottky), there are a few discrepancies in the dates and the sequence of events. The date of birth is incorrect in the two versions (February 1784 instead of October 1782). This has been expertly commented upon by Geraldine de Courcy (op. cit. vol. I, p.39 and vol.II, p. 348-49) and by Edward Neill (Il Cavaliere Armonico, p.12)
For all his severity, Paganini's father was also a remarkable man, giving his son instruction in mandolin, violin, composition, and, presumably, in all the other subjects of general education. By the time he decided that "he could teach him nothing more", the child had written and performed works such as the *Carmagnola con Variazioni* [M.S.1], which already shows an extraordinarily advanced violinistic expertise. The *Carmagnole* was a "chanson" of the Revolution and was adopted by the Jacobins at the time of the imprisonment of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The Revolutionists began the song with the words "Madame Veto avait promis" and ended with the famous refrain "Dansons la Carmagnole, vive le son du canon". It became identified with revolutionary festivities and was sung and danced around the "tree of liberty". The first impact of the French Revolution on Northern Italy was felt well before the Napoleonic invasion of May 1796, and the revolutionary songs were rapidly introduced in Liguria. The Genoese people who were in sympathy with the ideals of the French Revolution and engaged in open polemic against the local oligarchy, soon adopted the *Carmagnole*, which was spontaneously sung in the theatres at the end of certain performances. The revolutionary overtones of Paganini's variations presumably contributed as much to the enthusiasm of the public as did their musical content and brilliant execution. The choice of the theme may well have been influenced by his father's Jacobin sympathies. Musically as well as stylistically, the *Carmagnola con Variazioni* reveals a surprising maturity. After a very skilfully staged introduction - a solemn orchestral tutti echoed by a singing, almost Mozartian solo and a cadenza - the violin enunciates the popular theme *verbatim*:

\[ \text{\footnotesize \text{\begin{verbatim}
\end{verbatim}}} \]

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12 Due to the lack of consistency in Paganini's declarations to Lichtenthal and Schottky, the composition of *Carmagnola con Variazioni* cannot be dated with absolute precision.
13 Mrs. Veto [Marie Antoinette's nickname] had promised us..."  
14 Genoa, distrustful of Sardinia and aware of the importance of her ties with France, had declared herself neutral in 1792.
The fourteen subsequent variations are in a brilliant, virtuoso style. The musical discourse, notwithstanding the complex figurations and other arduous violinistic excursions, always keeps a close relation with the theme which can be superimposed on each variation to great effect, and one can imagine the Genoese public joining in the performance, giving, as it were, choral support to the young violinist. The same compositional principle underlies works like the Carnevale di Venezia [M.S.59], the Variazioni sul Barucabà [MS.71], and, indeed, the Caprice N°24. In all these works, the variations present an extraordinary diversity of effects, moods and colours, yet the inner structure of the theme is respected and preserved throughout. It becomes therefore possible to counterpoint any variations with the theme and even to superimpose two or in certain cases several variations. This has been illustrated by Franz Liszt and Alberto Bachmann:

Other characteristic aspects of Paganini's music are evidenced in the Carmagnola con Variazioni such as the great difficulty of execution, the strong, clear, conclusive harmonic basis, the continuous dialogue of timbres, the utilisation of the "coloristic" potential of the violin (ponticello playing and imitation of the spinet in variation 4), the G string episodes (variation 5), the passages in simple and double harmonics (variations 5, 7, 12, 13), all
constitutive elements of what Edward Neill has defined as una tecnica costruttiva - a "constructive" technique: 15

Paganini's teachers

Paganini unequivocally stated that his father had been his first teacher ("...I have to thank him for teaching me the rudiments of the art"). This influence, *volens nolens*, extended far beyond the first years of study since he appears to have been under close paternal supervision as late as 1801, when he and his brother Carlo (to whom paternal authority had been temporarily delegated) went to Lucca for the festival of the Holy Cross.\(^1\) It was not until 1805 that, aged 23, he really freed himself from parental tutelage (in the same year he was appointed to the court of Napoleon's sister at Lucca).\(^17\) Paganini, who retained a deep attachment to his mother, had been in a chronic state of conflict with his father since his adolescence. Notwithstanding this tension, the influence of Antonio Paganini on his son's musical interests and development appears to have been quite significant and might even be reflected in certain ideas contained in the Caprices (which were, incidentally, submitted for publication in November of 1817, a few months after Antonio's death). Several biographers, invoking the authority of Gervasoni, or perhaps faithfully borrowing from each other, write that a certain Cervetto or Servetto had given early violin lessons to Paganini.\(^18\) As Maria Tibaldi Chiesa points out, Paganini never mentioned this name in his reminiscences or in his correspondence.\(^19\) Neither did he allude to any violin teacher other than his father prior to the six month course of study he had with Giacomo Costa.

Given that there is virtually no substance to Gervasoni's isolated claim about

\(^{16}\) A festival dedicated to the veneration of the *Volto Santo*, a cedarwood crucifix allegedly carved by Nicodemus which was transported in the Middle Ages from the Holy Land to Tuscany and kept in the Cathedral of Lucca. The privilege of performing at the Cathedral was a honour coveted by the best artists in the country and a competition was held just before the festival to select the candidates. In 1801, Paganini won selection and played at the solemn pontifical Mass celebrated by Archbishop Filippo Sardi, on 14 September 1801 (Details of Paganini's performance are found in: *Zibaldone Lucchese*, ms. 93, pp. 507-508, State Archives of Lucca).

\(^{17}\) See supra, Chapter I.


