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Peter Christoskov's Twelve Caprices for Solo Violin, opus 1: a historical and theoretical analysis of the work and its connection to Bulgarian folk music

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**PETER CHRISTOSKOV'S *TWELVE CAPRICES FOR SOLO VIOLIN*,
OPUS 1: A HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
WORK AND ITS CONNECTION TO BULGARIAN FOLK MUSIC**

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
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in

The School of Music

by

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May, 2006

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF EXAMPLES	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
INTRODUCTION:	1
Background of the <i>Twelve Caprices</i> , op. 1: History and the Problems of Their Creation.....	3
The Genre "Caprice" as a Musical, Historical and Stylistic Line and Its Application in <i>Twelve Caprices</i> , op.1.....	5
CHAPTER ONE: FROM CREATIVE PERSONALITY TO <i>TWELVE CAPRICES</i> , OP.1:PETER CHRISTOSKOV'S BIOGRAPHY	9
CHAPTER TWO: STYLISTIC,DRAMATIC AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICIN THE <i>TWELVE CAPRICES</i> , OP.1 BY CHRISTOSKOV	13
CHAPTER THREE: <i>PRELUDE</i>	18
CHAPTER FOUR: <i>DAYCHOVO HORO</i>	22
CHAPTER FIVE: <i>RUCHENITSA</i>	26
CHAPTER SIX: <i>IMPROVISATION</i>	30
CHAPTER SEVEN: <i>SONG</i>	33
CHAPTER EIGHT: <i>RUCHENITSA</i>	36
CHAPTER NINE: <i>BALLAD</i>	39
CHAPTER TEN: <i>DANCE</i>	43
CHAPTER ELEVEN: <i>HARVESTER'S SONG</i>	46
CHAPTER TWELVE: <i>LITTLE TOCCATA</i>	50
CHAPTER THIRTEEN: <i>ARIOSO AND PRELUDE</i>	54
CHAPTER FOURTEEN: <i>SHOPP CAPRICE</i>	57
CONCLUSION.....	60

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	63
VITA.....	65

LIST OF EXAMPLES

1. <i>Prelude</i> , mm. 1-6.....	18
2. <i>Daychovo Horo</i> , mm.1-16.....	23
3. <i>Ruchenitsa</i> , mm. 1-8.....	27
4. <i>Improvisation</i> , mm.1-24.....	30
5. <i>Song</i> , mm.1-16.....	33
6. <i>Ruchenitsa</i> , mm. 1-8.....	37
7. <i>Ballad</i> , mm.1-24.....	40
8. <i>Ballad</i> , mm.10-11, mm. 13-14, mm. 16-17, mm. 22-23.....	41
9. <i>Dance</i> , mm1-9.....	43
10. <i>Harvester's Song</i> , 1-16.....	47
11. <i>Harvester's Song</i> , 1-2, 51-53.....	48
12. <i>Little Toccata</i> , m.1.....	51
13. <i>Little Toccata</i> , mm. 1-8.....	51
14. <i>Little Toccata</i> , mm. 20-23.....	52
15. <i>Arioso and Prelude</i> , mm. 1-12.....	55
16. <i>Shopp Caprice</i> , mm.1-2.....	57
17. <i>Shopp Caprice</i> , mm. 3-11.....	58

ABSTRACT

This document is an analysis of *Twelve Caprices for Solo Violin*, op.1 by Peter Christoskov. The analysis concentrates on the theoretical and historical aspects of the work as well as its connection to Bulgarian folk music traditions. The cycle contains twelve caprices based on various song and dance models. Each caprice is analyzed separately, with detailed information regarding the structure, harmony, melody, rhythm and meter. In addition, it establishes the relationship between the instrumental writing in the caprice and the folk music model from which it is derived. This document does not go into extensive detail about the performance and the pedagogical aspects of the cycle, although the work is very valuable in these regards. The original purpose of the *Caprices* was instructional in nature and therefore played an important role in the compositional process.

The cycle represents a unique combination of Balkan and Western musical traditions. For this reason, they have remained as an important fixture in the repertoire of violinists to this day. The caprices enjoy an international reputation as performance and pedagogical pieces. The elements of the musical folklore are given historical and theoretical context from a Western point of view. The analysis reveals this work to be filled with imagination, creativity, energy, lyricism, and an interesting variety of instrumental and compositional techniques.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the present study is to create a thorough musical and theoretical examination of the *Twelve Caprices*, op.1 by Peter Christoskov. The caprices will be analyzed in the context of the author's creative style, of the musical genre and historical line they indicate, of their dramatic, structural and compositional aspects, as well as in relation to their aesthetic and interpretative problems.

There are several reasons for creating an in-depth analysis of the *Twelve Caprices for Solo Violin*, op. 1 by the famous Bulgarian violin virtuoso performer, teacher and composer Peter. Created half a century ago (in 1952), the *Twelve Caprices* are an original, nationally defined Bulgarian piece of music connected to the traditions of the Bulgarian "classical" music of that time. The work has had great success and has been performed on the European and world concert stage. The virtuosic character and stylistic uniqueness of the caprices makes them suitable for both artistic performances and for competitions.

The impressions of the caprices recall many different artistic styles and attitudes. The universality reflects an inherent regularity; they inhabit the ideas of late-Romantic virtuosity and programmatic music. The musical language of the composer, however, is post-Romantic, which means that a sense key (or tonality) exists, but without the strict syntactical rules of tonal music. The caprices continue an old tradition of musical development, unifying the requirements for strictness and completeness of the musical idea, with the freedom of expression and improvisation of the structural aspects. The *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1 by Christoskov represent a technical and artistic achievement due to their unique blend of virtuosity and musical gestures, rhythms and sounds taken from Bulgarian folk music. They have been repeatedly examined in performance and critically

assessed by their author from their first edition in 1954 until their latest revision in 2000. “They represent pictures united in cycles, moods, movements, feelings, ideas, and moments manifested themselves in sound and dynamics, which directly and faultlessly influence the performer and the listener unlocking various strata of the perceiving consciousness—rhythmic and motivic impulses, emotional vibrations, more complicated intellectual levels of the historical and stylistic context of the musical experience.”¹

Created in Bulgaria (in the Balkan region) the *Twelve Caprices* have been enriched by regional and national traditions. They represent the national genre and stylistic models and speak the commonly understood language of movements and dance.² This language is comprised of musical gestures and feelings, which can be adequately understood in every corner of modern civilization. This is one of the many reasons that Christoskov’s works are included in the repertory of violinists all over the world. Christoskov achieves a balance between the convention needed for the broad cultural communication and his own highly original innovations. The *Caprices*, op.1 are the result of rich musical practice and concert activity, based on the idea of an original school of violin interpretation encompassing the stylistic and artistic aspects of the whole creative work of Christoskov. They represent the beginning of the transition to his mature compositional works. Melodic phrases and rhythms of the *Caprices*, op.1 can be found in mature works like the *Violin Rhapsody*, *Shopp’s Fantasy for Viola*, and the violin concertos. The significance of the *Caprices*, op.1 and of all later works of Christoskov is maintained not only by their undeniable artistic intensity, but also by their constant performance in Bulgaria and in the world. His music is characterized as modern, vivid and vigorous, and is created by his

¹ Georgy Bliznev, “The Vividness of the Caprices,” *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 23. Borislava Ilcheva rendered translations for all foreign documents for this dissertation.

passion for music making.³

The musical work and activity of Peter Christoskov have not found an adequate reflection in contemporary music literature, nor have they been analyzed in detail from a theoretical point of view. Publications regarding Christoskov in the Bulgarian and world press can be divided into three groups. The first group contains general biographic data about his activity and is of a referential/informational nature. The second group represents a small set of critical materials usually referring to a specific occasion—a concert, an anniversary, a music or CD edition, where, indirectly, the artistic achievements of Christoskov are mentioned. The third group includes some more analytical materials dedicated to separate works, such as the *First Violin Concerto*.⁴ No in-depth musical and theoretical study of the problems of the *Twelve Caprices*, op.1 exists to date. The present study intends to fill this void by revealing the significance, applicability and future of this work.

Background of the *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1: History and the Problems of Their Creation

A few important details and aspects surrounding the creation and function of the *Twelve Caprices* op. 1 not only enlighten their compositional ideas and their artistic statement, but also hint at new ways of studying and understanding the pieces. The *Caprices*, op. 1 are both prologue to the compositional works of Christoskov and a first clear reference point to the specificity of his compositional style.⁵ One reason for writing them related to the instructive needs of the Sofia Music Academy violin department. The

² Ibid, 25.

³ Pietro. Casaretto, “Christoskov: 24 Bulgarian Caprices” Annotation to a CD edition, performed by Evgenia Maria Popova.

⁴ Peter Christoskov, “Caprices for Solo Violin,” Boyan Lechev, preface. *Bulgarska Musica* (2000), 4.

result exceeded the educational and study purposes and it was not only of a high aesthetic value but also carried a defined picture regarding the development of the compositional processes of Christoskov.⁶

In different sources, the *Caprices* are referred to by various title names. B. Lechev says that Christoskov (already a recognized performer), discovers his compositional gift and “starts writing small, comprehensive and original etudes closely related to the development of violin technique, full of challenges, expressiveness and instrumental brilliance.”⁷ This process gradually brought about his first accomplished work (the *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1). The terms “caprice” and “etude” are used interchangeably because they refer to a similar compositional product and creative tasks. For example, in the Encyclopedia of the Bulgarian Musical Culture, the title “Twelve Caprices” is used with a specifying subtitle in brackets, “Concert Etudes,” and according to another author, Christoskov “enters our musical life in 1952 with his first opus, “Twelve Violin Etudes” with the subtitle “Caprices in Folklore Tone.”⁸ The incorporation of concert ideas, technical and instrumental approaches and the distinct presence of folklore themes easily provoke such differences in opinions as to the specific category of the *Caprices*, op. 1.

There is some controversial information about the instrumental choice for the *Caprices*. Some sources believe that the pieces were composed first for solo violin and later some of them were arranged for violin and piano.⁹

There are also some arrangements for string orchestra—for example, No. 10, “Little Toccata,” was adapted by the Pleven musician and teacher Bozhko Shoykov.

⁵ Georgy Bliznev, “The Vividness of the Caprices,” *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 25.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷ Peter Christoskov, “Caprices for Solo Violin,” Boyan Lechev, preface. *Bulgarska Musica* (2000), 4.

⁸ Georgy Bliznev, “The Vividness of the Caprices,” *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 26.

