

# NICCOLO' PAGANINI

## 24 Capricci – Complete cycle

(with option of “violin and piano” version by Robert Schumann)



The twenty-four Capricci for solo violin op.1 were written around 1800 by Paganini in Genoa, returning from a concert tour in Tuscany. They were published as op.1 from Ricordi in 1818 and widely advertised from the newspapers, together with a group of Sonatas for violin and guitar op.2 and op.3 and to the six Quartets for strings and guitar op.4 and op.5. The Capricci were dedicated "to the artists", that is to the violinists of superior class and not to the "amateurs". Reprinted later by Pacini in Paris, the Capricci attracted the attention of great musicians of the time, such as Schumann, who first took care of the piano transcription, and Liszt, who called them «of rare freshness and lightness» similar to «many diamonds that the richer setting required by the piano could strengthen them rather than volatilize them». In particular, the twenty-fourth Capriccio gave the opportunity to write a series of brilliant variations to Brahms, Rachmaninov, Lutoslawski, Boris Blacher and other composers.

According to a practice deriving from the seventeenth century, the term "capriccio" indicates a type of composition mainly entrusted to the improvisation. Paganini probably kept in mind the previous violinist models, especially those of Locatelli, Kreutzer and Rode, who wrote capricci characterized by a dense polyphonic game. But there is no doubt that the Capricci by Paganini, in addition to having an indisputable teaching value, are an example of high school violin and contain a musical and aesthetic message of considerable importance, standing on the same level as the piano studies of Chopin. In these pages all the Paganinian virtuosity spread out, with the use of the most extraordinary finds or effects, dictated by a demonic nature and aimed at widening the expressive range, both timbre and rhythm, of the violin, so as to touch the top of the art of this instrument in the nineteenth century European. Each Capriccio is a problem in itself and offers a starting point for a series of harmonic and contrapuntal ideas characterized by phosphorescent musical inventions.

In fact, no artist before him has been able to develop and enhance the possibilities of expressiveness and techniques of the violin, from the use of "scordatura" to double harmonics, thirds, sixths, octaves, from glissando to the pizzicato with the left hand.

1. Capriccio n. 1: Andante (Mi maggiore)
2. Capriccio n. 2: Moderato (Si minore)
3. Capriccio n. 3: Sostenuto, Presto (Mi minore)
4. Capriccio n. 4: Maestoso (Do minore)
5. Capriccio n. 5: Agitato (La minore)
6. Capriccio n. 6: Lento (Sol minore)
7. Capriccio n. 7: Posato (La minore)
8. Capriccio n. 8: Maestoso (Mi bemolle maggiore)
9. Capriccio n. 9: Allegretto (Mi maggiore)
10. Capriccio n. 10: Vivace (Sol minore)
11. Capriccio n. 11: Andante, Presto (Do maggiore)
12. Capriccio n. 12: Allegro (La bemolle maggiore)
13. Capriccio n. 13: Allegro (Si bemolle maggiore)
14. Capriccio n. 14: Moderato (Mi bemolle maggiore)
15. Capriccio n. 15: Posato (Mi minore)
16. Capriccio n. 16: Presto (Sol minore)
17. Capriccio n. 17: Sostenuto, Andante (Mi bemolle maggiore)
18. Capriccio n. 18: Corrente, Allegro (Do maggiore)
19. Capriccio n. 19: Lento, Allegro assai (Mi bemolle maggiore)
20. Capriccio n. 20: Allegretto (Re maggiore)
21. Capriccio n. 21: Amoroso, Presto (La maggiore)
22. Capriccio n. 22: Marcato (Fa maggiore)
23. Capriccio n. 23: Posato (Mi bemolle maggiore)
24. Capriccio n. 24: Tema con 11 variazioni. Quasi presto (La minore)