Servetto (or Cervetto, or Corvette, as he is alternatively described), it would therefore seem more enlightening to reflect upon Antonio Paganini's musical background on which there is, so far, little information available. Immediately after his father, Paganini includes Francesco Gnecco in the list of his mentors:

"...My fame in Genoa spread more and more. Nearly every week I played three times in church and at various social affairs; and I often saw my estimable countryman, Francesco Gnecco, who had some influence on my musical training."21

Francesco Gnecco (1769-1810) is stated to have studied with Cimarosa (Piccini) and F.L. Mariani at Savona. He was a very versatile musician who played a number of stringed and wind instruments, wrote trios, quartets, and not less than twenty-four operas. The best known, La prova di un'opera seria (1805), enjoyed considerable popularity. It is a parody of an opera rehearsal with a most effective and comic backstage plot which runs concurrently to the action itself. A lesson in instrumentation, a chorus riddled with false notes, a soprano who has problems with her pronunciation, and also with the tenor: Gnecco was a master of the mezzo carattere style,22 that is a highly engaging combination of the serious and the humorous, which strongly appealed to the Italian public. Paganini perceptively understood what Gnecco had to offer and wrote most of his works intended for the public at large in mezzo carattere style. The Carmagnola con Variazioni (which he perhaps submitted to Gnecco for advice) is an early, characteristic example of this compositional approach. The third name mentioned in the autobiographical sketch belongs to one of the most famous singers of the time:

"...Marchesi, known throughout Europe as one of the leading male sopranos (with few peers as regards the compass of his voice and interpretative gifts), had arrived in Genoa. This Marchesi, who was then associated with the excellent singer, La Bertinotti, asked my father to allow me to play at his benefit, in return for which he would sing at mine, which I was planning to give

20His given name seems no less problematic than the spelling of his surname (alternatively Giovanni, Antonio, or even Antonio Maria). Fétis spells "Servetto", but does not give a first name (op. cit., p.2)
21Schottky, J. M., op.cit., ibid.
22Musica di mezzo carattere: music, the style of which hovers between the serious and the comic. In operatic parlance, the term mezzo carattere is applied to a character part-serious, part-comic, as for example Susanna in Mozart's Figaro.
shortly. Both took place. I played my own variations on the Carmagnole and Marchesi seemed to be thoroughly pleased with my performance."[C.J. de Courcy]

Together with Matteo Babini, Gasparo Pacchierotti and Girolamo Crescentini, the great *virato Luigi Marchesi* (1755-1829) was one of the last representatives of the old tradition:

"The art of bel canto was created in the year 1680 by Pistocchi; and its progress was hastened immeasurably by Pistocchi's pupil Bernacchi. The peak of perfection was attained in 1778, under the aegis of Pacchiarotti; but since that date, the race of male sopranos has died out, and the art has degenerated.....After the epoch of Babini, Pacchiarotti, Marchesi, Crescentini and their contemporaries, the art of singing degenerated to such a degree of impoverishment that today nothing is left of all its former glory save the cold and literal technique of rendering an exact and inanimate note... Such, in the year of grace 1823, is the highest accomplishment to which a singer's ambition may pretend... The glories of spontaneous inspiration have been banished for ever from an art whose loveliest achievements have so often depended upon the individual interpreter and his genius for improvisation...In days gone by, the great singers, Babini, Marchesi, Pacchiarotti, etc. used to compose their own ornamentation whenever the musical context required an exceptionally high level of complexity; but in normal circumstances, they were concerned with extempore invention... The whole art of adorning the melody (*itezzi melodici del canto*, as Pacchiarotti used to call it, when I met him in Padua in 1816) belonged by right to the performer... There is no composer on earth, suppose him to be as ingenious as you will, whose score can convey with precision these and similar infinitely minute nuances which form the secret of Crescentini's unique perfection..."[R.N.Coe]

Paganini was a great admirer of this type of singing and spoke highly of Matteo Babini, Gasparo Pacchierotti, Giovanni Battista Velluti and Girolamo Crescentini (whom he befriended). He acquired such an intimate knowledge of the art of bel canto that, even though he himself did not possess a voice, he was able to impart his insight to singers. When he began his

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23Geraldine de Courcy writes that it is improbable that Marchesi would have sung at Paganini's benefit (op.cit, p.40), and Edward Neill suggests that Paganini presented his biographers "with a material reflecting a reality pro domo sua" ([Il Cavaliere Armonico], p.12). While no proof can be given that Paganini's statement is incorrect, it may be that Schottky, when writing the final version of the autobiography had mistaken Marchesi for Crescentini (with whom Paganini was closely acquainted).

24Alternatively spelt Pacchiarotti or Pacchierotti. Stendhal opts for the former version while Paganini rather uses the latter.


26See *PE* 19, 22, 26, 32, 63, 185.
liaison with Antonia Bianchi, at the time a modest and apparently not too brilliant supernumerary chorister in a Venetian theater, he gave her special instruction "so that she could sing at concerts"27 and, in a very short time, she developed into an accomplished soprano whose *maestria* was recognised by many music critics, notably in Vienna.28 In relation to Stendhal's statement about the degeneration of the art of singing, it is quite revealing that Paganini also felt that the tradition was not being sustained. After hearing Angela Catalani, a soprano of the younger generation, he wrote to his friend Germi:

"The Catalani would have more soul if she had been trained by such celebrated masters as Crescentini, Pacchierotti, Babini and our celebrated Serra...I've been yawning a lot. Her strong and agile voice constitutes the most beautiful instrument; but she lacks a sense of rhythm and a musical philosophy."29

A spiritual heir of the Marcheses, Babinis, Pacchierottis and Crescentinis, Paganini embodied in his playing the teachings of the Italian tradition. The way he imparted the inflexions of the human voice to his instrument (which so impressed Friedrich Wieck, Felix Mendelssohn, Ole Bull and other experts) originated in his study of *bel canto*:

