

JOSEPH BENESCH A FORGOTTEN BOHEMIAN VIOLINIST AND AN IMITATOR OF NICCOLÒ PAGANINI WITHIN THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN VIOLINISTIC TRADITION

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Izvleček: *Joseph Benesch (1795–1873) spada med zgodnejše potujoče violinske virtuozne in posnemovalce slavnega Niccolòja Paganinija, s katerim se je srečal v Trstu leta 1824. Šest let je deloval v Ljubljani in se pozneje ustalil na Dunaju, kjer je bil član dvorne glasbene kapele ter orkestrski direktor gledališča pri Hofburgu. Večinoma je pisal violinska dela, ki jih je izvajal kot del osebnega repertoarja.*

Ključne besede: *Joseph Benesch, Niccolò Paganini, koncertno življenje 19. stoletja, violinski virtuoz, violinski repertoar*

Abstract: *Joseph Benesch (1795–1873) was among the earliest violin virtuosos to become imitators of the famous Niccolò Paganini, whom he met in Trieste as early as 1824. He was active in Ljubljana for six years and later settled in Vienna, where he was a member of the Hofkapelle and orchestral director of the court theatre. He mainly wrote works for violin, which he performed as part of his personal repertoire.*

Keywords: *Joseph Benesch, Niccolò Paganini, nineteenth-century concert life, violin virtuosos, violin repertoire*

The Historical Background of Violin-Playing in Bohemia and the Rise of a Violin Virtuoso

When we think of the origins of the travelling “superstar” violin virtuoso, Niccolò Paganini immediately comes to mind. While it is true that the phenomenon of the itinerant virtuoso emerged in his era, the early nineteenth century, when travel was slow, expensive and dangerous, he was by no means the only person developing what would become the “standard violin repertoire”. There were others who contributed to the concept of a public solo performance centred around virtuosic violin technique, the fruits of which we can still enjoy today. Adopting a strategy of promoting their own compositions, tailored to their performance style, as a means of standing out from the competition, these aspiring virtuosos embarked on this life of constant touring in pursuit of commercial success and financial prosperity. Among them was the violinist and composer Joseph Benesch, who worked in Ljubljana for several years and was strongly influenced by Paganini, whom he met in 1824. Benesch was a musician well respected during his lifetime and considered

“one of the foremost violinists in Germany”¹ His name was included in the most important music encyclopedias of his time,² and music journals in Vienna, Leipzig, Prague, Brussels, Milan and Paris reported on his death.³ Today, however, like many Bohemian violinists, he is forgotten – as are also his compositions, which are preserved in music archives and libraries in the form of autograph manuscripts, manuscript copies and nineteenth-century prints. His works reflect the spirit of the “Paganini era”, especially in terms of their violinistic idiom. He was a child of two epochs – on the one hand, the expiring period of musical patronage, and on the other, the new, emerging period of the newly empowered bourgeoisie and the phenomenon of the travelling virtuoso.

Benesch grew up in a musically stimulating environment in Moravia and in Bohemia, which was also referred to as the “Conservatory of Europe”, since almost half the musicians born in Bohemia between 1740 and 1810 were active outside their native land.⁴ The importance of music in Bohemia from the earliest times is attested by the old Bohemian proverb “Co Čech, to muzikant” (Every Czech is a musician) and by historians and artists of the time. The English historian Charles Burney (1726–1814), who travelled through the Bohemian countryside in 1772, wrote in his diary that he was often told that the Bohemians were “the most musical people of Germany, or perhaps, of all Europe” and that he himself observed that “not only in every large town, but in all villages, where there is a reading and writing school, children of both sexes are taught music”.⁵ The composer Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787), who grew up in Bohemia, said similarly that in his homeland everyone was musical and music was taught in schools. Even in the smallest villages peasants sang and played various instruments during High Mass in their churches.⁶ According to another Bohemian tradition, fathers saw to it that their sons learned to sing and play at school and mastered at least one instrument before sending them out as merchants so that they had some talent to fall back on. When the wandering son returned, he often brought

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¹ *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, s.v. “Benesch, Joseph”.

² Pr., “Slovník powěstných gmen”, *Květy: národní zábavník pro Čechy, Morawany a Slowáky*, 24 September 1835; *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, “Benesch, Joseph”; *Das musikalische Europa*, s.v. “Benesch, Joseph”, 26–27; *Slovník naučný*, s.v. “Benesch, Joseph”, 613.

³ “Nécrologie”, *Le Guide musical: revue hebdomadaire des nouvelles musicales de la Belgique et l'étranger*, 27 February 1873; “Nécrologie”, *Le Ménestrel: musique et théâtres*, 23 March 1873; “Unsere Todten im Jahre 1873”, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* [Leipzig], 30 January 1874; “Berichte. Nachrichten und Bemerkungen: Wien”, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 26 February 1873; “Necrologie”, *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 9 March 1873; “Nouvelles diverses”, *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 16 March 1873; “Zprávy z ciziny a Rakouska”, *Hudební listy*, 27 February 1873.

⁴ Pilková, “Zur Frage der Musiker”; Franková, “Mýtus české hudební emigrace”, 75–77.

⁵ Burney, *Present State of Music*, 3–4.

⁶ Hertz, “Coming of Age in Bohemia”, 519.

with him an even greater musical competence and sometimes even scores acquired in the larger cities, with which he enriched the musical life of his homeland.⁷

Benesch's father, Matthias Benesch, who was also his first music teacher, was no exception. In addition to his profession as a tailor he was also a talented musician. It was very common for these musicians to be trained by their own fathers during their formative years, as was the case with Benesch. Most of them were broadly trained musicians who mastered various instruments, including the violin, which was a kind of "trademark" of the Bohemians, since many of them contributed to the development of violin playing in Europe.

Violin playing had emerged in the Czech Lands already in the first half of the seventeenth century.⁸ The end of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), when Roman Catholicism regained the upper hand in the Czech Lands, decisively influenced the fate of those lands and their music. Catholic choral establishments, monasteries and Latin schools became centres of musical education. Music and singing became effective tools in the pursuit of recatholization in villages and towns. The Bohemian *cantor* mastered playing the violin and other instruments. In the villages he was a choirmaster, music teacher and player at weddings, funerals and many other occasions.⁹ Bohemian violinists received training from cantors or other musicians; however, they could also be self-taught. A number of them received a thorough musical education in Latin schools, especially from the Jesuits and Piarists.¹⁰ Among them was also the violinist Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (1644–1704), one of the most important violin composers of all time, who may have studied at a Jesuit College in Bohemia.¹¹ By using *scordatura*,¹² which he developed up to an astounding and never since surpassed point, Biber greatly influenced the development of violin technique.¹³

⁷ This tradition was explained by the composer and essayist Johann Friedrich Reinhardt (1752–1814) in the ninth of his letters from Šluknov (Schluknow) near the Bohemian border, published in 1776. See Heartz, "Coming of Age in Bohemia", 518–519; Reichardt, *Briefe eines aufmerksamen Reisenden die Musik betreffend*, 123.