Others have suggested that Christoskov composed many caprices for violin and piano and later chose among them those he defined as op. 116. Such variations in instrumentation are not unusual for Bulgarian compositions, or for the rest of the compositional world. There are many examples where a work originally written for violin and piano has been arranged for orchestra or another instrument or ensemble. For example, the famous Bulgarian rhapsody *Vardar* by Pancho Vladigerov was composed initially as a chamber piece for violin and piano was later developed into a symphonic poem.

Christoskov worked quickly, and composed the caprices in a matter of a few weeks. This is not unusual considering that there are many cases when a performing composer has presented his own music on stage for a long time before writing it down. This was the case with the Concerto for Piano by the great Bulgarian pianist Dimitar Nenov (1901-1953), and this compositional process applied to many of his other works. In Christoskov's case, he possessed a considerable amount of practical models and improvisational sequences, and in some cases ready-to-use formulas, which he simply wrote down in this short period of time.¹⁰ The unity of performer and composer in the creative personality of Christoskov allowed him to make compositional decisions based on experience and intuition in order to complete the ideas in a written form.

The Genre “Caprice” as a Musical, Historical and Stylistic Line and Its Application in Twelve Caprices, op. 1

The word *caprice* (or “capriccio”) enters etymologically the Italian language from Latin, and in musical terms, it usually means a freely structured, vivid, instrumental piece, which may include popular melodies. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was

⁹ Lidia Mankova, “Author’s Concert of Peter Christoskov,” *Bulgarska Musica* 4 (1965), 53.

¹⁰ Neli Kulaksazova, “Events, Premiers and Concerts,” *Bulgarska Musica* 5 (1985), 88.

used as a synonym for the organ canzones, ricercares, fugues and fantasies and was mainly related to polyphonic techniques. For example, the German composer Friedrich Marpurg (1718-1795) created a cycle *Fugue and Caprice* in 1777 illustrating such a dependency. Sometimes the word caprice might additionally define an already constituted genre system—for example, Rondo Caprice, op. 129 by Ludwig van Beethoven.

The term caprice has been used to describe a wide variety of compositional paradigms throughout its history. It appears as early as the sixteenth century in connection with vocal, dance and instrumental music, and keyboard music in particular. “‘Capriccio’ does not signify a specific musical technique or structure, but rather a general disposition towards the exceptional, the whimsical, the fantastic and the apparently arbitrary.”¹¹ The seventeenth-century keyboard capriccio, an ancestor of the fugue, has historical ties to the compositional techniques of Caccini and Frescobaldi and to the aesthetics of the *seconda pratica*. “The rules of counterpoint could be broken or even ignored for expressive reasons; rhythmic liberties, especially tempo fluctuation, were encouraged.”¹² Another aspect of the term that begins to appear in the seventeenth century is that of virtuosic embellishment. The keyboard capriccios (c1590) of Giovanni de Macque exhibit unexpected, violent changes of mood and style; they are a fantastic mixture of fugal imitations, chordal fanfares, expressive ornaments, dazzling passage-work and harsh dissonances. The subjects are presented in augmentation, diminution, inversion and with many rhythmic variants.”¹³ The famous *Caprice on the Occasion of the Departure of the Beloved Brother* (1704) by J. S. Bach shows some figurative aspects, but it is closer to the stylistic processes of the scherzo, the ballad, and some miniatures.

¹¹ Erich Schwandt, “Capriccio”, *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (accessed 10 October, 2005)

¹² *Ibid.*

Later, the capriccio became synonymous with virtuosity. Some of the composers who put the technical possibilities of the violin on display in such pieces include G.B. Vitali, Pietro Locatelli, G. Tartini, F.M. Veracini, Antonio Vivaldi and Nicolo Paganini. Pietro Locatelli used the term to describe virtuoso passages for solo violin from the outer movements of each of the concertos of his *L'arte del Violino*, op.3 (1733). These capriccios, which are often as long as the rest of the movement, are technical, virtuoso studies. *Twenty-Four Caprices* by Locatelli (1695-1764) are a notable predecessor of the analogous cycle of Paganini, where the limits of virtuosity were broadened and the principles of improvisation and variation provided the possibility of free artistic and technical expression. Paganini's *Twenty-Four Capriccios for Violino Solo*, op. 1 represent a high-point in the history of innovation on the violin. In these virtuosic studies, the violinist is challenged by a plethora of instrumental difficulties involving the left hand, the bow arm, and often both simultaneously. These pieces are equally defined by their importance in purely musical terms. The virtuosity here is not a means to an end, but rather a portal to the expression of humor, wit, pathos, ferocity, brilliance, mystery and more.

During the romantic period, the caprice fuses with genres like fantasy, rhapsody, and ballad to form well organized, technically challenging compositions. Works like *Capriccio Italian* by Tchaikovsky and *Capriccio Espagnole* (1887) by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov are great examples of pieces that use the capriccio form as a compositional core to present music with national distinction and flare. The caprices of Brahms are very close to the genres fantasy, intermezzo, and rhapsody. This type of caprice, from the Romantic era, possessed an improvisational or a concerto-like character, but not necessarily a high degree of virtuosity.

¹³ Ibid.

In recent years, the genre caprice is used in a variety of different styles and compositions. The American composer Walter Piston (1894-1976) wrote *Caprice for Harp and String Orchestra* in 1963. The Austrian composer Gottfried von Einem wrote *Caprice for Orchestra* performed in 1943 by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

All of these historical predecessors undoubtedly influenced the *Caprices op. 1* by Christoskov, who combined aspects of the three genre lines in an original manner. He was a well-trained musician with broad musical and cultural knowledge, including the Western musical tradition. These works bear the characteristics of miniatures, frames of mind, pictures or poems closely related to the Bulgarian musical tradition and the people's psychology, as far as they outline the reflexes of a distinct Bulgarian author.¹⁴ This is why *Caprices, op. 1* represents a school of instrumental mastery and is of unquestionable theoretical interest.

¹⁴ Georgy Bliznev, "The Vividness of the Caprices," *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 29.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM CREATIVE PERSONALITY TO *TWELVE CAPRICES*, OP.1: PETER CHRISTOSKOV'S BIOGRAPHY

Christoskov, “one of the most famous, representative and artistically well-known Bulgarian musicians, also established himself as a competent, purposeful” teacher, and an original and brilliant composer.¹⁵ He was born on March 8, 1917, in Knyazhevo, Sofia, into a music lovers’ family. The neighborhood he lived in was far away from the center of the Bulgarian capital. This facilitated his close encounter with the *Shopp* folklore (see description of the *Shopp* region below) and with the strange *Shopp* songs. Later, the *Shopp* songs were reflected in his work and to a great degree predestined the expressive and structural basis of his music, performing style and aesthetic views.¹⁶

The *Shopp* region (where the capital Sofia is also situated) includes the middle part of Western Bulgaria, between the Balkan Mountains and the Pirin Mountains, reaching to the Serbian border in the West and going over to the Sredna Gora Mountains in the East. The epic spirit and binary forms characterize the folklore musical tradition of this region.¹⁷ Some of the songs resemble the organum style due to the use of parallel voice movement, but the harmonic interval between the voices is usually a major or minor second (and seldom exceeds a third). This is typical of the diaphonic style of Bulgarian folklore. “Performed antiphonally and only by women, the songs are highly dissonant, which makes them sound loud, forceful, sharp, and sudden... While one singer performs the top, and

¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶ Bogomil Starshenov and Petko Stoyanov, “Peter Christoskov – A Prelude,” *Narodna Prosveta* (1966), 254-262

¹⁷ Hrizantema Pashunkova, “Narodnoinstrumentoznanie Istoki Skripachnogo Iskustva Bulgarskih Kompozitorov 20 Veka i Problemai Interpretazii,” Ph. D diss., *Moscow Conservatory* (1981), 34.

moving voice, two or more women sing the static voice on the fundamental.”¹⁸

Christoskov began to play the violin at the age of seven with the high-school teacher Dimitar Popov, the father of the great Bulgarian violinist and conductor Sasha Popov. He was a motivated, serious young pupil who practiced long hours, sometimes playing the instrument for eight to twelve hours a day and improvising small piano pieces.¹⁹ This was the starting point for the improvisational character of Christoskov’s musical thinking. From childhood, he performed on the concert stage, and at age ten, he had his first independent violin performance. He received his formal musical education in Bulgaria as a student of Prof. Sasha Popov at the intermediate and advanced departments of the State Musical Academy (SMA) in Sofia, graduating in 1936. He continued his professional training by entering the Tsar’s Symphonic Orchestra—the most prominent professional group in Bulgaria before and during World War II (led by S. Popov). Due to Popov’s efforts, the quality of the public musical concert life in Sofia was on a par with the European cultural level until the mid-1940’s.

The most accomplished Bulgarian performers and composers of the first quarter of the twentieth century continued their education and broadened their cultural interests in Europe. Following their path, Christoskov left for Germany to continue his studies in violin and chamber music in the classes of Gustav Havemann and Hans Malke at the Berlin Musical Academy.²⁰ Between 1940 and 1943, he was an active performer in Germany and Austria. From 1942, he became one of the first collaborators of the Mannheim Concert Administration. His talent and skills were quickly recognized, and in 1943, he attained the

¹⁸ Blagomira Lipari, *The Influence of Bulgarian Folk Music on Peter Christoskov's Suites and Rhapsodies for Solo Violin*, DMA diss., (Baton Rouge: LSU School of Music, 2004), p. 9-10.

¹⁹ Rosiza Batalova, “The Composer Peter Christoskov,” *Bulgarska Musica* 10 (1968), 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

position of first violinist at the *Volksoper* (People's Opera) in Berlin. After his return to Bulgaria, Christoskov became concertmaster of the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra and during this period, he gave many concerts in Sofia and abroad.

As a performer of the highest level, who developed the standard and ingenuity for the art of violin playing in Bulgaria, he covered a vast repertory, including works of the old masters through Béla Bartók and Aram Khachaturian.²¹ At the same time, he used every opportunity to promote his own works, performing in many different chamber ensembles. By looking at programs of the many chamber concerts on which Christoskov performed, one can see the variety of different styles he liked to combine. In a review of the chamber concert performed on March 5, 1970, it was written “his temperamental Violin Rhapsody stood out against the other included works by Beethoven, Dvořák and Szymanowski.”²² He participated in the Academic Trio together with the famous piano player and composer Dimitar Nenov (1901-1953) and the cellist, Konstantin Popov. His active work continued as state artist giving concerts in 1955-56; later because of his quality as performer and teacher, he was invited to participate in many juries of international violin competitions, where some of his students also had successes.

