

## INTRODUCTION

As is shown in the new *Thematic Catalogue*,<sup>1</sup> since Niccolò Paganini's solo violin works make up a *corpus* in their own right, they represent a particularly significant aspect of his musical output.

This part of his output, with the 24 *Capricci* op. 1 published by Ricordi in 1820 at its core, is made up of compositions that vary widely in terms of character and structure, and were written during different periods of his life. They include *Inno patriottico*, *Tema variato* and *Sonata a violino solo*, composed during his juvenile period (probably before 1805);<sup>2</sup> a further *Sonata a violino solo* (also known as *Merveille de Paganini*), conceived during his Lucca period (1805-1809) and dedicated to Princess Elisa Baciocchi; and some other pieces that belong to later periods, such as *Capriccio a violino solo* su "In cor più non mi sento" from 1821; another *Capriccio per violino solo*, a singular work notated across four staves, written in Vienna in 1828; the variations on *God Save The King* from 1829 and *Caprice d'adieu* from 1833. As far as the short *Valtz* in A major is concerned, given its musical characteristics, we can reasonably rule out its being a composition for solo violin: the piece, recently published,<sup>3</sup> corresponds to the violin part from the *Valzer no. 2* from Paganini's *Divertimenti carnevaleschi* M.S. 4.<sup>4</sup> The fact that it is found in a

collection of compositions for guitar further leads to the hypothesis that the author intended to write a version for violin and guitar for which only the violin part remains. The inventory of works for solo violin according to the TC reads:

- M.S. 6 *Sonata a violino solo (Merveille de Paganini)*  
M.S. 25 *24 Capricci op. 1*  
M.S. 44 *Capriccio a violino solo su "In cor più non mi sento"*  
M.S. 54 *Capriccio per violino solo*  
M.S. 56 *God Save The King*  
M.S. 68 *Caprice d'adieu*  
M.S. 80 [*Valtz*]  
M.S. 81 *Inno patriottico*  
M.S. 82 *Tema variato*  
M.S. 83 *Sonata a violino solo*  
M.S. 136 *Contradanze inglesi*  
M.S. 138 *Quattro studi*<sup>5</sup>

In substance, besides the 24 *Capricci*—no doubt the most important as well as the most studied and performed works of this group—and a few other compositions, his other works for solo violin have not generated any particular interest on the part of scholars (and performers) of the great violinist's music, to the detriment of a group of pieces that deserve greater consideration for their originality and distinctive characteristics. Amongst these, *Sonata a violino solo* M.S. 6 (*Merveille de Paganini*), *Caprice d'adieu* M.S. 68, and *Capriccio a violino solo* su "In cor più non mi sento" (M.S. 44), the three of which recently came out in a critical edition curated by me.<sup>6</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the *Tema variato* for solo violin is a piece that belongs to the Genoese composer's juvenile period: according to the musicologist Edward Neill, it was composed between the end

1. *Catalogo tematico delle musiche di Niccolò Paganini. Aggiornamento*, edited by Maria Rosa Moretti and Anna Sorrento, introduction and appendices by Maria Rosa Moretti, Milan, Associazione Culturale Musica con le Ali, 2018. All the "M.S." references are based on this catalogue, hereafter referred to as TC (*Thematic Catalogue*).

2. Of the three compositions that have come down to us in non-autograph copies, it is possible that *Inno patriottico* was not intended for violin solo, but was actually a composition for violin and guitar, seeing that, on the frontispiece, the indication "violin" can be seen at bottom right, possibly indicating that it was just a part for the instrument rather than constituting the entire piece. See MORETTI and SORRENTO, *Catalogo tematico delle musiche di Niccolò Paganini*, Genoa, Comune di Genova, 1982, p. 255; TC, pp. 256-257.

3. NICCOLÒ PAGANINI, *6 piccoli Valtz per violino e chitarra*, revision and realisation of the guitar part by Italo Vescovo, Bologna, Ut Orpheus, 2017.

4. NICCOLÒ PAGANINI, *Divertimenti carnevaleschi per due violini e basso* M.S. 4, critical edition by Italo Vescovo and Flavio Menardi Noguera, Milan, Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 2011.

5. NICCOLÒ PAGANINI, *Quattro studi per violino solo*, edited by Danilo Prefumo, Rome, Società Editrice di Musicologia, 2013. In the 1982 *Catalogo tematico*, this composition figures among the *Pieces of uncertain authorship [Opere dubbie]*, while in the TC it has been included as a fully-fledged work of Paganini. See TC, pp. 43-44.

6. They were published, respectively, in 2016, 2017 and 2018 by Ricordi.

Nicolò Paganini  
TEMA VARIATO  
(M.S. 82)

*Tema*

4

7

10

14

*Var: I*

8<sup>va</sup> loco 8<sup>va</sup>

4 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>

8 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>

11 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>

14 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>