⁸ Židek, *Čeští houslisté tři století*, 15.

⁹ Ibid., 9, 20–21; Berkovec, *Slavný ouřad učitelství*, 7–10.

¹⁰ Židek, *Čeští houslisté tři století*, 20, 22.

¹¹ Biber was an Austrian violinist and composer of Bohemian origin. He was the outstanding violin virtuoso of the seventeenth century and a composer of the first rank; he wrote instrumental, vocal, sacred and secular music. His fame rests primarily on his violin sonatas, especially those requiring *scordatura*, but his polychoral church music has also aroused interest and admiration. See Dann, "Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von".

¹² So-called *scordatura* (literally, 'mistuning'; *accordatura* = tuning) was a tuning of the violin deviant from the usual one that followed similar earlier practices on the lute. It makes some passages easier to play, makes certain double-stops possible and changes the tone-colour by imparting different tensions to the strings. Among the first users of *scordatura* was the Italian violinist and composer Biagio Marini (1594–1663), who employed it in his *Sonata Seconda per il Violino d'Inventione*, Op. 8 (1626). *Scordatura* persisted long into the eighteenth century and even later. See Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 130.

¹³ *Scordatura* was introduced in two of Biber's collections: the *Mystery Sonatas* (1676) and the *Harmonia artificioso-ariosa* (1696). See Boyden, *History of Violin Playing*, 226.

Another important musical milieu for the development of violin playing and music in general was that of ensembles serving members of the aristocracy in Bohemia and Moravia.

The main impetus behind violin playing in the Czech Lands came from Italian musical centres. The earliest record of an Italian violinist playing in the Czech Lands dates from 1627, when Giovanni Battista Buonamente (c. 1595–1642) performed at the festivities in Prague for the coronation of the emperor's son Ferdinand III, King of Bohemia. Almost a hundred years later, in 1723, Francesco Maria Veracini (1690–1768) sojourned in Prague, where he was reportedly in the service of Count Kinsky, returning little later to Florence. Veracini's rival Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770), born in Piran (today's Slovenia), was invited to Prague a few months later by his friend and colleague Antonio Vandini (1690–1778) to perform at the Coronation of Emperor Charles VI as king of Bohemia.¹⁴ There he remained in the service of Count Philip Joseph Kinsky (1700–1749)¹⁵ for three years and enjoyed contact with Prince Lobkowitz's family. Because of the inclement climate he left Prague in 1726 and returned to Padua,¹⁶ where he later taught four Bohemian violinists, among whom were Antonín Kammel (1730–1784) and his pupil Joseph Obermayer (Obermeyer; 1749–after 1816); both were sent for further training to Padua by their master, Count Vincenz Waldstein. The impact of Tartini, who took lessons in counterpoint from the Bohemian composer Bohuslav Matěj Černošický (Padre Boemo; 1684–1742), is also reflected in two other violin pupils: Pietro Nardini (1722–1793) and Johann Gottlieb Graun (1703–1771). The latter was the source of inspiration for Franz Benda (1709–1786), who learned from him some of the finer points of violin playing, especially in Adagios,¹⁷ but Benda also concentrated on studying Vivaldi's violin concertos, which were much favoured at castles and choral establishments in the Czech Lands. Benda gained his reputation as a soloist in the Kapelle of Prince Friedrich, who wrote that he had heard the leading violinists from Mainz, Dresden and Mannheim, but none of them was Benda's equal;¹⁸ later, Benda succeeded J. G. Graun as concertmaster in Berlin. In addition, Wenzel Pichl (1741–1805) studied violin with another of Tartini's pupils, Pietro Nardini, to whom he dedicated his *Cento variazioni*, Op. 11. While the Czech Lands were initially strongly influenced by the Italian violinistic tradition, Bohemian violinists soon gained recognition throughout Europe. After the Italians, they formed the largest group of foreign musicians at the courts

¹⁴ In addition to Tartini, most of the great musicians of Europe from near and far, including a number from the Viennese Hofkapelle, were recruited to participate in Charles's VI coronation festivities. They performed Fux's opera *Costanza e Fortezza*, which was performed outdoors with a hundred-strong choir and an orchestra of two hundred musicians. The singers included the thirteen-year-old F. Benda, later a distinguished violinist, and instrumentalists such as C. H. Graun and J. J. Quantz. See Hertz, "Coming of Age in Bohemia", 512; Burney, *Present State of Music*, 178.

¹⁵ Count Philip Joseph Kinsky was Lord Chancellor at the court of Charles VI of Bohemia.

¹⁶ He wrote three letters from Prague (2 November 1723, 10 August 1725, and 3 November 1725) to his brother Domenico Tartini in Piran and a letter from Padua in which he mentions Prince Lobkowitz (24 February 1750). See Malagò, *Giuseppe Tartini*, 250–252, 319.

¹⁷ Hertz, "Coming of Age in Bohemia", 512.

¹⁸ Lee, "Preface".

of the German Lands and certain other places from the late seventeenth century onwards.¹⁹ How respected Bohemian musicians were even in the eighteenth century is evidenced by Burney, who notes that an important German composer living in London told him that if the Bohemians enjoyed the same advantages as the Italians, they would surpass them.²⁰

However, the Italian violin school also laid a foundation for the highly systematized French violin school through a pupil of Gaetano Pugnani (1731–1798), Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755–1824). Viotti made his debut in Paris at the *Concert Spirituel* in 1782, the year of Paganini's birth, and ushered in a new era of violin playing and composition. It was also the time when the “virtuoso” became the new ideal of public musical performances, and Viotti was one of the first great violinists to use the newly developed Tourte bow. He did not enjoy immediate success, either as a composer or as a virtuoso, as there were some objections to a style which “astonished more than it pleased”. But he gradually brought about the complete renewal of French violinistic art, and by 1800 “in Vienna and St. Petersburg, in London and Paris, everyone was playing Viotti”.²¹ His concept of the violin concerto – a fusion of Italian, French and German elements – was eagerly taken up and developed by his French pupils and eventually became known as the French violin concerto. The pillars of the school he founded were Pierre Rode (1774–1830), Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831) and Pierre Baillot (1771–1842), all professors at the Paris Conservatory (founded in 1795), who followed the stylistic example of their great Italian mentor and continued to turn the violin concerto into what it would become in the late Romantic period. Viotti's French pupils were not only prolific composers but also great virtuosos and conscientious teachers. As tireless travellers they carried the fame of the French school throughout Europe,²² and their concertos were played by nearly every virtuoso of the day.