Pedagogical work became the second major occupation of Christoskov, which began early in his professional career and continued through the years. He became a teacher of violin at the Sofia Music Academy in 1945, became associate professor in 1946, and full professor in 1950. His pedagogical techniques combined very productively practical skills and musical knowledge, which was a good base for producing outstanding students. “Christoskov educated generations of Bulgarian violinists, including many

²¹ Neli Kulaksazova, “Events, Premiers and Concerts,” *Bulgarska Musica* 5 (1985), 83.

²² Boriana Gramatikova, “Chamber Concert,” *Bulgarska Musica* 5 (1978), 69.

winners in national and international competitions.’’²³

Christoskov’s third area of creative activity and concentration was his compositional work. His compositions were heavily influenced by the combination and interaction of his active performance career and his teaching. Christoskov composed many pieces for various instruments and ensembles, incorporating many different styles as well as Bulgarian folk music elements and rhythms. Some of his more well-known pieces are the *Symphony-Poem for Orchestra*, *Concerto for Orchestra*, *Rhapsody for Solo Violin*, op. 21 (published 1974), *Fantasy for Solo Violoncello*, op. 15 (published 1967), *Shopp Fantasy for viola and piano* (1973), *Twelve Caprices for Solo Violin*, op.1(1952), *Moto Perpetuo for violin* (1953), *Vokalis (Vocalise) for Soprano, Alto and Symphonic Orchestra*, three concertos for violin and orchestra, *Concerto for Violin, Violoncello and Orchestra*, two concertos for violoncello and orchestra, and *Triple Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Cello*. His music is performed and regularly in concerts, competitions and contemporary music festivals. Christoskov’s music has been recorded by the Bulgarian National Radio and published by the Bulgarian Academy of Music.

²³ Pietro Casaretto, “Christoskov: 24 Bulgarian Caorices” Annotation to a CD edition, performed by Evgenia Maria Popova

CHAPTER TWO

STYLISTIC, DRAMATIC AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTIC IN *TWELVE CAPRICES*, OP. 1 BY CHRISTOSKOV

The *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1 belongs to a specific type of musical cycle, usually called an opus cycle. These are related to cycles like the *Twenty-Four Preludes for Piano* by Chopin, the *Preludes* by Scriabin, the late opus combinations of intermezzos, caprices and fantasies by Brahms (such as the cycle *Fantasies*, op. 116). The opus cycle is based on a strong unity of the material regarding the approaches, the principles, the style and the possible dramatic and structural solutions in a specific period and regarding a specific stylistic tendency in the work of a composer.²⁴ In the case of Christoskov, it concerns an early compositional period, in which instrumental thinking was dominant and led the compositional process. In contrast to the typical instrumental cycles like the suite and the sonata cycles, the opus cycle presents a set of short pieces organized in a thematically contrasting group with a great variety of characters, styles and technical difficulty that can function as well independently as together. Thus, *Caprices*, op. 1 can function equally well when performed together, as Christoskov himself has demonstrated at his concerts, as when performed separately.

Some unifying relations appear in the general scheme of *Caprices*, op. 1, illustrating the lines of development of the musical intensity, the genre, as well as the general compositional structure. The programmatic settings of the separate pieces play not only the role of clarifying the picturesque character, but also define and encode the artistic relations and processes in the cycle.

²⁴ Pencho Stoyanov, "Encyclopedia of Bulgarian Musical Culture," *S. BAS* (1967), 98

TABLE 1. Titles and Programmatic Settings

No. 1 <i>Prelude</i>	Functions as introduction to the cycle, and sets the stage for the development of motives, genres, folkloric elements
No. 2 <i>Daychovo Horo</i>	Presentation of dance model (Daychov's chain dance—made by dancers holding each other by the hand, waist or shoulder)
No. 3 <i>Tezhka Ruchenitsa</i>	Heavy Bulgarian folk dance
No. 4 <i>Improvisation</i> No. 5 <i>Song</i>	Presentation of song model
No. 6 <i>Ruchenitsa</i> No. 7 <i>Ballad</i>	Middle part of the development of the two main models (Dance and Song models)
No. 8 <i>Dance</i> No. 9 <i>Zhatvarska pesen</i> (Harvester's song)..... No. 10 <i>Little Toccata</i>	Dance in the middle section
No. 11 <i>Arioso and Prelude</i>	Rhapsodic transition
No. 12 <i>Shopp Caprice</i>	Functions as an epilogue

The table above shows a more evolved development of the structure of the cycle. The first movement, *Prelude*, is composed in a traditional style without extensive use of folkloric elements. The last movement, *Shopp Caprice*, contains, on the other hand, a variety of folkloric elements and is connected to the regional traditions. The ten movements connecting these outer movements are composed using a synthesis of traditional and folkloric paradigms. The regional elements are combined with post-Romantic elements in such a way that the composite language is unique and these

individual aspects retain their original identities. The caprices succeed in achieving a balance between the instrumental/technical and the musical/artistic aspects.

Christoskov uses two main traditional models indicated in the initial *Prelude*—the dance model (in Nos. 2 and 3) and the song model (in Nos. 5 and 6), which are exposed subsequently on a broad scale in the initial stage of *Twelve Caprices*. The models establish the thematic and the tempo contrasts of the cycle, and comparison between the fast and the slow tempi connected with the two models reveals technical challenges associated with each throughout the caprices. The main part of the cycle between Nos. 6 and 10 is based on the periodical alternation between the main models. The development of the overall form is achieved in this way. The frequency and alternation of the models creates a direct connection with simpler structural binary forms, which constitute the core of the cycle (in terms of a large-scale slow-fast pairing of movements).

The *Twelve Caprices* taken as a whole form a cycle of interconnected pieces similar in style to a suite. Similar processes with the organization of a cycle of the suite type are shown in *Rhapsody for violin solo, op. 21*, by Christoskov, which was often performed together with the *Caprices* by its author.²⁵ Its four movements (*Andante Maestoso*, *Scherzo*, *Fantasia*, *Presto*) are arranged in two slow-fast, slow-fast contrasting pairs. “The slow first and third movements (especially the first one) originate from the *sinfonia* of the ancient suite and *partita*, and the fast second and fourth movements (especially the *scherzo*) originate from the Classical *sonata* model.”²⁶

Caprice No. 11 plays the role of a rhapsodic transition in the *Caprices* from the poly-thematic style of its predecessors to the unity of the final *Shopp Caprice* (No. 12). The

²⁵ Neli Kulaksazova, “Events, Premiers and Concerts,” *Bulgarska Musica* 5 (1985), 90.

²⁶ Georgy Bliznev, “The Vividness of the Caprices,” *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 33.

Shopp Caprice is the most developed one in its thematic and compositional scope. “In this regard, we can continue to draw parallels to the finale of the already mentioned *Rhapsody*, op. 21, which unifies the motoric rhythm of the scherzo and the strict metric elements with elements of lyrical tranquility in the slow sections.”²⁷

All of these issues support the concept of the influence of a “super theme” (the folklore tradition) in *Caprices* op. 1. This concept unifies various expressive elements according to their similarities, as for example a song, a dance or a recitative, and is characteristic of some modern structural forms and cyclic processes.²⁸ In this sense, there are three thematic archetypes in *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1. The first one is connected with the vehement force of movement, with instrumental virtuosity, and with the dynamic nature of improvisation and instability. It includes processes and aspects of caprices Nos. 1, 8, 10 and 12. The second thematic model is related to the first one, but in dance forms defined by the folk tradition, which includes the rich palette of gestures, movements and communication forms in the different dance types. It includes, for example, the *Horo* (a fast dance with one, two, or a chain of dancers) of No. 2, the *Ruchenitsas* (a particular *horo* from the Shopska region in 7/8 or 7/16 meter with one or two dancers) in Nos. 3 and 6, and the dance in the middle section of No. 9. The third one is represented by the song melody, where the emotion of the vocal phrase can be felt most immediately and strongly, as well as its experience in the instrumental melody. This is not only a specific type of musical thinking, but also a more lyrical style, in general. Such moments occur in *Twelve Caprices* in Nos. 4 and 5, the *Harvester’s Song* in No. 9, the *Ballad* in No. 7, and the beginning of *Arioso* in No. 11.

²⁷ Georgy Bliznev, “The Vividness of the Caprices,” *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

The main aspects of *Caprices*, op. 1 are affirmed and enlarged in the next violin cycle, *Twenty-Four Caprices*, op. 24. The lyrical theme is exposed in No. 1 *Refrain*, then in No. 4 *Little Poem*, No. 6 *Aria*, and in the main part of No. 22 *Harvest*. The improvisational models appear in No. 8 *Fantasy* and No. 5 *Cadenza*. The force of movement manifests itself in No. 17 *Race* and No. 23 *Toccata* and in the dance models in No. 3 *Kopanitsa*, No. 7 *Pravo Horo*, No. 9 *Dunavsko Horo*, in the ritual fire-dance in No. 11 *Fire-dancing women* and in the middle part of No. 22 *Harvest*.

In Christoskov's later cycle, *Twenty-Four Caprices*, op. 24, new nuances appear to accompany an increase in programmaticism in the music. Examples of this arise in No. 2 *Daybreak*, No. 12 *Sorrow*, No. 10 *Little Humoresque*, No. 16 *Tease*. Characteristic folklore figures also appear in No. 14 *Shopp*s and in No. 20 *Mummers*. A new compositional model related to the imitation of instrumental folk music acquires a specific embodiment in caprices such as No. 13 *Pizzicato*, No. 19 *Bagpipe* and No. 21 *Gadulka*.

There are similarities between the two cycles of caprices regarding the structural principles of alternation of pieces contrasting in their nature, imagery and tempo. Another similarity lies in the use of the cyclic final "movement," as in No. 23 *Toccata* and No. 24 *Shopp Feast*, which correspond directly to No. 11 *Little Toccata* and No. 12 *Shopp Caprice* in op. 1. The analogies also spread over to the more detailed aspects of the structure and style of the individual caprices. For example, *Harvester's Song* of op. 1 (see the more detailed analysis beneath) and *Harvest* of op. 24 have a similar compound structure comparing song elements in the beginning and the end and dance elements in the middle.

CHAPTER THREE

PRELUDE

The first piece (called *Prelude*) is connected stylistically to the forms that are characteristic of the time between the common practice eras. In the case of the *Twelve Caprices*, it opens the opus cycle (like Bach's preludes) with non-improvisational and inertial movement (see Example 1, m. 1-6). This is combined with intonations and melodic lines that are typical for the practice of the Bulgarian folk musicians playing with spontaneous virtuosity and fiery temperament. Another tradition from the folklore is added by the implementation of new thematic elements (m. 66, and m.166) and the elegant scherzo-like dancing melody in the center of the *Prelude* (*Meno* m. 141). In comparison to Bach's generally monothematic preludes (motives closely related to the main material), Christoskov's *Prelude* is poly-thematic and the intensity and virtuosic content unifies the thematic elements.