"No one can thoroughly understand Paganini without an educated appreciation of melody and the art of giving life and expression to it [wrote Ole Bull]. Without a knowledge of the Italian art of singing, it is impossible to properly appreciate his playing. Contemporary with Pasta, Pizzaroni, Rubini and Malibran, Paganini rivalled them, singing on his violin melodies, many of which had been sung by these artists, and astonishing even them more than the public. Paganini especially excelled in giving life to the simplest melodies, in giving to his tone the quality of the human voice."30

28 See: *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, Vienna, April 5, 1828 (review of the concert of 29 March held at the Redoutensaal).
29 Milano 18 Giunio 1823
"La Catalani avrebbe più anima se la fosse stata formata da de' celebri maestri, come un Crescentini, un Pacchierotti, un Babini ed un Serra nostro celebre...io sbadigliai moltissimo. La sua voce forte ed agile forma il più bello strumento; ma le manca la misura e la filosofia musicale." (PE 63) (Quite significant is the fact that both Stendhal's statement and Paganini's letter bear the date of 1823)
30 Bull, Sara. *Ole Bull, a Memoir*, p.24-25 (Violin notes by Ole Bull).
"My father now decided that he could teach me nothing more and therefore placed me in the hands of Genoa's leading violinist, Costa, who in six months gave me thirty lessons. I think back with pleasure on the painstaking interest of good old Costa to whom, however, I was no great delight since his principles often seemed unnatural to me, and I showed no inclination to adopt his bowing." [trl. de Courcy]

Paganini had spent the early, most vital phase of his apprenticeship under the iron rule of his father's supervision, gaining occasional friendly advice from the composer Gnecco and others, but away from the current methods and dogmatic rules prevalent at music institutions of the time. Antonio Paganini's remarkable insight was to recognise that, as far as the basics of violin technique were concerned (posture, violin and bow hold, etc.), his son would not really benefit from outside influence. It was partly on Gnecco's suggestion that the inevitable step to send the child to an official teacher was taken. Costa's proposition that his potential student should play a solo in church every Sunday made it easier for Antonio to accept the change. In later life, Paganini declared that he had greatly benefited from the rigour of this weekly "performance practice" which demanded the constant study of new works. The repertoire of the music played in the churches of Genoa at that time included the works of composers such as Corelli, Vivaldi, Porpora, Rossi, Stradella, Nardini, Scarlatti, Padre Martini, Galuppi, Pergolesi, Piccini, Durante, Somis, Čimarosa, Romelli, and Mozart.

Giacomo Costa, Paganini's first "official" teacher, was born in Genoa around 1760 (Geraldine de Courcy gives the date of 1761, while Carlo Marcello Rietmann and Edward Neill retain that of 1762). His early life and musical background are not documented but there are reasons to believe that he had received instruction from Filippo Manfredi some time between 1772 and 1777. At the time he gave lessons to Paganini, Costa held the position of

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31 Schottky, J. M., op.cit., ibid.
34 Manfredi, a disciple of Nardini in Leghorn, also taught the Genoese Giovanni Battista Serra and Giuseppe Romaggi. He is considered to have been instrumental in the establishment of the Genoese school of violin playing.
maestro di capella at the San Lorenzo Cathedral and was considered Genoa's leading violinist and teacher.\textsuperscript{35} Besides organising for his student to play regularly at the Cathedral and in other churches of Genoa (the Oratorio San Filippo Neri and the Chiesa di Nostra Signora delle Vigne), Costa must also be credited with having introduced Paganini to the concerto repertoire of Pleyel, Viotti, Rode and Kreutzer. However, the teacher/student relationship was not without problems: Paganini held strongly individual views on the matters of bowing and fingering which he was not willing to discard in exchange for Costa's sound, but unnecessarily rigid principles. To increase the tensions, Paganini, after hearing the violinist Durand, was stimulated to experiment with special techniques and to explore areas which were beyond Costa's field of expertise.

**Auguste Frédéric Durand** (or August Fryderyk Duranowski) was born in Warsaw in 1770. He was the son of a French émigré employed at the court of Prince Oginski as a musician. In 1789, Durand became a pupil of Viotti, who found him to possess a great talent and an exceptional ability to master technical difficulties. In 1794-95 he toured Germany and Italy. Paganini, who heard him at that time,\textsuperscript{36} later confessed to F.-J. Fétis that the Polish virtuoso had been the inspiration for a number of his own virtuosic effects. Durand was at the height of his Italian career when Bonaparte marched into the city of Milan (15 May 1796). He decided to volunteer for the French army and, joining Dombrowski's Polish Legion, he became aide-de-camp of General Menou. Implicated in a murder case, he was imprisoned in Milan in 1798.\textsuperscript{37} Released by the General himself, Durand resigned from the army and returned to the violin. In later years he settled in Strasbourg as leader of the Theatre Orchestra. Durand's compositions include a Concerto in A major (op.8) and the demanding Six Études (op.15). A late meeting between Paganini and Durand took place in London, in 1831. In his *Recollections of Paganini* (London, 1886), Felix Weiss relates that, as Paganini was ushered into Durand's lodgings, he called out in French: "Où est mon vieil ami, celui qui m'a fait tel que je suis!..."

\textsuperscript{35}Among Costa's violin students were Gnecco, Giovanni Serra, Paganini (6 months) and Nicola De Giovanni.

\textsuperscript{36}Paganini seems to have heard Durand on several occasions; see: Schottky, J. M., op.cit., p. 369.

\textsuperscript{37}See: PE 126 and Paganini's letter to the Revue Musicale of April 21, 1831.
Composition studies at Parma

After six months of lessons with Giacomo Costa, it was decided to seek expert advice outside Genoa:

"...My father finally decided to send me to the excellent composer, Rolla, and we went to Parma. Since Rolla was ill in bed, his wife showed us into a vestibule where I found a violin and the Maestro's latest concerto lying on a table. It needed but a sign from my father for me to take up the violin and play the composition off at sight. The ill composer was immediately interested and asked who was playing in this way; he couldn't believe it was only a little boy. However, when he had convinced himself that this was so, he exclaimed: 'I also can teach you nothing. For goodness' sake, go to Paer! Here you'd only be wasting your time.'