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars led to major cultural and domestic reforms and the dissolution of a number of small states across Europe, greatly reducing the number of courts that supported the arts. Instead of serving in the court of a prince or in the church, the best violinists now worked as itinerant virtuosos, playing many public concerts before large audiences. Audiences tended to be less educated than the nobility, and to please them, travelling virtuosos developed a genre of music that focused on impressive technical skills combined with popular melodies, such as variations on themes from contemporary operas and variations on regional folk songs and national anthems. For the nineteenth-century virtuoso this was a routine choice, largely because opera appealed to both a general and a highly educated audience. Often, the operatic music was discovered only through piano or violin transcriptions of famous operatic melodies, since attending an opera was still relatively rare and affordable to few people. The travelling virtuoso composed “transcriptions”²³ of this kind in a specifically idiomatic manner

¹⁹ Zupančič, “At the Crossroads”, 5.

²⁰ Burney, *Present State of Music*, 3.

²¹ Schwarz, “Beethoven and the French Violin School”, 433.

²² *Ibid.*, 432.

²³ The term “transcription” is generally used for compositions that reproduce the musical material of the original exactly as it was written, without elaboration or simplification. The only changes allowed to the original score take into account the technical limitations and possibilities of the new instrument. In the violin repertoire, however, the same term is often used for operatic

that showcased his particular technical skills and was written to form part of a personal repertoire. Originally, these transcriptions were intended not to be played by other violinists but to serve as a “trademark” item distinguishing their author from the competition. Another phenomenon that emerged at this time as a result of the Napoleonic Wars was the concerto with a heroic-military character, which multiplied the virtuosic techniques and cast the virtuoso in a “heroic” mould but also shared the language of contemporary revolutionary operas. Such concertos essentially followed in the footsteps of the so-called French Concerto, which flourished between 1799 and 1815 and was characterized by an “idealized march character” and the “military pulse”.²⁴

While the Italian “violin masters” Veracini, Tartini, Vivaldi, Nardini, Pugnani and, later, Viotti inspired violinists in the eighteenth century, the early nineteenth century generation of violinists had only one role model: Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840). Paganini was one of the first itinerant virtuosos and a pioneer of violin transcriptions of popular opera melodies; his concertos embodied a wistful sentiment of the post-Napoleonic era, also defined as “military heroism”.²⁵ Under the influence of Viotti and his school, the concerto aspired to high musical standards, but especially under the influence of Paganini virtuosity became instead its main goal. Although Paganini mostly performed his own compositions, on rare occasions he played works by other composers, notably Viotti, Rode and Kreutzer, interpreting them freely with his own embellishments.²⁶ In the early nineteenth century Rode’s and Kreutzer’s concertos were generally among the most frequently played and were therefore part of the repertoire of violinists of the time, including Joseph Benesch.

The influence of the French violin school had already reached Vienna by the end of the eighteenth century, where Viotti’s Violin Concerto No. 16 was performed in 1785 or 1786. Franz Clement (1789–1842)²⁷ gave a concert in Vienna in 1793 in competition with Viotti. Another important channel through which influence flowed to Vienna was Beethoven’s connections with the guest virtuosos and with Viotti’s pupils Kreutzer, Rode and Baillot, from whom he may have received some valuable information about the French violin school. Beethoven’s last two violin sonatas, Op. 47 in A major (also known as the “Kreutzer” after the dedicatee),²⁸ and Op. 96 in G major, dedicated to Rode, show the

interpretations (transcriptions, arrangements or paraphrases) to refer to any category of piece that contains opera renditions of one kind or another contained within the violin repertoire. See Vaughn, “*Tosca*”, 4–5.

²⁴ Ibid., 433–434; Kawabata, “Virtuoso Codes of Violin Performance”.

²⁵ Kawabata, “Virtuoso Codes of Violin Performance”.

²⁶ Stowell, “Henryk Wieniawski”, 73; Istel and Baker, “Secret of Paganini’s Technique”, 114.

²⁷ Clement was born in Vienna. He studied violin with Giovanni Giannovich (Ivan Mane Jarnović; 1747–1804) and was active as a soloist and travelling virtuoso, then became assistant to the Kapellmeister at the National Theatre and musical director at the newly founded Theater an der Wien. He wrote many compositions, mostly for violin. His Violin Concerto in D major (1805), probably had a considerable influence on Beethoven when the latter embarked on his own violin concerto a year later. Clement died in Vienna. See Moran, “Clement, Franz”.

²⁸ Kreutzer came to Vienna in 1798, accompanying the French ambassador, General Bernadotte. Beethoven appreciated Kreutzer as a musician and dedicated to him the Sonata, Op. 47. However, this work was originally composed for the violinist George Bridgetower. See Schwarz, “Beethoven and the French Violin School”, 439–440.

composer's respect for these artists through these publicized dedications. Beethoven's collaboration with the outstanding Viennese violinists later referred to as the "vierblättriges Kleeblatt" (four-leaf clover) – Ignaz Schuppanzigh (1776–1830),²⁹ Franz Clement,³⁰ Joseph Böhm (1795–1876) and Joseph Mayseder (1789–1863)³¹ – similarly had a great influence on his violin compositions and string quartets. Beethoven's Violin Concerto was composed for Clement, whom the composer consulted on technique, but Beethoven also studied the contemporary violin repertoire of Viotti, Kreutzer and Rode. Since the composer was not a very skilled violinist, the composition suffered from the contrast between an excellent musical concept and a comparatively unidiomatic violin style. And since few virtuosos of the time were interested in performing concertos other than their own, and, moreover, the performance had to be tailored to their style, there were few further outings of the Beethoven Concerto in the years following its premiere in 1806.³²

The old Viennese violin tradition, together with its founder, the Bohemian violinist Anton Wranitzky (Antonín Vranický; 1761–1820) and his pupils Schuppanzigh and Mayseder, both of whom were associated with Benesch,³³ eventually faded and was overtaken by the French violin school. Following the example of the Paris Conservatory, the music conservatories in Prague (1811) and Vienna (1817) were founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Many important violinists of the time were trained there. Since

²⁹ Ignaz Anton Schuppanzigh was an Austrian violinist and conductor, best known as first violinist of the famous Schuppanzigh Quartett and for his friendship with Beethoven. The date of his birth is misstated in the literature. He was born on 20 July 1776 (rather than 20 November 1776) in Vienna, the son of Franz Joseph Schuppanzigh and Maria Anna (née Menschl). Schuppanzigh's father, Franz Joseph (c. 1734–1800), was a teacher of Italian at the Realschule and, according to A. W. Thayer, was a teacher of the young Beethoven at the Realschule. Schuppanzigh's family was of noble origin and came from the Slovenian area, probably from Zali Breg (Schallenberg). See Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, St. Stephan, Taufbuch 1776–1777, sig. 01-093, fol. 46, <https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/oesterreich/wien/01-st-stephan/01-093/?pg=93>. I would like to thank Sara Zupančič for information regarding Schuppanzigh's origins in the Slovenian area.