Example 1. *Prelude*, mm. 1-6

The image displays musical notation for the first six measures of a prelude. The notation is written on a single staff in treble clef. Above the staff, the tempo and metronome marking are given as 'Presto, J. = cca 176'. Below the staff, the dynamic and articulation are marked as 'f sempre staccato'. The first line of music contains measures 1 through 5, and the second line contains measure 6. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps and naturals) and fingerings (0 and 4) indicated above the notes.

The synthesis in the *Twelve Caprices* between the formal designs of Western music and the stylistic elements of Bulgarian folk music is realized on various, interconnected levels of the overall form. This is evident from the modal harmonic system, which constantly varies between the major and minor mode (the last measures in the codetta

resume a similar process on A-center) as an expression and tendency to the minor bi-harmonic kind on the same basis.²⁹ (The minor bi-harmonic scale uses raised fourth and seventh scale degrees, which imply tonalities centered around two tones. In this case, the bi-harmonic scale is A-B-C-D#-E-F-G#-A, and the centered pitches are A and E.) The clearly defined variation processes represent another level of this synthesis. These variation processes function not only in their more traditional forms, but also through original methods of “sprouting” (enlarging and accumulating in the course of the variation or by rearranging elements) as well as through a linear synthesis of the musical events.

In Example 1, the two-measure model at the beginning establishes a tendency of repetition and determines the whole syntax of the form. Nevertheless, the fifth measure breaks the symmetry and at the same time unifies the impulse of the beginning of each two-measure unit with the structure of its ending. The whole structure of the first caprice *Prelude* is formed on the basis of continuation and enlargement of the microstructures in the greater design. It is constructed as a ternary form of synthesized type with a contrasting development in the center. The A B A¹ model is confirmed by the recapitulation starting in m. 182 with the addition of a codetta (mm. 221). The A B A ternary structure is reproduced throughout other pieces of op. 1.

The exposition (mm. 1-100) contains a terraced development from the opening to the culmination. The constant motoric movement and transformation of the material enters a new thematic field in m. 66, which is overcome by the rhythmic cadenza in mm. 95-10 (thus momentarily halting the constant eighth-note pulsation). In general, the exposition contains all resources and aspects of the *Prelude* form and coordinates various musical means of expression – rhythm, dynamics, register, timbral nuances, and agogic accent

²⁹ Parashkev Hadjiev, “Music Theory,” *Bulgarska Musika* (, 1990), 122.

stresses.

The development section of the *Prelude* (mm. 101-196) presents the ideas of the exposition on a grand scale, and includes three phases clearly differentiated in a structural sense. The first phase (mm. 101-120) is definitely introductory and largely corresponds to the principles of the Baroque forms and to the initial stages of the development in works of the classical type (as in the sonatas of Scarlatti, Mozart and Haydn). In the initial measures of the development, the opening motives of the *Prelude* are developed and sequenced.

The second phase (mm. 121-157) not only enhances the action and enlarges the scope through the virtuosic addition of double-stops, but strengthens the allusions to the folklore through the imitative fauxbourdon style (utilizing parallel sixths and/or parallel second inversion chords).³⁰ The inclusion of new characteristic imagery and themes, such as the afore-mentioned scherzo-dancing idea of m. 141, also establishes a clear link to Bulgarian instrumental folk music by evoking the sounds of traditional instruments like the *gadulka*. The *gadulka* is a three-stringed (a-e-a¹), bowed, wooden lute with a dark, viola-like timbre, which is played vertically. The shopski style of playing the *gadulka* uses sudden changes between staccato and detaché bowing strokes, double-stops, triplets, and uses highly expressive, wide vibrato to embellish repeated and long melodic notes.³¹

The third phase contains a transformation of the second thematic area of the prelude (mm. 161-174) developing gradually into a transition (mm. 175-196) based on the main motivic center of the form. The recapitulation is abbreviated, but it is dynamic and contains a codetta—a structural approach that appears in most of the caprices. The cadential

³⁰ Michael Kennedy, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music*, Oxford University Press, (Oxford 1996), 245.

³¹ Blagomira Lipari, *The Influence of Bulgarian Folk Music on Petar Christoskov's Suites and Rhapsodies or Solo Violin*, DMA diss., (Baton Rouge: LSU School of Music, 2004), p. 17.

movement in parallel sixths puts the musical style of the prelude into the context of the historical tradition of the Baroque and classical prelude forms despite the many non-Western folklore references.

CHAPTER FOUR

DAYCHOVO HORO

Caprice No. 2 (*Daychovo Horo*) presents for the first time the dance model, which is essential for the Caprices op. 1. It presents the national and stylistic characteristics of Bulgarian folk music. Bulgarian instrumentalists react to the ideas encoded in this impulsive music on a cultural level. The great Bulgarian piano pedagogue Konstantin Ganev states that when performing a Bulgarian instrumental work the instrumental skills and the musical sensitivity of a Bulgarian performer multiply symptomatically.³² The folklore connection in *Daychovo Horo*, like in many other moments of the *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1 cycle, is very clear, despite the use of only imitative models (not quotations) regarding the methods used by folklore musicians. Interestingly, Christoskov used no quotations even with regard to the melodies, the types of movement, and the metro-rhythmic characteristics (9/8 meter).

The *Daychovo Horo* as a prototype is an energetic, male, ring-dance from northwestern Bulgaria, accompanied usually by folk instruments such as the Gaida (bagpipe), Kaval (a semi-transverse flute possessing a warm, harmonic-like sound and played by shepherds), Gadulka, or Drum. With regard to the artistic and technical challenges of the second caprice by Christoskov, this dance is a separate form woven into the stylistic and musical context of the whole cycle. Christoskov uses a new approach in the musical structure of the piece by combining the technical challenges of virtuoso etudes written during the romantic period (by artists such as Paganini and Franz Liszt) with the dancing character and the folk elements from Bulgarian folklore.

Christoskov combines creatively two different stems of instrumental and compositional thinking using the energy of folk music and the continuous pulse of the dance movement as a common factor. Chromaticism, as a technical component of Western music, dissolves organically into the natural diatonic context of the Bulgarian folk dance, establishing a new type of nationalistic etude. (This particular fusion between Western music and Bulgarian folk music is a unique model in music history that appears throughout Christoskov’s body of work, including, but not limited to *Caprices*, op. 1 and 24.)

Caprice No. 2 is built on four-measure subphrases that unify the material and create a structure built on the principle of a “chain” (or subphrase) system. The basic unit (A) is four measures long and, when combined with its variation (A') it creates an eight-bar phrase. Likewise, when this phrase (B) is combined with the subsequent variation (B') it creates a period or “chain” (Example 2, mm. 1-16).

Example 2. *Daychovo Horo*, mm.1-16

The development of the whole caprice is based on the initial subphrase that fuses

³² Neli Kulaksazova, “Events, Premiers and Concerts,” *Bulgarska Musica* 5 (Bulgaria, 1985), 91.

organically with the principle of vocal singing from Bulgarian folklore. Christoskov also uses *glissandi* that resemble vocal “calls” used by the singers of folk songs. The main four-measure unit (A) is repeated and in the repetition it cadences forming a phrase (mm. 7-8 and respectively mm. 15-16, forming a period). Mm. 17-22 are an addition to the period and serve as a transition to the new section of the piece starting in the pick-up to m. 23 (*a tempo*). The splicing of the motives intentionally destabilizes the formal structure and the transitions between the sections. The different sections themselves are variants (rhythmic or melodic) of the first period.

The whole composition of *Daychovo Horo* is full of numerous virtuoso passages and technical challenges. The originality of the approach to the virtuosity and the plasticity of the dance and gesture help the caprices work together to enrich the cycle. The whole development in *Daychovo Horo* is full of numerous variants, where the brightness, virtuosity, muscular intensity and plasticity of the gesture combine with figurative variation to mutually enrich and inspire each other. The climax of the caprice appears in mm 87-91 and is achieved partly through a drastic two-octave register change. A variant of the main unit (A) appears, and is accompanied by chords to strengthen the effect of this structural high point. The piece continues to develop through the addition of some new techniques not used up to that point (such as double stops, glissandos, and new chord progressions). The final section (recapitulation) starts in m. 122, and begins as a literal repetition of the opening of the piece, but then changes and continues to intensify until the end.

The overall impression of the piece is one of constant energetic motion connected closely to the choreographic element of the dance and gesture. “The people of the *Shopska*

region are known as some of the finest *hora* performers dancing in fast tempo with complicated steps, hands placed on the waist, and body leaning forward to stress the spring-like movements of the legs.”³³ In the music, this translates into a high degree of instrumental virtuosity transformed by the flare and spontaneity of the folklore.

³³ Blagomira Lipari, *The Influence of Bulgarian Folk Music on Petar Christoskov's Suites and Rhapsodies for Solo Violin*, DMA diss., (Baton Rouge: LSU School of Music, 2004), p. 17.

CHAPTER FIVE

RUCHENITSA

The third caprice of op. 1 is entitled *Ruchenitsa*. There are many kinds of *Ruchenitsa*, and the title “Heavy Ruchenitsa” refers to the importance of the social occasion surrounding the performance of this dance. This is a *Ruchenitsa* danced by the young men on pre-marital or marital folkloric occasions. The Ruchenitsa is a very popular Bulgarian dance used by the generation of Bulgarian composers from the end of the nineteenth- until the beginning of the twentieth century. It is so popular and important for the musical identification of the Bulgarian culture that one of the first presentations of Bulgarian music in Europe was the *Thracian Dances* by Petko Staynov, where the *Ruchenitsa* is the focal point of the piece. The dance plays a very important role regarding the cultural identification of Bulgarian music and the formation of a national, stylistic musical language. Many Bulgarian composers of this period incorporated the dance into their symphonic or chamber music pieces (for example, Panayot Pipkov’s piano pieces and Lyubomir Pipkov’s *Spring Caprices*).

