

# Capriccio no. 20

Op. 1, No. 20

Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840)

arr. for guitar by Drew Henderson

**Allegretto**

Musical notation for the first system of Capriccio no. 20, measures 1-16. The piece is in 6/8 time and D major. It features a melody with various fingerings (e.g., 3 2, 4 1, 3 2) and articulations like *dolce* and *RH. harm*. Measure numbers 8 and 17 are indicated. The system ends with a *Fine* marking.

Musical notation for the second system of Capriccio no. 20, measures 25-27. The key signature changes to D minor. This system is characterized by frequent trills (*tr*) and slurs. Fingerings and dynamics like *m*, *i*, *m*, *i* are present. Measure 25 is marked with a repeat sign. Measure 28 is indicated below the staff.

Musical notation for the third system of Capriccio no. 20, measures 28-30. This system continues the trill and slur patterns. It includes the instruction *RH. harm* and various fingerings. Measure 31 is indicated below the staff.

Musical notation for the fourth system of Capriccio no. 20, measures 31-32. This system features trills and slurs. The Roman numeral XIX is written below the staff. Measure 33 is indicated below the staff.

Musical notation for the fifth system of Capriccio no. 20, measures 33-35. This system includes trills and slurs with dynamics like *p* and *m*. Measure 36 is indicated below the staff.

Musical notation for the sixth system of Capriccio no. 20, measures 36-40. This system concludes with trills and slurs, including dynamics like *p* and *m*. Measure 40 is indicated below the staff.

39 *tr* *m* *i* *tr* *tr* *f* *p* *f* *p*

42 *tr* *f* *p* *f* *p* *(p)* *tr* *m* *i* *p* *tr* *m* *i* *p* *p*

45 *tr* *tr* *cresc.* *f* ⑥ ⑤ ④ ② *p*

48 CV CII CIII CII

51 ① ② ② *tr* *m* *i* *m* *i* *tr* *tr* *f*

55 *tr* ③ ② ② ① *tr*

D.C. al Fine

# Notes on Paganini's Caprice no. 20

Of all the Paganini caprices, the 20th seems to be the easiest to adapt to the classical guitar. The extensive use of the open D string as a drone (meant to imitate a bagpipe), the lack of any "light speed" violin runs, and the general range of this piece make it readable off the original score with only a few considerations to make when adapting it to the guitar. Admittedly, the "bagpipe" effect is lost on the guitar, however it still stands as a beautiful piece and serves as one of the best slur and articulation etudes I have found.

Below I discuss a few of these considerations, for anyone looking to study this caprice.

1) In this arrangement I use harmonics to help avoid disturbing the constantly droning D string, while also avoiding large shifts. If one chooses to play the passage without harmonics, it would result in more portamenti, a technique that may also work stylistically. I felt that being forced to always do a big glide up to the high A became a little predictable as this move happens a few times. Whatever you choose to do, don't disturb the open D as it should drone on like a bagpipe.

Measures 1 and 2

*dolce*      *RH. harm*      *dolce*      *a little portamento to connect the two A's*

2) Aside from the speed, the challenge of the second section in B minor is the clarity of the trills. In fact, I feel that this section is an excellent slur study for the guitar.

The action of "hammering-on" and "pulling-off", necessary for slurs, takes a lot of energy and movement compared to what bowed string instruments do. Sustaining clear slurs throughout this piece can be quite taxing on the left hand. It is not so hard to get the first few "passable", but to get all of them perfect where every slur is clear and even requires one to really examine their slur technique. Here is my realization of the trills:

*tr*      *m*      *i*      *m*      *i*      *tr*      *3*      *i*      *m*      *i*      *i*      *m*      *i*

Ideal, preserving the rhythm      What it probably becomes at faster speeds

There are a couple of tricky high notes, but luckily there is a fairly straight-forward solution. In the example below, all the notes are playable except the last two. By leaving the 1st finger on the F# played earlier, you can set up the 8ve harmonic for the right hand. Unfortunately, this harmonic is in the middle of the sound hole, and requires a lot of practice (and maybe a magic marker) to get used to. As I play this passage with rest stroke, the "i" finger will already be resting on the 2nd string to execute the first harmonic.

*8*      *m*      *i*      *m*      *i*      *a/i*      *a/i*

*RH. harm*

I am offering this score as a small token of thanks to my subscribers. I realize there are sometimes long pauses between videos, but rest assured i'm always working on the next one. It takes a long time to get the pieces ready to present, and I appreciate your patience greatly! Happy practicing!