³⁰ One of Clement's students was the violinist and composer Franz Knoll (1804–?) from Vienna, who was the orchestral director of the Estates Theater and private teacher in Ljubljana between 1830 and 1831. Knoll dedicated his Concert Polonaise to Clement, which was performed at the Philharmonic Society concert in Ljubljana on 5 November 1830. See Concert programme, "Philharmonische Gesellschafts Akademie", 5 November 1830, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica (NUK), Ljubljana.

³¹ Mayseder was an Austrian violinist and composer and second violinist of the Schuppanzigh Quartet. He was also appointed leader of the Burgtheater orchestra in Vienna, becoming a soloist at the Hofkapelle and later a soloist to the emperor and musical director of the Hofkapelle. See Rutter, "Mayseder, Joseph".

³² Beethoven's Violin Concerto received only one other performance in the years immediately following its premiere in 1806: at Berlin in 1812. Several years later, in 1828, Baillot played the already forgotten piece, and six years later, in 1834, H. Vieuxtemps performed it in Vienna. See Schwarz, "Beethoven and the French Violin School", 442.

³³ Benesch applied for the position of Court Chamber Violinist in the spring of 1830 after the death of Ignaz Schuppanzigh and then played for thirty years alongside Mayseder at the Viennese Hofkapelle.

Friedrich Wilhelm Pixis (1785–1842), the first violin professor of the Prague Conservatory, was a private pupil of Viotti and the first violin professor of the Vienna Conservatory, Joseph Böhm, was a pupil of Rode, it is not surprising that both institutions used the official violin method of the Paris Conservatory (*Méthode de Violon*) as basic teaching material.

The Bohemian violinists of the nineteenth century were therefore alumni of rival institutions. Others took lessons privately with the most eminent violinists of the day, as happened with Joseph Benesch, who studied privately in Vienna with his compatriot Martin Schlesinger. Similarly to Benesch, numerous other Bohemian violinists were active outside the Czech Lands as respected and accomplished musicians: composers, orchestral or musical directors (*Kapellmeister*), virtuosos and music teachers, often working in civil music institutions or as private music teachers.³⁴ For many of them, Vienna was the next destination after Prague. Leaving aside Joseph Franz Gläser (František Glaeser),³⁵ Leopold Jansa³⁶ and Friedrich Wenzel Bezdek (Bedřich Václav Bezděk),³⁷ who did not follow the path of the virtuoso but nevertheless made an important contribution to the Biedermeier Viennese musical milieu, the remaining three Bohemian violinists – Joseph Benesch, Joseph Slawik (Josef Slavík; 1806–1833) and Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst

³⁴ The most important among them were: Johann Wenzel Kalliwoda (Jan Křitel Kalivoda; 1801–1866), Johann Taborsky (Jan Táborský; 1796–1840) and Felix Raimund Dreyschock (Raymund Dreyšok; 1824–1869).

³⁵ Gläser was born in Horní Jiřetín in 1798 and studied violin with Pixis at the Prague Conservatory between 1813 and 1816. After his violin and composition studies he moved to Vienna, where he worked as a musical director in three places: from 1817 at the Leopoldstadt Theatre, from 1822 at the Josefstadt Theatre, and from 1827 at the Theater an der Wien. When the Josefstadt Theatre was reopened in 1822, Ludwig van Beethoven composed the overture *The Consecration of the House* (*Die Weihe des Hauses*), Op. 124, for the occasion. Despite his poor hearing, Beethoven conducted personally, with Gläser assisting him as his assistant and helping him with the performance. Gläser did not merely assist Beethoven at the premiere but also conducted the subsequent performances. In 1830 Gläser moved to Berlin, where he became musical director at the Königsstadt Theatre (Königsstädtisches Theater). In 1839 he settled in Copenhagen, where he worked at the National Theatre and was court musical director from 1842 until his death in 1861. See Zupančič, “At the Crossroads”, 11–12.

³⁶ Jansa was born in Ústí nad Orlicí in 1795. In 1823 he entered the service of the Count of Brunswick as a chamber musician, and a year later he returned to Vienna and became a violinist in the Hofkapelle. In 1832 he gave concerts in Prague and Budapest (Pest), in 1834 becoming appointed as musical director and professor of violin at the Conservatory of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde. After the death of Ignaz Schuppanzigh Jansa became the first violinist in the former’s quartet. He was praised as a chamber musician and teacher; the violinists Wilma Neruda and Eduard Rappoldi and the composer Karl Goldmark were the most famous of his pupils. He wrote chamber and violin works, dying in Vienna in 1875. See Němcová, “Jansa, Leopold”.

³⁷ Bezdek was born in 1804 in Prague and studied violin at the Prague Conservatory with Pixis between 1813 and 1819. In 1824 he became musical director at the City Theatre in Budapest (Buda), where he remained until 1832. He founded a music school and directed the Italian Opera in Trento. After Pixis’s death in 1842 he was appointed as provisional violin teacher at the Prague Conservatory and director of the Estates Theatre Orchestra in Prague. In 1846, he became a member of the Viennese Imperial Hofoper, and from 1861 a member of the Viennese Hofkapelle. He composed a violin concerto, a string quartet and some other works. See Zupančič, “At the Crossroads”, 10.

(1812–1865) – chose to follow and “imitate” their role model and the superstar of the era, Paganini, and attempted to adopt his style.

The Early Years of Joseph Benesch and His Italian Musical Tour

Joseph Benesch was born the third child of Matthias (Matěj Beneš)³⁸ and Anna Benesch (née Herza; 1769–1832) in the Moravian town of Batelov (Battellau). According to the baptismal register of the local parish, Joseph was baptized on 11 January 1795 by the chaplain, Joseph Reich (1742–1815); his godfather was Joseph Lazar, a schoolteacher.³⁹ A few members of Benesch’s family were teachers; also, his grandfather Franz Benesch (?–1784) was a teacher in Potěhy for fifty years.⁴⁰ During the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763) Franz lost six sons. One of his sons, born after the war, was Matthias Benesch, a tailor who could play the violin and other instruments. According to the story,⁴¹ he went out into the world and settled in Batelov.⁴² He first served the farmer Joseph Herza as a stable boy, then he worked as a tailor and musical-instrument maker. In 1790 he married the farmer’s daughter Anna Herza and had ten children with her, three of whom died in early childhood. After marriage he became a teacher and *regens chori* in Batelov, and later a teacher in Růžena. Among his pupils was his own son Joseph Benesch, who stood out for his exceptional musical talent at a young age.

