

He possessed a gift that few of his contemporaries had: that of creating unforgettable melodies. And in tonight's concert, you will have the opportunity to appreciate this unique quality. Today, Paganini's importance as an inspiration to many musicians of the Romantic movement is increasingly recognized. Without Paganini, Liszt would not have developed his transcendental piano virtuosity; if he had not listened to Paganini, Schumann would not have decided to become a composer. The Italian musician's European tour, between 1828 and 1834, was thus one of the most important moments in the history of nineteenth-century Western music. Thank you for your attention and enjoy the concert.

PAGANINI ENSEMBLE VIENNA was founded in 2019 by Mario Hossen. Dedicated primarily to the chamber music of Niccolò Paganini, the ensemble presents rarely performed works by the great Italian composer for violin, viola, guitar and cello.

The musicians of Paganini Ensemble Vienna give the audience a unique opportunity to experience the less-known but extremely beautiful world of Paganini's chamber music — presented not only with uncompromising technical virtuosity and dedication, but also with the rich palette of emotions that Paganini himself put into these works: from tenderness through suffering and drama to rapture and joy. These emotional elements are the key to understanding the musical universe of Paganini, whose own words are: "We must feel strongly and deeply in order to be able to make others feel." The Paganini Ensemble Vienna has been chosen as the Official Ambassador of the Paganini Route, an initiative of the composer's hometown of Genoa, certified this year by the Council of Europe as part of the major European project Cultural Routes.

The ensemble performs actively throughout Europe, as well as in China and Canada. It has given concerts at the Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna, in Madrid, Warsaw, Montreal, Shanghai and Santander, as well as at the festivals in Ghent (Belgium), Vilnius (Lithuania) and Paganini Festival in Genoa.

„**NICCOLÒ PAGANINI** (Genoa, 1782 – Nice, 1840) is today unanimously remembered as the greatest violinist of all time, and his works, especially the Six Concertos for Violin and Orchestra and the Twenty-Four Capricci for Violin, represent the pinnacle of violin virtuosity. However, in addition to the works he composed for himself and his concert hall performances, Paganini also wrote numerous chamber works that remained unknown to the general public for a

long time. The Genoese musician was extremely protective of his music and, during his lifetime, published only a small number of compositions. After his death, his unpublished manuscripts were sold by his heirs to a German collector, and only finally returned to Italy in 1970. It can be said that the true rediscovery of Paganini began from that date. For a long time, Paganini's music was unfortunately often published inaccurately and performed without any philological scruples. Fortunately, in more recent years, thanks to the efforts of musicologists and musicians, greater attention has been paid to the correct performance of Paganini's music. In this context, his chamber music output, rich in high-quality works such as his five trios and fifteen guitar quartets, is gaining an increasingly important role thanks to his inexhaustible melodic imagination, in many ways inspired by the great tradition of Italian bel canto" (Danilo Prefumo, musicologist, co – author of the book "Paganini. His Life, Works and Times")

GHEORGHI ARNAOUDOV is one of the best contemporary composers in Bulgaria. His music had been performed all over Europe, also in Asia and North America. He had graduated in composition with Alexander Tanev and contemporary music with Bojidar Spassov from the National Academy of Music and obtained his Doctorate of Philosophy in the New Bulgarian University. While attending the Music Academy, Arnaoudov also studied composition in Florence, where he explored electronic and concrete music. Upon graduation and completion of his studies abroad, Arnaoudov began establishing a reputation as dedicated composer as well as a theorist. Specializing in modern and postmodern aesthetics, communication and semiotics, he also set himself to exploring ancient and Far Eastern musical forms. To date Arnaoudov had produced numerous symphonies, oratorios, concertos and has won several important international prizes. Since 2020 he is a Professor in Composition and Harmony at the New Bulgarian University. Soon after the world premiere at Musikverein in Vienna in 2024 of his "Cazoni obscure", Arnaoudov created another piece for "Paganini ensemble Wien" – Canzoni ardenti. The main thread in all four parts of the piece is 'a surreal' sense of passion, excitement, intense anger or rage to certain extent, and joy, conveyed through the various intense melodic and rhythmic lines and virtuoso sonic bursts of the four instruments", as the composer describes it.



**Община Варна
Министерство на културата**

**Международен музикален фестивал
"Варненско лято" 2026**

основан 1926 г.