Alessandro Rolla (1757-1841) (c-Renzi and Conti) was one of Italy's leading violinists. His reaction to Paganini's playing reveals that the young musician was already a master of his instrument. Rolla was particularly impressed by the intelligence and maturity of Paganini's "impromptu" interpretation of his concerto - technically brilliant and stylistically irreproachable. Acknowledging that Paganini did not need any violin lessons, he advised him to take advantage of his stay in Parma and study composition with Paer:

"...Paer, who was then director of the Conservatorium in Parma, received me very kindly and referred me to his own teacher, the old but very experienced Neapolitan conductor Ghiretti, who now took me systematically in hand and for six months gave me three lessons a week in counterpoint. Under his direction I composed, as an exercise, twenty-four fugues for four hands, without any instrument, just with ink, pen, and paper. I made great progress because I myself was interested."  

There is unfortunately no trace left of the 24 Fugues written "just with ink, pen, and paper", nor does any fugue appear in the Catalogo tematico, if we exclude the three-voice canons belonging to the Quartets op.5 [M.S. 31 and 33]. Yet there exists a first-hand description of Paganini playing a fugue for unaccompanied violin. From his statement regarding his studies at Parma,

38Schottky, J. M., op.cit., ibid.
39 op.cit.
40Paganini parlait encore, lorsque'il commença une fugue travaillée sur les quatre cordes, depuis les chevilles jusqu'au chevalet, et de telle sorte que l'on croyait voir et entendre une
it appears that Paganini completed within ten months a program that would normally require several semesters of Conservatorium coursework. After the first months devoted to the study of counterpoint with Gasparo Ghiretti, Paganini was taken in hand by Ferdinando Paer:

"...Paer soon became interested. He grew very fond of me and absolutely insisted that I come to him twice a day to work with him. After about four months he told me to write a duetto, which he then looked over, saying with a pleased smile that he could find in it no violations of pure form. Shortly after this he left for Vienna to write an opera. We parted for a long time. Yet later I always returned with delight to this great master and am happy to call myself his grateful pupil."

Ferdinando Paer (1771-1839) was a native of Parma, where he studied under Francesco Fortunati (>Padre Martini) and Gasparo Ghiretti. Until Rossini's advent, he was one of the leading representatives of the Italian operatic school, in de Courcy's words, "an admirable craftsman with a genuine lyrical gift". He was also an experienced and sought-after composition teacher. In 1807, he left Parma and settled in Paris as Napoleon's maître de chapelle (he wrote the Bridal March for the imperial wedding of 2 April 1810). In 1823, Paer became Liszt's private composition tutor. There is therefore a significant artistic link between Paganini and Liszt. As regards the craft of composition, they shared the same solid traditional type of training. Both were heirs of the great Italian tradition through their common teacher Ferdinando Paer (>Fortunati>Padre Martini >Perti >Franceschini >Corsi).


41Gasparo Ghiretti (1747-1797). Information about Ghiretti's teachers is lacking. He became professor of violin and 'cello at the Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini in his native city of Naples and was subsequently appointed to the ducal orchestra in Parma in 1774. His numerous students included Ferdinando Paer, the violoncellist Alfonso Savij, and also, for a period of six months, Paganini. He wrote several books of sonatas, caprices and church music.

42Schottky, J. M., op.cit., ibid.
The last assignment

When he took Paganini under his wing, Paer knew that the allotted time was limited since he had an engagement to fulfil in Vienna. The regime of two daily sessions is a fair gauge of his interest in his talented student as well as of Paganini's receptivity. After four months of intense study, Paganini had to submit, as a final assignment, a duetto. Not a symphony, or a concerto; not even a sonata. Simply a piece of modest dimensions in the form of a musical dialogue, a cultivated, artistic conversazione. Such was Paer's farewell message to Paganini: a lesson in simplicity and musical philosophy. According to Lauro Malusi, the three Duetti Concertanti for violin and violoncello [M.S. 107] belong to the Parma period. One of them may be the duetto written for Paer, perhaps the duet N°2 in G minor, a short but remarkable work, with dense counterpoint, extremely changeable in harmony, alternately eloquent, impassioned and sparkling in its melodic designs. The opening statement has echoes of Beethoven:

Return to Genoa

After parting with Ferdinando Paer, the young musician, always accompanied by his father, proceeded through northern Italy, giving a series of concerts before returning home, towards the end of 1796:

"My father's excessive severity now seemed more oppressive than ever as my talent developed and my knowledge increased. I should have liked to break away from him so that I might travel alone; but my harsh mentor never left my side and accompanied me through most of the towns in northern Italy, especially Milan, Bologna, Florence, Pisa, Leghorn, etc., where I gave concerts and received great applause. I was then about fourteen years old and took great pleasure in my work except for the strict supervision of my father, who finally returned to Genoa with me."44

44Schottky, J. M., op. cit., ibid.
The concert tour was shortened probably as a consequence of the political turmoil. The Italian campaign had been launched on March 20, 1796, and, on 15 May, "General Bonaparte marched into the city of Milan at the head of the youthful army which had just crossed the Bridge of Lodi, and taught the world that, after the lapse of so many centuries, Cæsar and Alexander had found a successor at last..." The military situation growing steadily more acute, northern Italy was no longer an ideal place for artistic voyages and concert tours. Upon his return to Genoa, Paganini occupied himself with composition, putting into practice the teachings of Ghiretti and Paer and, more lucratively, he "played at private affairs", thus helping his family financially in a time of hardship:

"...From Parma I returned to Genoa, where for a long time I played the dilettante rather than the virtuoso. I played a good deal, but for the most part at private affairs. On the other hand I busied myself quite industriously with composition and also wrote a great deal for the guitar." He also made frequent visits to the private library of his Genoese protector, the Marquis Di Negro, deepening his knowledge of the repertoire of classical Italian music and widening his horizons in ancient Greek and Italian literature and poetry. Furthermore, he seems to have taken a special interest in treatises on ancient Greek music. The house of Gian Carlo di Negro (1769-1857), an enthusiastic patron of the arts, was open to musicians, writers and poets and later became a rendezvous of some of the most eminent minds of Europe including Francesco Gianni, Vincenzo Monti, Alessandro Manzoni, Antonio Canova, Francesco Guerazzi, Cesare Cantù, Massimo d'Azeglio, Giovanni Berchet, Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac, Byron, Stendhal, Mme de Staël, and Colonel Montgomery. It was there that Paganini was introduced to Rodolphe Kreutzer, possibly in December of 1796. On that...
occasion, the young violinist, on Di Negro's instigation, took an opportunity to show off his phenomenal sight-reading ability, giving a masterful rendition of a newly written and very difficult piece that the French master had composed for his concert tour.\textsuperscript{49}

**Rodolphe Kreutzer** (1766-1831) had been professor at the Paris Conservatoire since its foundation in 1795, and the first edition of his famous 40 Études had recently been published (1796). It would therefore not be surprising to find that the discussion between the French master and his young Italian colleague revolved around the subject of writing violin studies. At that time, the composition of a set of Études, Caprices, Studies (or "Matinées" as Gaviniès entitled his own collection), was considered an important asset in the curriculum vitae of a professional violinist. A significant personal contribution to the teaching repertoire was then a condition *sine qua non* to gain access to a professorship, and the publication of a work such as the 40 Études constituted both a potential source of income in royalties and a professional visiting-card.

*An encyclopædia of pre-Paganinian violin playing*

Stressing their fundamental importance in the acquisition of a solid technical basis, Carl Flesch described the 40 Études of Kreutzer as "an encyclopædia of pre-Paganinian violin playing."\textsuperscript{50} It is quite significant that these Études, which appeared initially in 1796, were one of the first publications issued by the newly founded Conservatoire de Musique - an institution created in the whirl of agitation and changes that characterised the Revolutionary period (1795). The violin Études, such as those conceived by Kreutzer for the Conservatoire, had an avowed didactic purpose and were devised to meet with the new requirements of efficiency in the instruction of professional orchestral players. Systematic, methodical, logical in their approach, they were "a typical product of French rationalism".\textsuperscript{51} They had a tremendous impact on the


\textsuperscript{50}"...eine Enzyklopädie des Vor-Paganinischen Geigenspiels." (Kreutzer, Rodolphe. 42 *Etüden für Violine*, ed. by Carl Flesch, Zürich: Hug&Co, 1953, introduction).

\textsuperscript{51}"Die Etüde, die im Hinblick auf die methodische Seite ein typisches Produkt des französischen Rationalismus ist, hat die didaktische Systematik zur Voraussetzung*
As with many of Paganini's early works, it is very difficult to give an exact date of composition for the Caprices, or to trace their first performance. No manuscript, sketch or tentative draft other than the fair copy handed to Ricordi's engraver in November 1817 has survived to bear witness to their genesis. However, from his declaration to Peter Lichtenthal that, after his return to Genoa, "he composed difficult music, studying continually difficult passages of his own invention, so as to master them",53 one may legitimately infer that he was occupied with his project of writing virtuoso violin studies. According to a well-established tradition, Locatelli's L'Arte del Violino was one of the sources of inspiration for the Caprices.54 Fétis reports that when this work fell into Paganini's hands, "he perceived from the first glance a whole new world of ideas and feats which had not had the success they deserved, because of their excessive difficulty and perhaps because, when Locatelli published his work, the time had not yet come to depart from classical canons."55 The music of Locatelli ignited the zeal and creativity of the young artist who sometimes practised until total physical exhaustion:

"...he was heard trying the same passage in a thousand different ways during ten or twelve hours, and was completely overwhelmed by fatigue at the end of the day. It is this unparalleled perseverance which allowed him to overcome difficulties which were considered insurmountable by contemporary artists, when he published a sample in a book of studies."56


54 Locatelli's L'Arte del Violino is a set of 12 violin concertos with 24 Caprices ad libitum. It was first published by Le Cène in Amsterdam in 1733. The work is sometimes referred to as L’Arte di nuova modulazione or Caprices Énigmatiques, from the titles given in subsequent abridged editions comprising only the Caprices.

55 "...au premier coup d’œil il y aperçu un monde nouveau d’idées et de faits, qui n’avaient point eu dans la nouveauté le succès mérité, à cause de leur excessive difficulté, et peut-être aussi parce que le moment n'était pas encore venu, à l'époque où Locatelli publia son ouvrage, pour sortir des formes classiques." Fétis, F.J. "Paganini" in: Biographie Universelle, vol VI, 1875, p.415 [Fétis based his assertions on conversations he had with Paganini in Paris in 1831].

56 "Quelquefois on le voyait essayer de mille manières différentes le même trait pendant dix ou douze heures, et rester à la fin de la journée dans l’accablement de la fatigue. C’est par cette persévérance sans exemple qu’il parvint à se jouer de difficultés qui furent considérées comme insurmontables par les artistes contemporains, lorsqu’il en publia un spécimen dans un cahier d’études." Fétis, F.J., Ibid.
The siege of Genoa

Israil Markovitch Yampolski describes the years 1798-1800 as the most important in the artistic development of Paganini. According to the Russian musicologist, it was during this period highly charged with revolution that "he formed his views and his musical genius" and began to write the Caprices:

"To wholly appreciate this work, understand its musical content, representing the heroical and rebellious spirit of the Risorgimento, one must know the social conditions of that time and what concepts have influenced its creator."57 [trl. I.Kortchnoi]