News of the child prodigy soon spread to the Batelov estate, where its owner, Count Philipp Benitus Johann von Swéerts-Sporck (1753–1809), who was a great lover of music and art, heard the little boy play Hoffmeister’s *Konzertstück* in 1802.⁴³ The count was so delighted with the boy’s playing that he offered to take him to Prague and provide for his

³⁸ Matthias Benesch was born in Potěhy in 1767, the son of Franz Benesch (František Beneš) and Anna Schkrabal (Anna Škrabalová; ?–1772). He married Anna Herza on 17 November, 1790, in Batelov. After she died of cholera on 12 November 1832 he remarried in 1834 to Veronika Kučera. He died on 27 March 1852 in Batelov. See Brno, Moravský zemský archiv (MZA), Batelov, Marriage Records 1788–1803, book 6197, II (VI), fol. 5; Brno, MZA, Batelov, Death Records 1800–1842, book 6002, II (VI), fol. 187; Brno, MZA, Batelov, Marriage Records 1804–1840, book 6198, II (VI), fol. 91.

³⁹ Brno, MZA, Batelov, Birth Records 1784–1804, book 6189, II (VI), fol. 90.

⁴⁰ Franz Benesch was succeeded by his son, Franz Benesch, Jr, who was a teacher for fifty years until 1820. Later (1812), Franz Benesch, Jr, trained his nephew Joseph Benesch. See “Kronika školy 1836–1928”, vol. 2, Zakladní škola Potěhy, Státní okresní archiv Kutná Hora (SOKA), fol. 2. I would like to thank Vojtěch Vaněk for his kind help.

⁴¹ One of the Benesch relatives, Ignác Wildmann, told Anna Knížková the story of the Benesch family in 1937. Antonín Mareš summarized his notes in the typescript “Hudební skladatel Josef Beneš” before 1982. See Mareš, “Hudební skadatel Josef Benesch”. I would like to thank Michaela Koplíšová for her kind help.

⁴² According to the story, on the road between Nová Ves and Batelov the waggon of the peasant Herza passed by, allowing Benesch to sit down, sing and play the violin. Benesch slept on the Herza farm and on the next day went to church, where he played the organ. Chaplain Jiří Bayer listened to his organ playing and agreed that he should become an organist, promising him a teaching position. See Mareš, “Hudební skadatel Josef Benesch”, fol. 11.

⁴³ Luib, “Biographische Skizzen”.

further musical education. Benesch's parents were hesitant about agreeing, since they had lost two of their children to smallpox just two days apart a few years earlier.⁴⁴ Although Count Swéerts-Sporck suggested that the whole family move to Prague, where he would buy them land and a house, Benesch's mother could not countenance leaving their home town or parting from her eldest son. Benesch therefore continued his education with father in Batelov and the organist in Třešť (Triesch), Wenzel Horzalka (1769/1774–1835), from whom he learned basso continuo, piano and organ.⁴⁵ Besides Joseph, his father raised two other sons musically: Alois Prokop,⁴⁶ later, a music teacher in Batelov, and Franz (1806–?), a composer in Budapest.

At the age of twelve Joseph moved to Jihlava to receive a proper general education, graduating from the German school run by the Premonstratensians and continued at the Gymnasium.⁴⁷ According to his parents' wishes, Benesch was to become a priest, but feeling that this profession did not suit him, he opted instead for the teacher-training course (*Präparandenkurs*) and in 1812 moved to Potěhy near Čáslav, where his uncle Franz Benesch (František Beneš; 1751–1829) was a schoolteacher who trained Joseph to succeed him.⁴⁸ Although the prospect of teaching offered Benesch some security, it was not enough for him, and he left Potěhy for Vienna in July 1814 to explore the musical world. There, up to 1816, he improved his violin skills with the Bohemian violinist Martin Schlesinger,⁴⁹ considered one of the leading violin virtuosos of his time. Schlesinger worked as a chamber

⁴⁴ Franziska Benesch (1793–1799) died on 21 July 1799. Her younger brother, Anton Benesch, died two days later at the age of six weeks on 23 July 1799. See Brno, MZA, Batelov, Death Records 1784–1799, book 6201, II (VI), fol. 102.

⁴⁵ Luib, “Biographische Skizzen”.

⁴⁶ Aloisius Prokop Benesch was born on 3 July 1800 in Batelov. He was a tailor and private music teacher there. He inherited his father's house (no. 29), where he lived until his death on 15 February 1878. See Brno, MZA, Batelov, Birth Records 1784–1804, book 6189, II (VI), fol. 122; Mareš, “Hudební skadatel Josef Benesch”, fols. 12–13; Bořecký and Polícar, *Dějiny Batelova*, 499–500.

⁴⁷ The literature states that Benesch attended the Gymnasium and teacher-training institute of the Premonstratensians in Jihlava between 1807 and 1812, but the school register does not list him among the pupils. It is therefore possible that he studied instead at the Municipal School (Stadtschule) of the Premonstratensian parish. Similarly, in the Gymnasium in Havlíčkův Brod (then Německý Brod/Deutschbrod), which was run by the members of the Želiv Premonstratensian Monastery and was relatively close to Jihlava, Benesch's name does not appear in any of the archival records such as the school chronicle kept since 1807, the official records (correspondence) between 1807 and 1812 and the transcripts of the Gymnasium reports from the same period. He is also not on the list of the Gymnasium pupils compiled according to the records available at the time and published in the 1935 publication *Dvě stě let gymnasia v Německém Brodě*. I would like to thank Miroslav Kružík from Státní okresní archiv Havlíčkův Brod for his kind help. See also Bořecký and Polícar, *Dějiny Batelova*, 500.

⁴⁸ Luib, “Biographische Skizzen”; “Joseph Benesch”, *Moravia*, 6 February 1840.

⁴⁹ Martin Schlesinger was born on 13 November 1754 in Ústí nad Orlicí. He was a successful violinist in Hradec Králové (Königgrätz), then became musical director of Anton Prince Grassalkovics in Bratislava (Pressburg) and made concert tours to the Russian Empire. From 1782 onwards Schlesinger was a member of the Tonkünstler-Societät in Vienna. After working as a chamber virtuoso for Ludwig Count Erdödy in Burgenland (Schloss Eberau) in the 1780s, he entered the service of the Hungarian court chancellor Joseph Count Erdödy and stayed with

virtuoso in the chapel of Count Ludwig Erdődy. The following year Benesch began to teach violin privately, becoming a member of the orchestra of Franz Thaddaus Freiherr von Zinnicq[ue] (1760–1832), whose opera company performed alternately in Baden and Bratislava. During the two years that Joseph played in the orchestra he gave successful concerts in Bratislava and neighbouring towns, in the course of which he met, in Trnava, the cavalry officer Anton von Praun.