In the *Ruchenitsa*, Christoskov preserves the distinct image and sound of the dance as well as the 7/16 meter with the characteristically elongated third beat (2+2+3). He also incorporates into the caprice artistic and technical difficulties that are common characteristics of etudes. This synthesis between folklore and instrumental qualities with a clear instructive purpose occurs here for the first time in Bulgarian music.³⁴ The general structure of the *Ruchenitsa* is one of a ternary form with some variation in the motivic structure; it has a very clear major, minor, major modal fluctuation (the minor being the

developmental section of the piece). The exposition (mm.1-48) is in D major and has a ternary structure. The main theme is introduced in mm. 1-8 (Example 3), and it modulates to closely related key areas (such as E- and G-major). The simplicity of the melodic and harmonic development as well as the characteristic metric irregularity gives cohesiveness and clarity to the piece. There are two main reasons for the aesthetic simplicity of the piece. Firstly, it shows the clear distinction between the themes, which can be easily traced in the minor middle section. Secondly, the simplicity of the form is juxtaposed with the richness of the musical elements and the modal, melodic and rhythmical changes in the course of the caprice.

Example 3. *Ruchenitsa*, mm. 1-8

The image shows a musical score for the first eight measures of 'Ruchenitsa'. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato, 3/4 (2:5) m.'. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with various rests. Below the staff, there are fingerings (1-4) and bowings (V) indicated. The bottom staff shows a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature, with fingerings (1-4) and bowings (V) indicated. The piece is in D major.

The middle section of the piece (mm. 49 -123) coincides with those phases of the original dance, which are most vivid, very impulsive and dynamic. In response to the *Ruchenitsa's* choreographic squats and jumps the composer shows strong arrival points by using chords in longer note values jumping up and down in register (mm. 76-81). Many moments sound similar to the bourdon forms of Gaida (bagpipe) and Gadulka (bowed lute) music, while the flexible and ornamented melodic line resembles the middle register and timbre of the clarinet. This piece reveals a very important aspect of Christoskov's compositional approach—instrumental imitation. By including so many different

³⁴ Georgy Bliznev, "The Vividness of the Caprices," *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 35.

references to other instruments in the *Ruchenitsa*, he expands the richness and the variety of sounds that the violin can produce. This gives the violin the range of a small folk orchestra.

The compositional process of drawing on the folklore of a particular culture for material and artistic inspiration is not unique to Christoskov. This technique was pioneered and developed by Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. In the piano etudes, *Microcosmos*, by Bartók, there exists a clear example of how this process was carried out. The styles of Christoskov and Bartók also share many similarities beyond the compositional process. In extracting material from the folklore with its specific formulas and paradigms, the two composers create a musical language with characteristic instrumental and vocal imitations, metric and rhythmic references to specific dances and melodic and harmonic allusions to the songs and instruments of the culture.

The main part of the *Ruchenitsa* is a very rich *micro-variation system* (where individual fragments or themes of the caprice are varied) and as a *sub-variation system* (where separate variations can be regarded not as variations of the initial theme, but as variations of the initial theme's variations).³⁵ The system of variability encompasses not only the melodic matter, but also every parameter of the piece. The modal and harmonic development, for instance, in the second section of caprice No. 3 (mm. 49-123) varies one of the tonal versions of the exposition (m. 25). The melody in thirds, implied already in the initial theme, continues in the beginning of the main part (m. 49) and then appears in variants throughout the whole structure. The parallel movements in thirds, sixths, and octaves are derivative variants.

The third section of the *Ruchenitsa* is organized as a codetta (mm. 124 to the end).

After a short transition, (mm. 124-128) the main theme is presented for the last time, and not only strengthens the form of the caprice but also reestablishes the importance of this main theme. The uniqueness and richness of the material generates the unity of the line; by using the same theme for the opening and the closing of the piece, the composer shows his tendency towards the “closed form,” which is an atypical compositional trend in Western music. This is in contrast to the original Bulgarian dances, where the choreographic form is usually open and without a recapitulation. Of course, the composer takes features of the open development into his *Ruchenitsa*, but certainly makes the form more sophisticated and brings it closer to the Western musical tradition.

³⁵ Ibid., 37.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPROVISATION

Caprice No. 4 *Improvisation* plays a significant role in the collection of *Caprices*, op. 1, because it presents for the first time a complete and thorough song model and introduces the lyrical aspect of the piece. This caprice is closer to the form of variations on a folk melody, and the title *Improvisation* is connected to the freedom and expressiveness of sound and phrasing on the violin. The folk song quoted in the theme (Example 4, mm.1-24), *Tragnala Rumjana za voda studena* (Rumjana went to bring cold water), provides some essential moments, which serve as a point of departure regarding the form. Some typical melodic fragments in the quoted folk melody refer to other folk songs. For example, the meter of 8/8 with first and last elongated groups is very usual for some other folk song examples like *Polegnala e Todora* (Todora lay down for a while). In the mind of the Bulgarian listener and performer, *Improvisation* creates spontaneous associations with a greater melodic richness of several song motives.

Example 4. *Improvisation*, mm.1-24

The musical score for Example 4, *Improvisation*, mm. 1-24, is presented in a single system with four staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 8/8. The tempo/mood is marked "Andante cantabile". The score begins with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) at measure 1. The melody is characterized by elongated groups of notes, often with a fermata. Various ornaments are indicated by 'V' above notes. The dynamics fluctuate, including *pp* (pianissimo) at measure 12, *dim.* (diminuendo) at measure 17, and *p* (piano) at measure 20. The piece concludes at measure 24 with a final dynamic marking of *pp*. The score includes measure numbers 1, 7, 12, 17, and 22.

The song theme is open in its thematic structure and with regard to the tonal system

used. It employs the principle of the double tonic system because it begins in G-major at the fifth scale degree D, but ends on the same melodic tone D at the variation and deviation to tonality of D-major (because of the use of C-sharp). This is a remainder of a very old style of the folkloric melodic treatment in the Balkans and in Bulgaria. It is not accidental that the whole piece starts in G- but ends in D-major because the improvisation subsequently generates, on a higher structural and dramatic level, the characteristics of the initial theme.

There are two main structural ideas in *Improvisation* governing the development of the musical processes in all their main aspects and directions. The stanza-song forms develop the three main sections after presenting the theme (from m. 25 *poco meno mosso* in D-major, from m. 88 *a tempo*, and from m. 103 in D-major). Secondly, the principle of mixed variations, which includes a zone of strict variation (from the places mentioned in the above topic) and of free variation and thematic elaboration in the center of the form (the variation from m. 41), gradually sharpens the form making it more complex. This principle also enlarges the song phrases and introduces the elaborating and improvising aspect. The different compositional methods used in the *Improvisation* allow the piece to reach a higher level of melodic richness, closely connected to vocal forms and style.

The linear, one-part melody of the opening theme lies in contrast to the rest of the piece, which is built around a chordal structure. Because the chordal variations and the elaborating impulses imitate a characteristic model of polyphonic folk music, the polyphony (where all the voices are induced by the leader as variants) re-harmonizes and rearranges the static fauxbourdon forms creating additional melodic preconditions in all

voices.³⁶ This leads the *Improvisation* to achieve a complete and rich instrumental cantilena, directly connected with the vocal principle, form and style.

³⁶ Peter Cooke, *Heterophony*, Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy (accessed 15 October, 2005)

CHAPTER SEVEN

SONG

The form of the *Song* is ternary. The separate sections are not delineated clearly, and this lack of clear outlines defines the musical structure as a whole. The piece is a simple monothematic composition based on the song model. After introducing the main theme (Example 5, mm. 1-16), there is a transitional section (mm. 16-24), a middle section (mm. 24-56), another transitional segment (mm. 57-62), a recapitulation and a codetta (m. 63 to the end.) In this caprice, the improvisational principle is used in a purely classical sense to break the frames of the musical thought, as a free choice of the developmental principal. As in the other *Caprices* of op. 1, and in many other pieces, such an improvisation is not a goal in itself, but is an expression of the internal creative spirit dominating Western music culture's desire to achieve a strong and individualized form.³⁷

Example 5. *Song*, mm.1-16

There are several parallel points between the *Song* of op.1 and other pieces by

Christoskov. The improvisational skill and manner of presentation of the musical ideas indicate a connection between *Song of Caprices*, op. 1 and the *Scherzo* movement of *Rhapsody for Solo Violin*, op. 21. The internal relations between them go beyond the natural stylistic and figurative differences.

The improvisation begins in the first part of the violin *Rhapsody*, where the short motives with recitative character coexist within the clearly defined climax. This climax is achieved in stages and by jumps, with a gradual retreat, which can be connected with the principle of *jumping and filling* at the center of the cycle of *Caprices*, op. 1. The presence of a *quasi-cadenza* and the anticipated fast sections formulates a concept that is common to many other rhapsodic examples. This is a line of variation made from improvisational accumulations. There is a stylistic connection regarding a similar monopolistic meaning of the development of the motif in the beginning of the finale of *Fantasy* for violoncello op. 15 by Christoskov. Thus, we can provisionally mark a center of delayed action in the middle of the scherzo (*a piacere*) and a dynamic, shortened recapitulation, also developed in variations. Thus, in *Song*, the unstable moments—the tempo variations (*a piacere*, *piu mosso*), the performance instructions (*a la cadenza*), the expansion of the formal limits—are not isolated cases, but represent fundamental characteristics of the creative thinking of the author.³⁸

The main melody used to generate the *Song* (Example 5) has two distinctive elements. The first one connects the melody to the vocal folklore traditions found in the region around the Rhodope mountain chain (without being an exact quotation). The melody contains an ornamental richness underlining closely related tonalities. The

³⁷ Georgy Bliznev, “The Vividness of the Caprices,” *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

sixteenth-note group is supported by the eighth-note group, which clearly defines individual musical phrases connected with the natural principals of vocal phrasing (breathing). The length and unity of the melodic lines are determined by the use of separate melodic motives that are varied in terms of rhythm, register and intonation. The beauty of the vocal idea in the theme of the *Song* is intensified by the changes in registers that are accessible only to the violin. However, the principle of such registral variation is so typical for folk vocal tradition that, in this sense, the instrument only continues to develop the natural expectation of the melodic line.

The second characteristic feature is that the above-mentioned conditions are expressed often in musical practice without meter or bar-lines. The rhythmic indicator in this case is relative to the length of the vocal line and helps the performer to organize the musical phrase in a more precise way. Nevertheless, the lack of bar-lines does not represent excessive freedom or create asymmetry in the rhythmic structure. The composer uses the nuances to fix the unique and elusive nature of the folk-music tradition.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RUTCHENITSA

This *Ruchenitsa* is very different from the *Heavy Ruchenitsa* discussed earlier. In this piece, the composer directs his attention to models and organizational principles of the material, which gradually find their way into the entire cycle of *Caprices*, op. 1. The variation principle and the subphrase structure of the Horo (dance), the imitative forms of the song and dance pieces, the bourdon forms and the ostinato models are all found in the folk heritage permanently incorporated by Christoskov throughout his works.³⁹

The imagery of this *Ruchenitsa* presupposes merriment, happiness and flexibility (as in a scherzo). There are elements of strange forms of love games in the folklore rituals, of the brightness of the national wit and virtuosity. This scherzo-like *Ruchenitsa* is based on dynamic, changing states and aspects, as if it creates moods and characters rather than independent musical figures. Thus, there is a logical starting position in it regarding, for example, the humoresque and the tease of *Caprices*, op. 24.