The arrival of the Napoleonic troups had changed the course of history in Italy. One could say that the Settecento prematurely ended as the Revolution reached the Peninsula. Having been subjected to the Austrian rule, the people readily welcomed the new ideas of liberation and unification. A description of the sudden and profound change in social consciousness is given by Stendhal in the opening chapter of La Chartreuse de Parme:

"A whole nation became aware, on 15 May 1796, that everything they had been respected until then was quite ridiculous and on occasion even hateful. The departure of the last Austrian regiment marked the collapse of old ideas: to risk one's life became fashionable. To love one's country with real passion and to strive for heroic actions was now seen as a necessary condition to gain access to happiness after these centuries of bland feelings and hypocrisy. The possessive despotism of Charles V and Philippe II had plunged the people into darkness; they toppled the statues of these tyrants and, suddenly, found themselves flooded with light."58 [trl. PXB]

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58"Un peuple tout entier s'aperçut, le 15 mai 1796, que tout ce qu'il avait respecté jusque-là était souverainement ridiculé et quelquefois odieux. Le départ du dernier régiment de l'Autriche marqua la chute des idées anciennes: exposer sa vie devint à la mode; on vit que pour être heureux après tant de siècles de sensations affadissantes, il fallait aimer la patrie d'un amour réal et chercher les actions héroïques. On était plongé dans une nuit profonde par la continuation du despotisme jaloux de Charles Quint et de Philippe II; on renversa leurs statues, et tout à coup l'on se trouva inondé de lumière." Stendhal. La Chartreuse de Parme, chapter I (Milan en 1796).
In June of 1797, Bonaparte put an end to the old Genoese Republic. The venerable *Serenissima Repubblica di Genova* was transformed into a new “equalitarian” Ligurian Republic under a French protectorate. The old aristocratic rule was abolished and the Genoese had to adopt a democratic form of government on the pattern of the French. With the continuing blockade of the port, the ongoing military operations and general unrest, the conditions of life in Genoa rapidly deteriorated. Maritime trade was brought to a standstill and the dockers, such as Paganini’s father, had to find other means of livelihood. French and Austrian forces fought important battles at Novi and Tortona, practically at the doors of Genoa. The situation in the city became more and more precarious. Due to the uncertain, erratic arrivals of grain, a rationing center was organised. In July of 1799, a national guard was formed and all males aged seventeen and over became eligible for military duty. Antonio Paganini, who had recently inherited a country property at San Biagio in the Polcevera Valley, decided to move his family out of Genoa, thus saving his two sons from possible conscription. The decision proved quite sensible for by September the city was declared to be in a state of siege. On 29 December the Free Port was closed and, for months, the besieged city heroically resisted the Austrians with the help of General André Masséna who had taken command of the defense forces.

“...While Paganini, by this time almost eighteen years of age, relentlessly practised his violin in Val Pocevera, supplies of food were becoming short at Genoa and people suffered indescribable torments... Horsemeat, cats and dogs became a luxury and finally worms and bats were placed on the ghastly menu. Corpses were piled high in the streets and for the living the conditions became daily more atrocious....”

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59 See supra.

60 “Mentre Paganini ormai quasi diciotenne studiava il violino con rabbioso accanimento in Val Pocevera, a Genova i viveri venivano a mancare e la popolazione subiva tormenti inenarrabili; si razionò il pane, si risparmiavano le bucce delle patate; la carne di cavallo, i gatti e i cani divennero roba di lusso, sulla mense comparvero perfino i vermi e i pipistrelli. Nelle strade, i cadaveri si ammassavano in macabri mucchi, e per i vivi, le condizioni divenivano ogni giorno più atroci...” Tibaldi-Chiesa, Maria. *Paganini, la vita e l’opera*, Milan: Garzanti, 1940, p.29.
formation of the violinists of the Paris School and this was reflected in the precision, flexibility, and unprecedented cohesion achieved by the string section of the Orchestre du Conservatoire. Their inherent, rich musical qualities, however, were marred by a streak of scholastic rigidity and formalism, as well as by their all too ostentatious instructional purpose. It must be observed that a rather aporetic proposition is brought about by the original title which reads: 40 Études ou Caprices pour le Violon. This hesitation suggests a form of compromise between the austerity of serious "technical" study and the lighter, more engaging nature of a Caprice. In Kreutzer, characteristically, Étude comes before Caprice, whereas Jacques Pierre Rode, another member of the famous professorial "triumvirat" at the Conservatoire de Musique (Baillot-Kreutzer-Rode), chose to entitle his own violin studies Caprices en forme d'Études. Rode placed the stress on the musical aspect but still cast his work in the mould of scholastic Études to meet the institutional requirements of the Conservatoire.

The influence of both Kreutzer and Rode on Paganini's musical development must not be overlooked. He studied and played most of their works and indeed relied on a repertoire based on their concertos during the first part of his career as a touring virtuoso. In his own compositions, however, and particularly in the 24 Caprices, he avoided following in the steps of these masters, convinced that a new chapter in violin playing had to be written that would express the ideals of his time. It was not in Paganini's character to descend to compromise in artistic and other matters, nor did he have to meet with a publication deadline since he was not attached to any institution. From 1797, the probable date of their inception, to November 1817, when they were handed to Ricordi's engraver, the Caprices were Paganini's constant artistic preoccupation. These seemingly spontaneous masterpieces of invention mask a reality distinguished by twenty years of study and maturation.