The latter's son, Sigmund Maximilian Willibald Otto Freiherr von Praun,⁵⁰ was a child prodigy who drew admiration early on for his mathematical knowledge,⁵¹ but even more for his musical talent.⁵² Sigmund's father entrusted Benesch with his musical education, and soon the two gave concerts in Hungary and Moravia (1818 and 1819).⁵³ At the end of 1819 they travelled to Northern Italy, which entailed a long journey for the young artists.

Long-distance travel was at that time handled by the postal service, which held a monopoly over the transportation of passengers until the introduction of the railway. Journeying by post coach, however, was tedious, slow and (because of poorly maintained roads) expensive. For example, the journey from Vienna to Trieste took three days.⁵⁴ But nothing stopped the enthusiastic teacher and his student from travelling to Italy. On the way they gave concerts in the most important cities of the monarchy,⁵⁵ including Ljubljana, where they performed on 12 April 1820. There Benesch played his Variations and Polonaise, "a truly grandiose work, original and full of youthful fantasy".⁵⁶ Two months

him at his residences in Vienna, Bratislava and Freistadt. He died in Vienna on 12 August 1818. See Svoboda, "Der Geiger Martin Schlesinger", 216, 235; Fastl, "Schlesinger, Familie".

⁵⁰ Sigmund von Praun was born in Trnava on 1 June 1811. He began playing the violin at the age of two. He undertook concert tours to Italy (1819–1824), Paris and the Netherlands (1825) and Germany (1828/1829). He died on 5 January 1830 at Cracow. See Fastl, "Praun, Sigmund (Sigismund) Otto Freiherr von".

⁵¹ At the age of two years and five months Sigmund was deemed qualified to enter the second grade of the Principality National School of Trnava. After attending this school for about ten months, he was examined with the other pupils on 26 August 1811; in reading and writing the German language, in Hungarian spelling, in catechism and in drawing, he won the highest prize among his seventy youthful competitors. At the examination held on 17 March 1815, being then three years and nine months old, he was again declared the best among the 124 pupils of his class – in reading the German, Hungarian and Latin languages, in arithmetic and in the Catechism. See H. W. S., "The Gresham Lectures on Music", *New Monthly Magazine*, 1 October 1816, 221.

⁵² "Korrespondenz und Notizen: aus Wien", *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 8 May 1815.

⁵³ They gave concerts in the following cities on the territory of today's Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary: Brno, Olomouc, Znojmo, Banská Štiavnica (Schemnitz), Banská Bystrica (Neusohl), Budapest (Buda and Pest separately), Győr (Raab), Sopron (Ödenburg) and others. In Brno they gave a concert on 1 November 1818. See "Musikalische Nachricht", *Brünner Zeitung der k.k. priv. mähr. Lehenbank*, 31 October 1818, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=bru&datum=18181031>.

⁵⁴ Budna Kodrič, "Popotništvo in popotniki v Ljubljani", 262–270; Kavrečič, "Pričevalci preteklosti", 698.

⁵⁵ On the way to Trieste they gave concerts in Bruck an der Mur (Bruck), Leoben, Graz, Maribor (Marburg), Klagenfurt and Ljubljana. "Angekommene Aus- und Inländer", *Klagenfurter Zeitung*, 5 April 1820.

⁵⁶ Concert programme, "Große musikalische akademie", 12 April 1820, Philharmonische Gesellschaft,

later they gave four successful concerts in Venice,⁵⁷ which earned Benesch an honorary certificate from the Philharmonic Society (Istituto filarmonico) in Venice.⁵⁸ After their success there Benesch decided to extend the tour for one-and-a-half years and continued to Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Mantua,⁵⁹ Cremona, Brescia, Milan, Pavia, Piacenza, Parma, Modena and finally Bologna. During this time he perfected his violin skills and musical knowledge in general, making useful connections and acquaintances with famous Italian masters such as Alessandro Rolla (1757–1841), the latter’s son Giuseppe Antonio Rolla (1798–1837) and Luigi Aliani.⁶⁰

Although some sources state that he became acquainted with Paganini during the tour,⁶¹ it seems unlikely that Benesch met him, since Paganini was on tour at the time in Southern Italy. The claim was probably false, as Benesch met Paganini four years later in Trieste, when Benesch was living in Ljubljana. However, we can safely assume that Benesch was acquainted with Paganini’s most important didactic works: the Caprices, Op. 1, published just two months before his arrival in Milan. These caprices, which Paganini most likely never performed in public, were composed over a long period of time before November 1817 and published by Giovanni Ricordi in Milan in June 1820.⁶² They were dedicated “alli Artisti” (to professional musicians) and were immediately judged unplayable by most contemporary violinists, while some others saw in them new musical horizons to be explored. They were the most significant of Paganini’s various violin didactic works, since he never completed a long-planned violin treatise that was to use a secret technical “system”.⁶³ For Benesch, this was a unique opportunity to study Paganini’s technique using actual sheet music, since no one was in a position to see a copy of Paganini’s violin parts during his lifetime.⁶⁴ Even the few compositions that Paganini published did not

Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana; “Inland: Laibach”, *Vereinigte Laibacher Zeitung*, 11 April 1820, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-MWRS733B>.

⁵⁷ They gave concerts on 8, 9, 10 and 11 June 1820.

⁵⁸ Luib, “Biographische Skizzen”; “Joseph Benesch”, *Moravia*, 6 February 1840.

⁵⁹ “R. Teatro”, *Supplimento alla Gazzetta di Mantova*, 12 August 1820.

⁶⁰ Luigi Aliani was born in Piacenza in 1789. He studied violin with his father Francesco and later in Milan with A. Rolla. He attracted attention with concerts he gave in Vicenza and Venice. Afterwards he was first violinist and conductor of the theatre orchestra in Vicenza. In 1827 he ran unsuccessfully for the office of director at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa. He won the admiration of Rossini, who asked him in Paris in 1829 to conduct *William Tell*, a request that he was unable to accept because of the obligations that bound him to Vicenza. The author of unpublished sonatas and concertos for violin, he published with Ricordi a *Grand’aria di bravura* with a prelude and variations for violin and quintet dedicated to the famous Paganini. He died in 1841 in Vicenza. See Gervasoni, *Nuova teoria di musica*, 81.