Like the other pieces in the cycle, this caprice is a three-part (ternary) reprise configuration, although the variation and subphrase principles and the periodicity dominate its space.⁴⁰ The exposition (mm. 1-65) introduces the rhythmic model of the theme (Example 6, mm. 1-8), which dominates the first section of the form.

Example 6. *Ruchenitsa*, mm. 1-8



Despite the variation of the melodic and rhythmic structure of the first eight measures, this model ensures a high degree of aesthetic and constructive unity. Certain gestures, such as the glissando in m. 4, are improvisatory in nature, and are part of the instrumental, and particularly the vocal, folklore tradition. The glissando, which would be added instinctively by folk musicians in Bulgaria, becomes a creative springboard for the addition of increased complexity such as the chords in mm. 17, 19 and 21 and the chromatic runs in mm. 20 and 23. The ascending octave jump in measure 4 (at the end of the phrase) begins to inspire new thematic processes—from measures 16, 18, and 21 the self-renewal of the material and the continuity of the musical flow are part of the same artistic process.⁴¹ The gradual transformation of the melodic interval into a harmonic one, which defines the parameters of the ostinato at the end of the exposition, is of a highly imitative nature.

The middle part (from mm. 66-135) utilizes the models of the exposition, but uses an ornamented approach towards the form. The persistent and primitive repetition and the pedal points create open allusions to folklore and develop into complex methods of voice leading, movement, linear combination and chord structure, which indicate the instructive

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

function of the pieces. Christoskov presents his ideas with a strong sense of national instrumentalism and virtuosity so that even the most complicated technical elements sound simplified and lighter. This allows him to reduce to a minimum the didactic rules and models, and to promote the pure artistic aspects of the musical thinking and problems, in general.⁴²

The recapitulation (mm. 136 to the end) is a codetta that synthesizes the main motives of the piece. The *Ruchenitsa* in Christoskov's hands becomes a new type of Bulgarian instrumental movement with a scherzando character and, to a great extent, the piece is analogous to the scherzos of the Western tradition. The lightness and playfulness of the piece helps instrumentalists to explore technical challenges by way of expression.

⁴⁰ Stoian Petrov and Hristo Kodov, "Starobalgarski musikalni Pametnizi," *BAN* (1979) 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 16.

CHAPTER NINE

BALLAD

Caprice No. 7 *Ballad* is lyrical and dramatic, which is characteristic of the genre. Christoskov does not apply the model of the extended ballad, which is well known from the piano sonatas of Brahms and Chopin, but instead uses the song ballad of the type popular in the vocal and instrumental music of Franz Schubert. This type is rooted in the Middle Ages, the time of the blind virtuoso Francesco Landini (1335-1397).⁴³ The lyrical and dramatic imagery of the piece has something in common with the fairy and mythical folklore, which confirms the impression of a declamatory vocal style in the instrumental writing.

The roots of the ballad as a genre lie in the chorale song, having its traditions from the time of the polyphonic Protestant chorale, through the variation of the organ chorale preludes of the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries. Through the implementation of the chorale in the cantata and oratorio tradition, and its broad use in the classical and romantic periods, the chorale preserves its significance even today (for example in the work of Alfred Schnittke in some *concerti grossi* and in his *Viola Concerto*). In the Classical era the chorale defined the character and the musical ideas in many of the slow movements of the instrumental concertos, and in the music of Brahms, and especially in his *Ballads* op.10, the chorale is one of his creative priorities.⁴⁴

In Caprice No. 7, the main features and aspects of the chorale are preserved. These characteristics include prevalent chordal and homophonic writing, a moderate *Andante* tempo, use of the middle register, flowing melodic phrases, and motion in all voices

⁴³ Kurt Von Fisher and Gianluca D'Agostino, Francesco Landini, *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (accessed 30 October, 2005)

⁴⁴George S.Bozarth, Johannes Brahms, *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (accessed 30 October, 2005)

irrespective of the leading role of the highest voice. This is a chorale practice called *canto*, which is a defined strophic structure of the material in the main theme (Example 7, m. 1-24).

Example 7. *Ballad*, mm.1-24



The principles of style and musical thinking in the ballad are far removed from the folkloric and imitative forms used by Christoskov in the other caprices of op.1, and here his compositional approach enters a different musical and historical context. The *Ballad* has clearly defined dramatic stages and logical phases in its structural system. The theme (Example 7) is divided into two- and three-measure phrases. In those measures, there are alternations of interval jumps (a descending perfect fourth leap in mm. 2-3 and a leap of an ascending sixth in mm. 4-5) followed by a succession of seconds (major and minor), which fill in the space of the leap between F-sharp and A (mm.5-7). Through the process of filling in the leaps with passing tones (and chords) the theme acquires an internal balance, stability and logic.

From a modal and harmonic standpoint, the chromaticism utilized in the piece leads

to a clear, diatonic D-major. The use of certain tendency tones, or melodic “extensions,” leads to some plagal (or deceptive) moments. The cadences on the sixth scale degree from IV^7 to vi (Example 8, mm. 10-11) and the flattened sixth scale degree from $V^{4/2}/vi$ to flat VI (mm. 13-14 and 16-17) provide harmonic complexity before the stable closing on D-major at the end of the thematic statement (mm. 22-23). These plagal elements can be regarded as belonging to the historical context of the chorale in the theme, but in this particular case, they represent the continuous action of the form and have a definite tonal function.

Example 8. *Ballad*, mm.10-11, mm. 13-14, mm. 16-17, mm. 22-23

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a piano piece. The first staff, starting at measure 8, features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It includes time signatures of 2/4 and 1/2, and dynamic markings such as *p*. The second staff, starting at measure 15, continues the piece with a *f* dynamic marking. The third staff, starting at measure 22, includes first and second endings and a *Meno mosso* tempo marking. The notation consists of chords and melodic lines, with some notes marked with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4).

The exposition of the *Ballad* (mm. 1-55) is a simple binary form. Within this section, the main theme is developed and enriched, setting up the future use of the thematic material. The middle section of the entire *Ballad* (mm. 56-112) is in the subdominant key of G-major, which is introduced gradually, without a direct modulation. The use of G-sharps (mm. 25-39) leads to a localized A-major tonality. The composer uses the close relation between these three key areas (along the circle of fifths), but eventually the key of D-major is rethought as dominant to the subordinated G-major. The middle section of the work is developmental because of this instability of the key areas and the increases in register spacing, dynamic range and overall complexity needed to arrive at the climax.

The recapitulation, which starts in m. 135, also contains the synthesized codetta. The composer combines the main theme of the piece with the variations of the theme used in the development in order to achieve a strong and more unified ending. The *Ballad* serves as a new stage in the development of the compositional style of Christoskov. In this piece, he turns to the ancient traditions and forms while simultaneously using contemporary violin techniques to challenge the performer on a technical level.

CHAPTER TEN

DANCE

Caprice No. 8 *Dance* is a wild, virtuosic etude with clearly divided technical sections in its formal design. This caprice has no defined genre affiliation, but is rather dedicated to the instrumental and technical development of the violinist (Example 8, mm. 1-10). The caprice is situated in the central part of the cycle, and it participates in the general principle of the slow-fast alternation followed by the composer through the cycle. The triple meter of 12/8 is closely related to the initial *Prelude* (in 6/8) and the final *Shopp Caprice* (in 9/8). The closeness in the metric organization unifies the musical idea behind the whole cycle and brings together the different characters of the musical ideas.

Example 9. *Dance*, mm1-9

The image shows a musical score for the first nine measures of 'Dance' by Paganini. It consists of three staves of music in 12/8 time, with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first staff (measures 1-3) features a melodic line with slurs and accents, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff (measures 4-6) is a highly technical passage with sixteenth-note patterns, marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The third staff (measures 7-9) continues the melodic development, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The score includes various performance markings such as slurs, accents, and dynamic changes.

The form of the *Dance* is a simple ternary structure with a monothematic exposition. When compared with the theme of the *Prelude* it becomes obvious that the theme of the *Dance* does not possess a complicated logical structure, but instead is built on the motive principle, where the separate segments of the melody are connected together and are developed through variation and repetition.

The exposition (mm. 1-30) is energetic and intense in mood because of the active

eighth-note movement and the acceleration and repetition (starting at m. 11) of the thematic model of the first ten measures. The composer develops the thematic material by exploiting the registers of the violin. These preconditions define the closeness of the piece to the *etude* genre (known in its clearer instructive version) in contrast to those etudes with more complicated forms by Rachmaninoff and Scriabin (such as *Etudes Tableaux* and *Etude-Poem*).⁴⁵ The exposition seems to exhaust a set of motivic possibilities, where the movement does not cease, but pauses temporarily while seemingly awaiting new ideas.

The middle section (mm. 31-59) begins with a method of development using motivic inversion. The first two measures of the exposition (mm. 1-2) appear in reverse order in the development (mm. 31-32), a common approach for Baroque composers. Another important element of the development is the intensity that the composer achieves by using rests at the beginning of motives that, in the exposition, began directly on the beat. These interruptions and pauses facilitate the rhythmic and phrase variation (through displacement) of the dance motive, by means of which new reduced variants arise. For example, the descending scale motive (presented in a reduced form in m. 31) begins on the fourth eighth note of the measure, compared to the opening position of m. 2, where it begins from the first beat. By using those compositional methods, Christoskov strengthens the logical cohesion between the individual sections of the piece in the course of its development. Behind the vehemence and wildness of the caprice there is always a governing logic, thought and a strong aesthetic sense of the form.

The recapitulation from (m. 61) begins with the return of the main theme. The composer uses the three-note motive (m. 61) from the first beat of the theme to

⁴⁵Boyan Lechev, "Caprices for Solo Violin," *Bulgarska Musica* (2000), 6.

construct the last climax. The motive is sequenced (mm. 73-76) in an ascending stepwise scale pattern, ultimately leading to the concluding measures.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HARVESTER'S SONG

Harvester's Song represents a synthesis between the two main compositional paradigms of the cycle—the dance and the song. The ternary form includes in its middle section (mm. 51-104) a new dance theme with a change of the modal and tonal centers (A-major replaces the initial e-minor) and the meter changes from the flowing 8/8 to the *Ruchenitsa's* irregular 7/8. The tempo also increases significantly under the new genre conditions. The structure has bucolic (a style used by shepherds on the *kaval*) folklore instrumental samples, and the utilitarian folklore melodies, like the harvester's song, require a steady and unvaried pulse as well as a change of character and mood at different stages of the work related to the harvesting processes.⁴⁶ Christoskov imitates such a compound form in this caprice, and achieves maximum musical interconnectedness and unity of the process resulting from the melodic and thematic statements that appear at the beginning of the caprice.

