

The Introduction and Rondo capriccioso, Op. 28 (1863), is one of Saint-Saëns' few genuine showpieces. It was composed for his friend, the virtuoso violinist Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908), for whom he had already written the Violin Concerto in A major, Op. 28 (1859), and for whom he would eventually create the Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61 (1880). Whereas the Op. 28 Violin Concerto was written when the violinist was only 15 years of age, the Introduction and Rondo capriccioso is deliberately challenging -- a testimony to the mature master's technique. Sarasate's frequent programming of the work did a great deal for its popularity in the years after its publication (1870); its appeal was wide enough, in fact, that both George Bizet and Claude Debussy made arrangements of it -- the former for violin and piano, and the latter for piano, four hands. As one would expect from the title, the Introduction and Rondo capriccioso begins with a slow section, marked *Andante malinconico* and characterized by a plaintive falling leap and rising arpeggio. Becoming gradually more animated, the introduction culminates in a scintillating mini-cadenza that leads into the Rondo proper (*Allegro ma non troppo*). When the violin enters, it states a theme that has a Spanish flavor, stemming from syncopation and chromatic inflections. The melody spins out into wild arpeggios and gigantic leaps before the orchestra begins a bridge to the contrasting theme, marked *con morbidezza*. This lyric melody is especially entrancing because it is in 2/4 time, played simultaneously with the continuing 6/8 time of the orchestra. The Rondo theme returns quietly in the solo violin before an orchestral outburst that is a reprise of the earlier bridge passage. The oboe takes the final statement of the rondo theme, which becomes fragmented and developed until the beginning of the brilliant coda, which is mainly a showcase for Sarasate's technical ability.

ERICK FRIEDMAN PLAYS VIOLIN SHOWPIECES

Wieniawski - Légende

Saint-Saens - Havanasuite Op. 83

Paganini - Concerto No. 1 Op. 6

Rondo, *Allegro Spirituoso*

Chausson - Poème Op. 25

Ravel - Tzigane

Saint-Saens - Introduction Et Rondo
Capriccioso Op. 28

Sir Malcolm Sargent - London Symphony Orchestra

Walter Hendl - Chicago Symphony Orchestra



Légende Op. 17 is a showpiece by the Polish violin virtuoso Henryk Wieniawski, written for solo violin and orchestral accompaniment, though it is often performed using a piano reduction as a substitute for the orchestra. It is estimated to have been written in about 1860, though the exact date is unknown.

Wieniawski's Légende was instrumental in helping to secure his engagement to Isabella Hampton. Initially, Isabella's parents did not approve of their daughter's engagement to Wieniawski, but after they heard the piece, they were so impressed that they offered the young couple their blessing, and they were married in 1860.

Saint-Saëns completed the Havanaise in E major for violin and orchestra, Op. 83, in 1887; however, the work's origins predate this by two years. In November 1885, the composer set out on a concert tour with the violinist, Raphael Diaz Albertini, playing throughout northern France before moving on to Germany. While in Brest on a cold night, Saint-Saëns built a fire in his hotel room, the popping sound of the burning wood sparking a melodic idea in his mind. Saint-Saëns originally wrote the piece for violin and piano, soon after orchestrating the piano accompaniment. The Havanaise, Op. 83, was published in 1888 in Paris with a dedication to Albertini.

Paganini - Concerto No. 1 Op. 6 Rondo, Allegro Spirituoso was composed by Niccolò Paganini in Italy, probably between 1817 and 1818. The concerto reveals that Paganini's technical wizardry was fully developed. Contemporary audiences gasped at the extended passages of double-stop thirds, both chromatic and in harmonics.

Poème, Op. 25, is a work for violin and orchestra written by Ernest Chausson in 1896. It is a staple of the violinist's repertoire, has very often been recorded and performed, and is generally considered Chausson's best-known and most-loved composition.

Poème was written in response to a request from Eugène Ysaÿe for a violin

concerto. Chausson felt unequal to the task of a concerto, writing to Ysaÿe: I hardly know where to begin with a concerto, which is a huge undertaking, the devil's own task. But I can cope with a shorter work. It will be in very free form with several passages in which the violin plays alone.

It was commenced in April 1896 and finished on 29 June, and was written while Chausson was holidaying in Florence, Italy.

He wrote three different versions of Poème: with orchestra; with piano accompaniment (later rewritten by other hands); and a recently discovered version for violin, string quartet and piano, a companion to his Concert in D for piano, violin and string quartet, Op. 21 (1892). The solo violin parts of these versions are identical except for one minor detail.

The work is notionally in the key of E-flat, and lasts about 16 minutes. It was dedicated to Ysaÿe, who gave its early performances.

Tzigane is a rhapsodic composition by the French composer Maurice Ravel. It was commissioned by and dedicated to Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Arányi, great-niece of the influential violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim. The original instrumentation was for violin and piano (with optional luthéal attachment). The first performance took place in London on April 26, 1924 with the dedicatee on violin and with Henri Gil-Marchex at the piano (with luthéal).

The composition is in one movement, with an approximate duration of ten minutes. Though the composer is sometimes regarded as following an Impressionist idiom, Tzigane clearly demonstrates Ravel's ability to imitate the (late) Romantic style of violin showmanship promoted by such composer-virtuosi as Paganini and Sarasate.



Erick Friedman

Plays Violin Showpieces

- 1. Sarasate - Zigeunerweisen Op. 20 8:23**
- 2. Wieniawski - Légende 7:31**
- 3. Saint-Saens - Havanasuite Op. 83 9:13**
- 4. Paganini - Concerto No. 1 Op. 6 - Rondo, Allegro Spirituoso 8:26**
- 5. Chausson - Poème Op. 25 14:39**
- 6. Ravel - Tzigane 8:46**
- 7. Saint-Saens - Introduction Et Rondo Capriccioso Op. 28 8:47**
- Total Time: 65:45**

Tracks: 1,2,3,5,6
Conductor – Sir Malcolm Sargent
Engineer – Gordon Perry
Producer – Charles Gerhardt
Orchestra – London Symphony Orchestra
Recorded by RCA 1964
Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape

Tracks: 4,7
Conductor – Walter Hendl
Engineer – Lewis Layton
Producer – Richard Mohr
Orchestra – Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Recorded by RCA 1962
Transferred from a 15ips 2-track tape



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