⁶¹ Luib, “Biographische Skizzen”; “Joseph Benesch”, *Moravia*, 6 February 1840.

⁶² Borer, “Twenty-Four Caprices”, 8–12.

⁶³ Stowell, “Henryk Wieniawski”, 75–76; Borer, “Twenty-Four Caprices”, 12–13; Istel and Baker, “Secret of Paganini’s Technique”, 107.

⁶⁴ Because Paganini depended on his exclusive advocacy, he played his own compositions from memory, and even the orchestral parts were strictly controlled and collected immediately after the performance. By making his works inaccessible, he created the crucial mystery that attracted the many contemporary virtuosos who followed him on his tours. See Istel and Baker, “Secret of Paganini’s Technique”, 115.

correspond to his playing technique, and contemporaries demanded editions with precise playing instructions for performance à la Paganini. Benesch therefore probably focused on the caprices, because as stated later in periodicals, he studied the “Paganini School” for years.⁶⁵

Benesch and Praun arrived in Milan at the end of August,⁶⁶ gave concerts to great acclaim and remained there until the end of October 1820. During their stay Benesch met Alessandro Rolla, the principal professor of violin and viola at the Milan Conservatory, the orchestral director at the Teatro La Scala and Paganini’s teacher never to be.⁶⁷ Rolla invited Benesch and Praun to give a concert at La Scala, where eminent violinists such as Paganini, Louis Spohr (1784–1859) and Charles Philippe Lafont (1781–1839) had performed only a few years earlier. On 8 October 1820 Benesch performed his Polonaise and Variations under Rolla’s direction.⁶⁸ They gave their next concert on 20 October 1820 at Milan’s Canobiana Theatre. Benesch played his second Polonaise and Concert by Rode under the direction of Pietro Bertuzzi.⁶⁹ During his stay in Milan Benesch published *Sei valzer per la chitarra* with Ricordi, which he dedicated to Giovanni Pichel.⁷⁰ The tour was also to continue to southern Italy, as they were allowed to perform before the Pope,⁷¹ but since Benesch received further offers incompatible with his contract with the von Praun family, he parted company with them in Bologna. The Italian tour, where he gave more than seventeen concerts, was a success, as testified almost two years later by the *Wiener Zeitschrift*, which reported that most Northern Italian newspapers wrote with great praise about Benesch and ranked him alongside the most distinguished violin-players.⁷² The success of an unknown musician was seen to be of great significance, especially since immensely famous virtuosos were musically “spoiling” audiences there.

After separating from the von Praun family Benesch returned to Trieste via Venice in early January 1821 and then travelled on to Ljubljana, where he had already given a concert nine months earlier. If Ljubljana was still relatively quiet and “boring” in 1820, as Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart (W. A. Mozart, Jr.; 1791–1844), the youngest son of the famous composer, wrote before his visit to Ljubljana,⁷³ this was certainly no longer the

⁶⁵ “Neuigkeiten: Wien; Concert des Hrn. J. Benesch”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 14 April 1829, 178, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=thz&datum=18290414>.

⁶⁶ “Avviso”, *Gazzetta di Milano*, 30 August 1820.

⁶⁷ He was to become Paganini’s teacher in 1795, but instead told him he could teach him nothing, and later gave concerts with him and remained a close friend. See Neill, “Paganini, Nicolò”.

⁶⁸ Chiappori, *Continuazione della seria cronologica*, 30–31.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 36–37.

⁷⁰ Joseph Benesch, *Sei valzer per la chitarra* (Milan: Ricordi, 1820).

⁷¹ “Joseph Benesch”, *Moravia*, 6 February 1840; Mareš, “Hudební skadatel Josef Benesch”, fol. 20.

⁷² “Concert-Ankündigung”, *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*, 11 April 1822, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wzz&datum=18220411>.

⁷³ Mozart arrived in Ljubljana from Vienna on 12 July 1820 and continued his journey to Trieste on 21 July 1820. He performed before several Ljubljana noble families and at a Philharmonic Society concert. See “Fremden-Anzeige: Angekommene und Abgegangene”, *Vereinigte Laibacher Zeitung*, 18 July 1820; “Fremden-Anzeige: Abgereiset”, *Vereinigte Laibacher Zeitung*, 25 July

case half a year later, when the city became the site of the Congress of Laibach (Ljubljana) attended by allied rulers or their representatives to discuss international problems after the Napoleonic Wars. This Congress, which took place from 26 January to 12 May 1821, made the capital of Carniola the centre of European politics for several months. The lively accompanying events (balls, theatrical performances, concerts) attracted important and celebrated artists, including Benesch, who gave four⁷⁴ out of about fifteen concerts during this congress.⁷⁵ The concerts were organized by the Philharmonic Society (Philharmonische Gesellschaft), which had an orchestra of a hundred musicians. On 17 February 1821, the Society presented Benesch with a certificate of honour, and he decided to move to Ljubljana after the tour. Among the performers during the congress were several other Bohemian musicians who were living in Ljubljana at that time: Amalie Maschek,⁷⁶ Wenceslaus Wenzel (Wenzel Wenzel; 1784–1835) and Joseph Miksch (Josip Mikš; 1778–1866). Besides his own compositions and compositions by some contemporaries,⁷⁷ Benesch played the Concerto for two violins by R. Kreutzer together with the local violinist Johann Georg Altenburger (Janez Jurij Altenburger; 1796–1844)⁷⁸ during the congress. Another acquaintance he made in Ljubljana was Caspar Maschek,⁷⁹ an important musical figure

1820; Kuret, “Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart v Ljubljani”; Kuret, *Ljubljanska filharmonična družba*, 57–60.

⁷⁴ Concert programmes, 16 February 1821, 23 February 1821, 9 March 1821, 16 March 1821, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana; “Fremden-Anzeige”, *Laibacher Zeitung*, 16 March 1821, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-JAAM4SX3>.

⁷⁵ See Concert programmes, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana.

⁷⁶ Amalie Maschek was born Maria Amalia Victoria Horný on 19 January 1792 in Valtice, the daughter of Franz Heinrich Horný and Antonia Petrowa. It seems that she made her debut at the Leopoldstadt Theatre in Vienna around 1812 and remained there until 1815. She then appeared at the theatre in Klagenfurt (1816–1818), and in 1819 she came from Bratislava to Graz to become an opera singer at the Estates Theatre. There she met Caspar Maschek, whom she married on 6 May 1820. After moving to Ljubljana she performed as an opera singer at the Estates Theatre and was also active as a teacher and performer on the stage of the Philharmonic Society. See Zupančič, “Impact of Foreign-Born Musicians”.