The theme (Example 10, mm. 1-16) contains two main structural moments. The first one is an extended phrase (mm. 1-10). The second moment (a tag) is very typical for the song's addition (mm. 11-16), and serves as a conclusion of the first 10 measures. This addition develops processes from the second half of the phrase in mm. 6-10. The closeness between the two segments is underlined by the cadences: the cadence in mm. 15-16 represents a harmonic solution to the melodic cadence in mm. 9-10. The extensively outlined repetition around the main melodic center E-natural turns into a support for a two-part bourdon form.

Example 10. *Harvester's Song*, 1-16

The musical score for 'Harvester's Song' (Example 10) is presented in four systems. The first system (measures 1-5) begins with the tempo marking 'Andante cantabile' and the dynamic 'mf'. It features a melodic line with various ornaments and fingerings. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the melody with similar ornaments. The third system (measures 11-15) shows further development of the melodic line. The fourth system (measure 16) concludes with a double stop and a triplet of eighth notes.

The artistic meaning of the theme is organized around the usage of intervals up to a perfect fifth. This influences the sound of the piece in a very expressive, but also archaic way. The primitive form of the melodic movement, the repetition, as well as the variation of the main motives and the frequent use of the (flat) seventh scale degree D-natural also help to strengthen the implicit modality of the melody.

The ternary exposition presents the theme in a different key in each section—e-minor (mm. 1-16), a-minor (mm. 17-32) and back to e-minor (mm. 33-50). The double stops used in the second and third section of the exposition also support the two tonal areas of a- and e-minor by holding these pitches as pedal tones throughout the section.

The development section enters a contrasting sphere by using the dance model. Besides the change of the meter (from 8/8 to 7/8) and the increase in tempo, the mode changes from a-minor to A-major. This change in mode reflects, on a macro-level what

⁴⁶ Pencho Stoyanov, "Encyclopedia of Bulgarian Musical Culture," *S. BAS* (1967), 102.

happens at the micro-level within the exposition. Another connection occurs with the pitch center E-natural, which acts as a common tone on the border of the two sections (mm. 50-51). This process of using a common tone to create a smooth modulation between modes occurs again in the transition to the recapitulation (mm. 97-104). Another important connection, which is a motivic one, ties the material of the entire piece together. The descending three-note motive from m. 1 of the song becomes the basis of the thematic material of the dance. Thus, the first three measures of the dance (mm. 51-53) contain three versions of this motive—the diminutive one on beat three of m. 51, the augmented one in m. 52, and the inverted one on beat three of m. 53.

Example 11. *Harvester's Song*, mm. 1-2, mm. 51-53

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The first staff, labeled 'mm. 1-2', shows a descending three-note motive in G major (one sharp) and 3/8 time. It features a first ending bracket over the final two notes and a fermata over the final note. The second staff, labeled 'mm 51-52', shows the same motive in G major, 3/8 time, with a mezzo-forte (mp) dynamic marking and various articulations including accents and slurs.

In the organization of the dance section, the composer applies the *verse-refrain* principle, which makes the connection between the compound parts of the form more logical. The beginning of the verse (mm. 51-58) represents the first in a series of varied versions of the verse. Another version appears in mm. 67-74, which is lighter in character. It has a different thematic element despite the impression of contrapuntal variability. The refrain in mm. 59-66 (repeated afterwards in variants in m. 75 and again in m. 79) has a more constant nature. This distinct thematic identification of the refrain is used in the transition (mm. 83-90) to the recapitulation as the main thematic element of this part.

The reduced recapitulation, which returns to the song of the beginning, includes motives from the development section (such as the bourdon motives). Despite the impression that the *Harvester's song* is an interpretation of an earlier folklore prototype, its general harmony, sophistication and simplicity make it one of Christoskov's most beautiful pieces.

CHAPTER TWELVE

LITTLE TOCCATA

Caprice No. 10 *Little Toccata* is one of the most popular and frequently performed pieces of the *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1 by Christoskov. There are many arrangements for different instrumental groups. Some of the reasons for this concert showpiece's popularity are its accessible and clear musical language, its virtuosity and brilliance of the style.

The genre toccata in the twentieth century is very popular in both the Western and the Bulgarian traditions. The cycle *Improvisation and Toccata*, op. 36, by Vladigerov, where the improvisation symptomatically builds on an old harvester's melody, can be regarded as the model for Christoskov's caprices Nos. 9 and 10.⁴⁷ As mentioned earlier, Christoskov enlarges these processes and makes them more complex in *Twenty-Four Caprices*, op. 24.

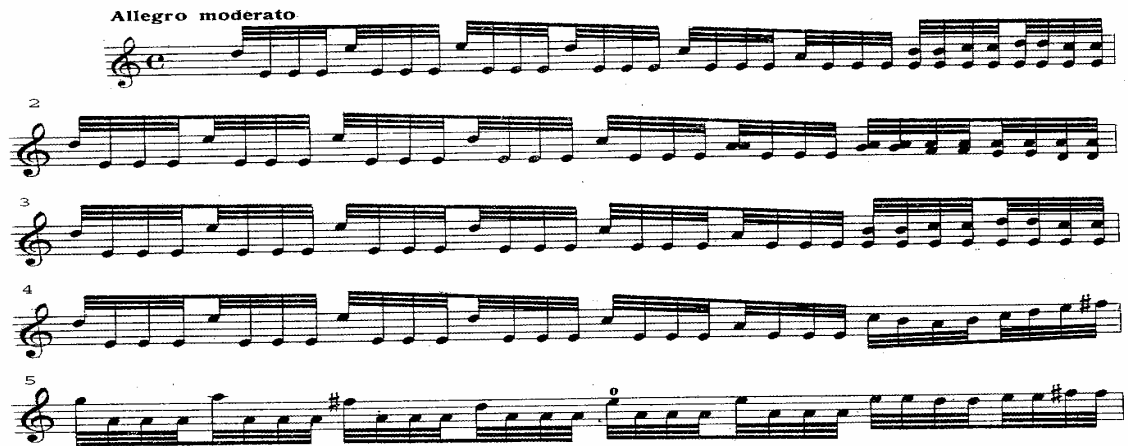
Little Toccata is structured as a united ternary form and it has a homogenous rhythmic flow. Within this flow, however, a united process of movement is achieved, where the 32nd-note is connected contrapuntally with the eighth-note pulsation of the main motifs of the theme. Thus, in m.1 the first note of each group of four (D-E-E-D-C-A) forms a contrapuntal melody in an eighth-note pattern until the last beat of the measure, where the melodic voice quickens to a sixteenth-note pattern (Example 12, m.1).

Example 12. *Little Toccata*, m.1



The theme (Example 13, mm. 1-8) is an eight-measure phrase of symmetrical type regarding the thematic content of the subphrases, but it is open regarding the tonal structure, which modulates from the pitch center A to the center D. Thus, the exposition (mm. 1-19) remains tonally open. The second half of the exposition (mm. 9-19) develops the motives from the first and the second half of the initial phrase, but around the new pitch center of D. This makes the development of the exposition open and unstable, which influences the following section. The motoric rhythm, the strong contrapuntal pulsation and the tonal organization referring to ancient modal forms interact organically and ensure a powerful impression.

Example 13. *Little Toccata*, mm. 1-8



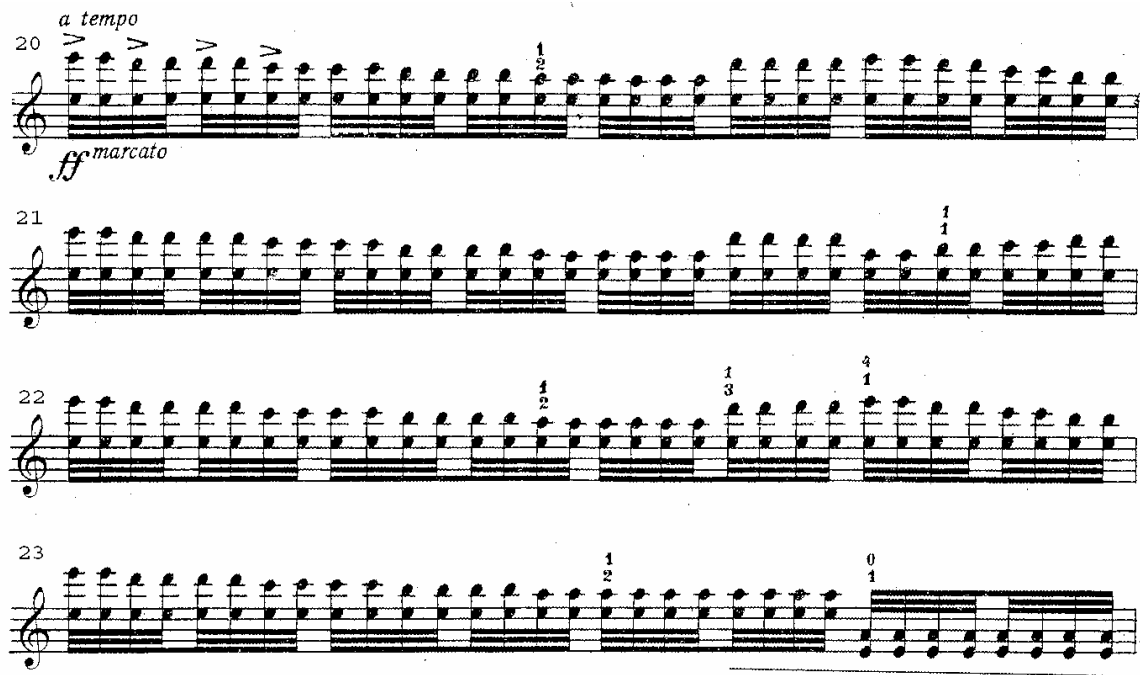
Example 13 continued on the next page)

⁴⁷ Ibid., 103.