Член на Европейската асоциация на фестивалите

PAGANINI ENSEMBLE VIENNA

**MARIO HOSSEN – violin
DIEMUT POPPEN – viola
LILYANA KEHAYOVA – cello
ALEXANDER SWETE – guitar**

Presentation by Danilo Prefumo - musicologist, leading expert on Paganini's music

*This concert is realized in partnership with the
**Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities,
the Young Network TransEurope (YNT)
and Siemens Arts Program***



**25 July (Saturday)
7.00 PM**

**Varna State Opera
Main Stage**

ПРОГРАМА

NICCOLÒ PAGANINI (1782 – 1840)

Quartet Op.4 №2 MS 29

- I.Moderato
- II.Minuetto. Andante
- III.Larghetto
- IV.Rondo. Allegretto

Terzetto Concertante MS 114

- I.Allegro
- II.Menuetto and Trio
- III.Adagio
- IV.Valtz a Rondo

Caprice №24

(arrangement by Mario Hossen)

15 мин. антракт

GHEORGHI ARNAUDOV (1957)

**Canzoni ardenti
(world premiere)**

- I.Moderato
- II.Moderato
- III.Poco Lento
- IV.Poco Andante

NICCOLÒ PAGANINI (1782 – 1840)

La Campanella

(arrangement by Rudolf Leopold)

Resume of the Speech by Danilo Prefumo

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for being here. I am Danilo Prefumo, I am an Italian musicologist, and I've been studying Paganini's music for many years. And it's precisely about Paganini that I want to talk to you very briefly this evening. Because Paganini's arrival on the scene was a musical phenomenon of extraordinary importance in the first half of the nineteenth century and significantly determined the course of Romantic musical Europe.

From a certain point of view Paganini is still a little-known composer, whose legends are mostly known, and his music much less. Paganini, the violin wizard, the unsurpassed soloist. Many in his time even thought he'd made a pact with the devil, and that the devil had revealed to him the secret to being so good. But that wasn't the case at all.

One day, Emperor Napoleon was asked what the secret was to his victories in battle, and he replied, "You start first and then you see." He meant, of course, that there was no secret. He was simply more skillful, more intelligent, bolder, and more brilliant than his adversaries.

I am often asked what Paganini's secret was, and I could answer in the same way as Napoleon. There was no secret; he was simply much more gifted than his fellow violinists of his time. That's all. But his virtuosity was so original, so inexplicable, that his contemporaries were often forced to resort to myth to explain it. And so, the improbable story of a pact with the devil was invented. It was even said that he had learned to play the violin during the many years he spent in prison for killing his mistress in a fit of jealousy.

These stories, of course, have nothing to do with historical reality, and today the mission of more experienced musicians and Paganini musicologists, like maestro Hossen and me, is to restore Paganini to his historical place and to understand the myth in its true meaning and historical origin.

Paganini was undeniably a musician of exceptional talent and technical and instrumental mastery, surpassing even the greatest virtuosos of his time and the past. Without this, he would not have triumphed before European audiences, who were often far from welcoming foreign musicians with open arms.

Therefore, the myth of Paganini took shape and spread everywhere during the Genoese musician's European tour, which took him to the most important musical centers of the continent: Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London, and Brussels, between 1828 and 1834. This tour decisively influenced the subsequent evolution of European music. Let's be clear: without Paganini, musical Romanticism would not have been the same. None of the great Austro-German composers active at that time escaped Paganini's allure: Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and Liszt, to name only the most famous, listened to him and were profoundly influenced by him. The legend of Paganini was born and spread both among the public, thanks to extraordinary international media coverage, and within the musical community: it was an ecumenical phenomenon, born spontaneously, to which the composer certainly contributed, not only through his incomparable artistry, but also through an instinctive and skillful sense of

what we would call today self-marketing. That is, the art of self-promotion.

Paganini was extremely protective of his music, fearing imitation by other violinists, and during his lifetime, he published only a few compositions: some sonatas and quartets, and above all, the 24 Capricci, Op. 1 for solo violin, unanimously considered his masterpiece.

Unfortunately, he did not publish any of his six concertos for violin and orchestra, nor his works for solo guitar, nor any of his other chamber music. A small number of these compositions, including two concertos for violin and orchestra, were published posthumously. But chamber music, which contains authentic gems such as the works you will hear this evening, remained unpublished for a very long time and has only been rediscovered in recent times.

The reason is simple. In 1910 the Paganini's heirs decided to sell all the music they still possessed in manuscript to a German collector, and it remained virtually unpublished until 1970, when the Italian government finally decided to acquire the posthumous collection, which was then able to return to Italy. It can be said that the true rediscovery of Paganini as a composer began in the year 1970, because musicians and researchers finally gained access to a large quantity of works that were still unpublished or had been published very, very inaccurately.

We can say that unspeakable crimes had been perpetrated against Paganini's music for over a century. If you publish a score by Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, and you change a single note, you will be treated as a criminal. With Paganini, on the other hand, anything was possible: cuts, changes in dynamics, insipid personal interventions, ridiculous revisions. Anything was permitted at the end of the 19th century, and it remained so for many years. For a long time, Paganini's music was played as Gypsy music. Today, the trend has finally reversed, because thanks to the efforts of a new musicology and younger, more demanding musicians, a new attention is being paid to what is played and how it is played. Today, the motto is therefore "Paganini deserves respect," and maestro Hossen and me, and many others, strive to guarantee, through musicological studies and interpretations ever more faithful to the authentic spirit of his music, that this is indeed the case. "Paganini deserves respect."

Paganini was an Italian musician, endowed with an inexhaustible melodic vein, whose music is still imbued with the lyricism and virtuosity of the Italian opera of his time.