52 "...Die Schule von Baillot, Rode und Kreutzer liefert ihnen die Geiger, und es ist eine Freude zu sehen, wenn die jungen Leute so in Masse auf's Orchester kommen, und alle nun anfangen mit demselben Bogen, derselben Art, derselben Ruhe und demselben Feuer..." (Mendelssohn's letter to Zelter).
Caught in a maelstrom of foreign conflicts, Genoa was experiencing one of the most harrowing sieges in history. Never-ending shelling by the forces of General Hohenzollern, famine and epidemics took their toll of human lives: over 30,000 people died from hunger, typhus, or suicide. A few biographers have accredited the well-established but undocumented tradition according to which Paganini, furtively leaving San Biagio at night, went to Genoa to visit his friends and to continue his studies at the library of Gian Carlo Di Negro:

"In 1799, Paganini, together with his family, retired to the suburb of Polcevera, a short distance from Genoa... During his residence there, he devoted himself to the study of music, composition, and the violin... He made frequent trips to Di Negro's library where he was able to study the music of all the masters of the preceding centuries."  

"At night, without telling his father, Paganini was going to Genoa. These trips were very dangerous, because he could be taken for an enemy spy. Anyway, he was doing it with the audacity of a carbonaro. There he studied till dawn the works of Corelli, Vivaldi, Tartini, Locatelli and other masters of the ancient Italian School of violin playing in the palazzo of his protector, the Marquis Di Negro."  

"Romairone", the country house owned by the Paganinis in the Polcevera Valley, still exists. It is situated in the territory of San Biagio, a village about 12 kilometers away from Genoa. The walk to the city through the hills, at night, is rather adventurous, but feasible. Paganini's determination was strengthened by the prospect of visiting those of his friends who had remained in the besieged city. It is perhaps at that time that he made the acquaintance of the poet-patriot Ugo Foscolo, who was taking an active part in the resistance, "haranguing the soldiers, lifting up the spirits of the political refugees,

62 По ночам, тайком от отца, Паганини пробирался в Геную. Эти опасные поездки в разгар военных действий, когда его могли принять за вражеского шпиончика, совершались им со смелостью карболаты. Здесь, в палаццо его покровителя маркиза Ди Негро, в богатой музыкальной библиотеке, Паганини часто просиживал до рассвета над произведениями Корелли, Вивальди, Тартини, Локателли, и других мастеров старой итальянской скрипичной школы." Mostras, K. G. op.cit., p.8 (I.M. Yampolski's preface).
encouraging the citizens." Yampolski has stressed the importance of Foscolo's influence on Paganini:

"Young Paganini was very impressed by Ugo Foscolo's Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis, the novel that all young Italians read at that time. The poet has evoked the illusions, hopes, love, despair and sorrow of the Italian youth of that time in the person of a passionate young man driven to suicide by his touching love and patriotic despair. Later, it was written that 'listening to Paganini playing was like reading one of Jacopo Ortis's letters'..." 

Between Paganini and Foscolo there undoubtedly existed a strong similarity of character and thought. They both had an acute perception of the emerging Romantic sensitiveness and were united by their longing for artistic freedom. They shared an interest in ancient Greek literature and one could say, to use Antonino Sole's expression, that, by education as well as by temperament, they stood "fra rimpianto dell'antico e coscienza del moderno". Freely translated, this means that "they had a nostalgic passion for the classical tradition coupled with a sharp consciousness of modernity." 

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63 Yampolski. ibid.
64 Copies of the Last letters of Jacopo Ortis were available from 1798 in Italy. The novel owes much to Goethe's Werther. Foscolo wrote that the main purpose of his work was "to usher the reader into the soul of a person committing suicide" ("...far penetrare i lettori nell'anima d'un suicida..."), the theme of the suicide appears in Paganini's Adagio of the First Concerto.
65 Mostras, Konstantin G. op.cit., ibid.
66 A late conversation between Foscolo and Paganini (c.1822) was recorded by the writer Alessandro Amati: "Paganini and I were on the terrace; Ugo was unwilling to remain where Monti was playing the experienced gallant, and joined us. The rage on his countenance vanished when he saw Paganini. He shook him by the hand and said, 'I went to your concert last night; you are a god, and Homer hovered before my eyes when I heard you play. The first magnificent movement of your concerto seemed to portray the landing of the Greeks before Troy; the Adagio in its nobility was a colloquy between Briseis and Achilles; but when shall I hear the despair, the lamentations over the hearse of Patroclus? - 'As soon as Achilles-Paganini finds a Patroclus among the violinists' replied Paganini." (see: Schottky, op. cit., p. 327).
The final revision

For Sergio Martinotti and Claudio Casini, the stay at "Romairone" in the Polcevera Valley provided Paganini with the calm and the solitude needed to meditate on his accumulated knowledge and to pass in review all the repertoire of Italian violin music. He committed himself to this task of revision perhaps on Paer's suggestion and also in memory of Gasparo Ghiretti who had died in Parma during 1797. Be that as it may, he would not have been able to carry out this "final revision" without having access to music scores and books, hence his adventurous visits to the music library of Gian Carlo Di Negro. This additional period of study was dictated by the political and military circumstances. Professional activity was suspended and there was no question of performing. Having escaped conscription in the national guard, Paganini took advantage of the situation to deepen his knowledge and practise intensively. Such was Paganini's last year as a student: an extraordinary experience of isolation interrupted by clandestine excursions to the besieged city, conjoined with deep study of ancient music, constant research of "new and hitherto unsuspected effects":

"The years 1799-1800 marked a turning-point in Paganini's physical and spiritual evolution."

"These stormy years marked a great change in the artistic biography of Paganini. In this period he formed his views, his musical genius."

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69 Paganini resumed regular public appearances in December of 1800 at Modena. The two concerts he gave there (5 and 21 December) marked the start of his professional life.

70 The privileged situation of the young violinist "practising his violin in Val Polcevera" and away from the uproar of the Austrian artillery, is not without similarities with that of the young Chopin in Stuttgart, learning of the seizure of Warsaw by the Russians and writing the "Revolutionary" study as an expression of grief and revolt.

71 "gli anni 1799-1800 segnarono nell'evoluzione fisica come quella spirituale di Paganini una tappa importantissima." Tibaldi Chiesa, Maria, op. cit., p.28.