The middle section of the piece is an organic continuation of the previously developed material. It begins with a subphrase (mm. 20-23) where the top voice (Example 14) becomes a rhythmically active transitional passage, rather than a melody. This leads to the phrase beginning at m. 24, where the counterpoint of the melodic voice against a pedal point is replaced by homophonic writing of two lines moving in parallel fourths. The theme becomes integrated in a polytonal manner at different heights, which provides this section with a synthesized character.

Example 14. *Little Toccata*, mm. 20-23



The recapitulation (from m. 30) not only returns to the initial setting of the theme,

but also takes the characteristics of a codetta, where the motivic work is summarized. The simplicity and the elegance of the compositional process, as well as the details and means of expression fill the *Little Toccata* with freshness and vitality despite the fact that it is incorporated into a traditional genre.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ARIOSO AND PRELUDE

Caprice No. 11 *Arioso and Prelude* belongs in stylistic and compositional terms to the more freely structured musical works, which are generally described as *rhapsodic*. Like the etymological meaning of the word (to recite poems and to sew), rhapsodies consist of different elements, usually a slow song-like section followed by a quick dance-like one. *Caprice* No. 11 applies exactly this principle—a song-like *Adagio* is followed by a dynamic *Allegro vivace*. The tradition of rhapsodies by Liszt and other composers, created under the conditions of various national schools, are models in this regard. Bartók composed the *Two Violin Rhapsodies* based on material from Hungarian folklore. Another important example of a rhapsody form the French school is Ravel's *Tzigane*. Despite the stylistic and folkloric differences, they are built in a similar manner—a slow, improvisational section in the beginning, regarded as a broad introduction (*Lento quasi cadenza*, for example, in Ravel's rhapsody), leads to a quick, dancing variation. In Bulgarian music, many rhapsodic forms encompass the chamber- and solo-instrumental genres and gradually enter the concerto- and symphonic-forms. The *slow-quick* formal design of the above-mentioned four parts of the *First Violin Rhapsody* of op.21 by Christoskov remains true to the typical rhapsodic contrast—the slow parts have no measure delineations (the measure 4/4 in the third part is very relative), and the quick parts have a distinct accentual meter of 6/8.

Arioso of Caprice No. 11, op. 1 contains improvisational song-like thematic material (Example 15, mm. 1-12). The initial phrase, with wide intervallic leaps and a recitative-like declamatory character, forms a distinct syntactic unit. The more developed

vocal melismatic forms summarizing the characteristic type of Rhodope ornaments (discussed in the *Song*, Caprice No. 5) are also present in this phrase. These contrasting elements in a variant form represent the first part of the piece, and foreshadow the intervallic development of the material in the second part.

Example 15. *Arioso and Prelude*, mm. 1-12



The second section (*Alegro vivace*) introduces a metric contrast (5/8 replaces the initial 4/4) and a shift to D-major from its initial b-minor. The establishment of a constant eighth-note pulse links this section to the genre “*prelude*.” In this case, the stress is put not on the dance element, nor on the united movement type and the tonal shading, but on the definitive etude character of the piece, where there are constant combinations of several types of violin techniques. The section with double-stops in thirds in the beginning of this part (mm. 31-45) plays the role of a thematic center continuing the melismatic embellishments of the beginning. The arpeggios (from m. 67) have both an intermediate function and a theme-structuring function, since they inspire the double-stops in mm. 95-106. The passage in octaves (mm. 148-end) marks the beginning of the codetta regarding the thematic material and increases the intensity with the change in register and virtuosity.

In general, Christoskov treats the *rhapsody* genre in an innovative way connecting the declamatory principle with the expression and the technical richness of the etude.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SHOPP CAPRICE

Caprice No. 12 synthesizes many stylistic/musical qualities that make it an appropriate concluding movement. Various kinds of techniques, methods, ways of producing sound, genre characteristics, and structuring and stylistic models, which have already been implemented in the other pieces, are present in this caprice. In this sense, the programmatic title “*Shopp*” is not so much a characteristic one, but rather a summarizing, emblematic and conclusive one. In the form of the *Shopp Caprice*, there are two tendencies, which at first glance seem to function contradictorily to each other. This increases the complexity of the system of musical thinking and makes the picture of this music more varied and bright.

The first tendency is expressed by the aspiration for closeness, for crystallization of the themes and for clear sectional borders between the individual parts. The coda, (marked *Vivace*) for example, is a distinct temporal, figurative, and rhythmically constituted section and plays not only a local, but also a more general, structural role. It is full of cadences and is a virtuosic elaboration of the previously presented material in the form; it also indicates the exploitation of the music in the movement, the imagery and energy flow to the fullest extent.

Example 16. *Shopp Caprice*, mm.1-2



Example 17. *Shopp Caprice*, mm. 3-11



This coordinating tendency also manifests itself in the originally applied form of the instrumental ritornello (Example 16, mm. 1-2), which plays the role of a starting mechanism for the whole movement. Later, it obtains other functions—the conclusion of the main theme of the piece (Example 17, mm. 3-11), a transitional and developmental element, a function related to the timbral variants, a rhythmic cadence, and a contrasting aspect that sharpens the listener’s attention and creates a narrative throughout the caprice. If we assume that this ritornello forms a rondo-variation line in the piece, then this centralization around the supporting moment in the structure is in dramatic and logical compliance with the centralization (on a microcosmic level) of the melodic motives.

This, and many other forms of artistic unity and aesthetic harmony in the broad sense in the composition of the *Caprices*, op. 1, was discovered spontaneously and intuitively through experimentation, which provides the music with immediacy and vividness.⁴⁸ The richness of the folklore dance and the related gestures, rituals and movements, as well as the imagery and the characters, are a key to the consciousness of the

⁴⁸ Rosiza Batalova, “The Composer Peter Christoskov,” *Bulgarska Musica* 10 (Bulgaria, 1968), 12.

listener and the performer.⁴⁹

The second tendency is to free the musical thought, to break the form, to open the structure and to combine in a subtle, delicate and fluid manner the separate sections in a common duration. This tendency appears to be in conflict with the first tendency, but in fact helps to create it, and also comments on and enlarges it. This leads to an asymmetry of the separate variations of the theme and the ritornello and to the changes of meter that ultimately lead to an open mixed-meter form. The organic growth of the form and the idea is an important and effective compositional solution in this Caprice as a whole. The maturity of the synthetic solution of the last caprice of the cycle is a precondition for many of the forthcoming compositional successes of Christoskov.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

CONCLUSION

Twelve Caprices for Solo Violin, op. 1 represents a line of creative discoveries of the author in several directions. They use the genre, structure and stylistic inertia of Western music examples (such as the *Twenty-four Caprices for Violin Solo*, op. 1 of Paganini), and from their spirit and ingenuity establish a new school of instrumental mastery and of creative and aesthetic accomplishment. Their sophisticated taste, mood, technical potential and character, as well as their originality and universality, make the Bulgarian caprices by Christoskov exceed the regional stylistic models of Bulgarian music, which they actively represent, and show the dynamic of a young and vivid culture in its movement to universal, eternal aesthetic values.⁵⁰

The caprices present an effective solution to the problem of enclosing strong improvisational elements within the boundaries of traditional structures and forms. Different types of ternary structures appear throughout the cycle with many modifications, innovations, functional syntheses and originality. The form of the caprices is not a preliminary model or a type of structure found in the stylistic traditions of the past. Rather, it provides the support for the various types of movements, technical exercises, the dance or song forms, and the improvisation. Thus, without being open or approximate forms in the literal sense, the *Twelve Caprices* create individualized, “moment” forms that are emblematic and, largely, provisionally fixed in a musical picture.⁵¹ The distinct understanding of melodic purity is also an important function of the methods for sound production—for the tonal/modal and systematic characteristics of the musical instruments

⁵⁰ Georgy Bliznev, “The Vividness of the Caprices,” *Bulgarska Musica* 2 (1987), 36.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

from Bulgarian folklore reflects the broad scope of the caprices. From Christoskov's own performance of his *Caprices* op. 1, one notices that the composer does not strictly obey his own temporal, dynamic or agogic notations, as well as the rhythmic purity, but tries to add vividness, brightness, power and contrast to the given musical idea, while flexibly redistributing the available musical means of expression.⁵²

Twelve Caprices, op. 1 includes definite technical challenges within the artistic aspects and shows that a technical method cannot be a goal in itself. The techniques can also depict a certain culture, a method of music making and principles of musical consciousness in a broader sense. The musical consciousness of *Caprices* op. 1 can be described as poly-stylistic because it encompasses many aspects, processes and sources. However, the style of the cycle, in terms of its musical language, is post-Romantic with elements of primitivism. The harmonic language is firmly rooted in tonality, but it contains sudden alternations between major and minor, plagal and deceptive elements, and, at times, a lack of clear stabilizing authentic cadences. The primitive aspects of the language originate in the folklore and include Bulgarian melodies and vocal-style embellishments from the song models as well as irregular and mixed meters from the dance models.

From the violinistic point of view, the *Twelve Caprices* represents an opportunity for technical study within a unique, stimulating musical context. The caprices offer a wide range of technical challenges to the performing artist including traditional and non-traditional double-stop and chordal passages, rhythmic work (related to the irregular meters), various combinations of bow strokes and articulations, contrapuntal voicing, ear training for dissonant intervals and unusual harmonic changes and scales (including

⁵¹ Ibid., 36.

⁵² Ibid., 36.

bi-harmonic and whole tone), shifting challenges from large melodic leaps, and issues of style relating to the implementation of folk elements. Many of these technical issues appear in standard etudes and caprices for violin (such as those by Paganini, Jacob Dont, Rodolphe Kreutzer and others), but none of those examples offers the same type of musical context (or the exact technical challenges, for that matter) in which to develop and perfect the various techniques. The *Twelve Caprices* is, at its musical core, full of imagination, joy, sorrow, simplicity, regional flavor, playfulness, and energy. Thus, a student or professional will be able to enjoy the fun aspects of the music making while discovering the serious aspects of the technical benefits.

The study of the essence of the *Twelve Caprices* sheds light on the creative laboratory of the performing composer, the evolution and the enrichment of his creative thinking, and the successful discovery of significant starting positions—an intuitive, but also experienced artistic position. The examination of Christoskov's work, without claiming any exceptional uniqueness or significance, proves him to be among the most outstanding artists of the Bulgarian musical tradition—Pipkov, Vladigerov, Vesselin Stoyanov, and Staynov—whom we discover today as being equally relevant to the composers of European and world music in the twentieth century. In this sense, the *Twelve Caprices*, op. 1 by Christoskov shows us the dynamics of an epoch, the reflexes of the artist in a heavily changing situation and environment, in which the basis of the folklore originals becomes a focal point for the understanding of musical thought and expressivity.

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