72 Эти бурные годы явились важным переломным периодом в творческой биографии Паганини. Именно тогда сложилось его мировоззрение, сформировался музыкальный гений." Mostras, K. G. op.cit., p.5.
School versus Tradition

"...Paganini's formation is not so much tied to schools or lessons as to his tremendous capacity of assimilation", writes Sergio Martinotti. Free from scholastic fetters, Paganini, with greater independence of thought and curiosity than any of his contemporaries, went right to the sources of Italian violin playing. If Paganini cannot be strictly speaking attached to a specific school of violin playing, one may, however, consider his contribution as a culminating manifestation of the great old Italian tradition, comparable to a fireworks finale. His careful study of the works of the old masters, his exploring spirit and exceptional musical intelligence allowed him to carry on to their logical conclusion many ideas contained in the works of Marini, Farina, Stradella, Corelli, Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Locatelli, Veracini, Tartini, Lolli, Giornovichi and Viotti. He exploited and amplified existing techniques but also revived forgotten ones, striving for the fusion of traditional material with his own visionary concepts. This "éblouissante synthèse", as Anne Penesco has defined it, found one of its finest expression in the 24 Caprices. An examination of the work substantiates Jacques Thibaud's postulate that, in instrumental art, Paganini forms a double link between the classical, the romantic and the modern style. While the virtuoso attempted to amaze his listeners with his transcendent execution, the composer did submit to the demands of traditional forms, and often preferred structures which were characterised by their clarity and simplicity. This has often resulted in Paganini's being misconstrued as a pseudo-romantic. The formal clarity

73 "La formazione di Paganini non è legata a scuole o lezioni, quanto all’enorme facoltà assimilativa." Martinotti, Sergio. Ottocento Strumentale Italiano. p.278.


75 "...Paganini est, dans l'art instrumental, une double liaison entre le style classique-romantique et le style moderne. Il a donc devancé d'un siècle l'écriture violonistique actuelle, et je reste persuadé que ses inventions, ses trouvailles, ses heureuses créations ont influencé les possibilités techniques de toute l'orchestration." [...] In instrumental art, Paganini forms a double link between the classical-romantic and the modern style. His genius was seconded by incredible virtuosity, which anticipated all the musical art of the future. He was a century ahead of contemporary writers of violin music. I am convinced that his inventions, his discoveries, his felicitous creations, have influenced the technical possibilities of universal orchestration... Thibaud, Jacques, preface to Renée de Saussine's Paganini le Magicien. Paris: Gallimard, 1938.
which is demonstrated in the concertos, the variations and indeed even in the Caprices points to a clear and logical approach which is not typical of Romanticism. But the link with tradition does not in the least detract from Paganini's originality as a composer. On the contrary, his ability to effortlessly incorporate the totality of his expression and to develop highly complex material within a strict mould with "no violation of pure form", provides evidence of his independence of thought and striking compositional powers.\textsuperscript{77} In response to those critics who claim that Paganini was not capable of giving distinctive creative shape to his works, it may be argued that the need simply did not arise. The availability of traditional structures which were capable of accommodating his expression obviated the need for new ones. Schumann, in a 1832 article, described Caprice 4 as being "filled with romanticism".\textsuperscript{78} A detailed analysis of the work not only confirms but substantiates this impression. In the Caprices, Paganini seems to literally spell out the musical vocabulary of the Romantics: abundant use of diminished sevenths, minor ninths, augmented seconds, Italian and German sixths (augmented IVth degree), expressive use of the Neapolitan (flattened IInd degree), abrupt modulations to distant keys -sometimes by way of enharmonic change - tonal ambiguity, marking of unaccented sub-divisions of the beat in the most rapid tempo, sudden changes of mood (often switching between rapid effervescence and melting tenderness), lightning progressions, successions of thirds and sixths in unexpected keys, full utilisation of timbral range, new sonorities, highly chromatic sequences and of course, systematic exploration of that favourite dimension, virtuosity. All these elements, in high density under a single bow and four fingers (in the case of Paganini sometimes five...)\textsuperscript{79} were soon adopted and employed by other musicians -

\textsuperscript{76}See, among others: -Lang, Paul Henry. Music in Western Civilization, p.802 ["Among the notable pseudo-romanticists let us mention two typical cases, Paganini and Onslow."] -Casini, Claudio, Paganini, Milan: Electa, 1982, p.47 ["benché egli non avesse consapevolmente nulla a che fare col romanticismo."] -Einstein, Alfred, Music in the Romantic Era, p.203 ["But even if he himself was anything but a Romantic, he impressed the Romantics strongly as being a Romantic personality..."].

\textsuperscript{77}Several Caprices follow the strict ABA or ABA' schema (13,15,17,18,20,22,23; 3,5,6 and 11)

\textsuperscript{78}"Der ganze Satz ist voll Romantik..." Schumann, Robert. GS, p. 165.

\textsuperscript{79}Contemporary testimonies relate that Paganini invariably employed his thumb as an aid in the execution of certain multiple-chords or for the execution of certain shifting passages. The characteristic "thumb in the palm position " described by Fétis (op.cit.,p. 74) is clearly
especially pianists - to exploit the expressive potential of their instrument. But some conservative musicians denigrated the Caprices, alleging that they were "against the nature of the instrument" (Spohr) or simply "unplayable". With the benefit of hindsight, their adoption by Schumann, Liszt, Brahms, and well into the twentieth century by Busoni, Szymanowsky, Ravel, Milhaud, Rachmaninoff, Lutoslawski, Dallapiccola, Blacher, Rochberg, Schnittke, etc., offers convincing evidence that they actually contained pioneering material which enriched the musical language. In the more immediate nineteenth century context, they found a response in the emerging sensitiveness of the Romantic era.

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depicted by Delacroix in his famous portrait of the violinist (see infra, Chapter 4).