⁷⁷ See Concert programmes, 16 February 1821 (“Vocal und Instrumental Concert”), 23 February 1821 (“Vocal und Instrumental Concert”), 9 March 1821 (“Instrumental und Vocal Concert”), Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana; P., “Kunst-Notizen”, *Illyrisches Blatt zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*, 9 March 1821, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-P4MQUHUS>; “Wirksamkeit der Laibacher philharmonischen Gesellschaft”, *Illyrisches Blatt zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*, 16 March 1821, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-G05E2NSW>.

⁷⁸ Johann Georg Altenburger was born in 1796 in Hainburg an der Donau. From January to December 1822 he was orchestral director of the Philharmonic Society. We know that as a soloist he performed the Variations for Violin and Orchestra by Pierre Rode (21 June 1816) and the Double Concerto for two Violins and Orchestra by Rodolphe Kreutzer with Wenzel Wenzel (26 October 1821). See Concert programmes, 21 June 1816 (“Gewöhnliche Gesellschaft Academie”), 26 October 1821 (“Gewöhnliche Gesellschaft Academie”), Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana; Census Survey of Ljubljana 1830, 4/5542, Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana (ZAL); Keesbacher, *Die Philharmonische Gesellschaft in Laibach*, 123.

⁷⁹ Caspar Maschek (Gašpar Mašek) was born on 6 December 1794 in Prague. His father Vinzenz Maschek, who was a piano virtuoso and a pedagogue, taught him music. Maschek studied violoncello at the Prague Conservatory between 1811 and 1815. From 1812 until 1815 he was

who would later be closely associated with Benesch both professionally and familiarly. He was an uncle of Benesch's later wife Friederika, and during the Congress he directed both the Italian and German opera groups and even organized special musical evenings with one of Austria's most important politicians and diplomats, the Prince of Metternich-Winneburg (1773–1859).⁸⁰ It is possible that it was Maschek who influenced Benesch's decision to move to Ljubljana. Benesch did not live in Ljubljana during the congress but travelled between Ljubljana and Trieste,⁸¹ where he then spent several months teaching Amalie de Pepeu,⁸² to whom he dedicated his Variations, Op. 5.

In June 1821 he left Trieste and returned to Vienna via Rijeka, Karlovac and Zagreb, and at the end of the year he also gave concerts in Budapest and Graz.⁸³ During the long journey he made some influential acquaintances, who encouraged him to consider a trip to St Petersburg, which was to be around April 1822.⁸⁴ But when he passed through Wiener-Neustadt and gave a concert there, he was introduced to the lawyer Ernst Proch and his wife Vinzenzia. Benesch was so surprised by the musical talent of their son Heinrich that he asked them for permission to give him violin lessons for a short time. Ernst Proch came from Česká Lípa and was a great lover of music.⁸⁵ In his house he often organized concerts attended by eminent musicians, including the young Franz Liszt.⁸⁶ Proch's wife,

a military musical director and his father's assistant at the Church of St Nicolas in Prague. In 1819, he was the musical director of the Estates Theatre in Bratislava, then Graz, and one year later he moved to Ljubljana, where he became musical director of the Estates Theatre. As a music teacher, he was active in the Public Music School and the Philharmonic Society Music School in Ljubljana. He wrote numerous compositions (also for violin), which are preserved in the National and University Library in Ljubljana. He died on 13 May 1873 in Ljubljana. See "Haupt [...] der Schüler des Conservatorium in Prag von 1811 bis 1880", sig. D81, AHMP, fol. 3; Mantuani, "Mašek, Gašpar"; AHMP, Praha I, Staré Město, Kostel sv. Františka, Birth Record 1790–1795, sig. FR N5, fol. 135.

⁸⁰ Weiss, *Češki glasbeniki*, 102–104.

⁸¹ "Fremden-Anzeige: Abgereiset den 22. Februar", *Laibacher Zeitung*, 27 February 1821; "Fremden-Anzeige: Angekommen den 11. März", *Laibacher Zeitung*, 16 March 1821.

⁸² She could have been a daughter of Joseph Pepeu, "Doctor der Rechte" (doctor of Law) from Trieste, who was an honorary member of the Philharmonic Society in Ljubljana. See Philharmonische Gesellschaft in Laibach, *Verzeichnis sämtlicher wirklichen*, [7].

⁸³ "Correspondenz-Nachricht: Theater in Graz", *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Unterhaltungsblatt für Fremde der Kunst, Literatur und des geselligen Lebens*, 1 January 1822, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=thz&datum=18220101>.

⁸⁴ "Concert-Ankündigung", *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*, 11 April 1822.

⁸⁵ Ernst Proch was born on 11 November 1778 in Česká Lípa to Bernardus Broche and Anna Theresia Großmann. He is listed in the baptismal register as Ernestus Nicolaus Martinus Broche. He married Vinzenzia Maschek on 6 June 1803 in Prague (Sv. Mikuláš). He died on 29 December 1856 in Wiener Neustadt. See Litoměřice, Státní oblastní archiv v Litoměřicích, Česká Lípa, Birth Records 1774–1795, book L 18/3, fol. 127; Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wiener Neustadt-Neukloster, Sterbebuch 1856–1867, sig. 03-03, fol. 20; AHMP, Praha III, Malá strana, Farní kostel sv. Mikuláše, Marriage Records 1784–1811, book MIK 08, fol. 287.

⁸⁶ Rychnovsky, "Heinrich Proch", 763.

Vinzenzia Anna Theresia Maschek (1782–1849),⁸⁷ was the eldest daughter of the famous Prague composer Vincenz Wenzl Maschek (1755–1831). It is therefore not surprising that two of the Prochs's children became musicians. Leaving aside their successful son Heinrich, who was a violinist, their daughter Friederika (1805–1872) was a pianist who became Benesch's wife a year later and influenced his further career choices.⁸⁸ Benesch's lessons given to young Heinrich produced such extraordinary results that after only a few weeks they performed on the stage of the Estates Theatre Spohr's Double Concerto (14 July 1822). After the concert a critic reported that "the originality of Benesch's playing, his excellent bowing, and his melting tone, surprise the connoisseur of art, and win over every listener; young Proch is his worthy pupil, and is entitled to great expectations if he continues to study with the same zeal".⁸⁹ Proch fulfilled expectations and later became a prominent musician in Vienna.⁹⁰ Benesch moved to Ljubljana the same year, which also meant the end of plans for a tour of the Russian Empire.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Vinzenzia Anna Theresia Maschek was born on 8 February 1782 in Prague to a well-known composer, Vincenz Wenzel Maschek, and a music-lover, Johanna Prauß (1761–1808) as the first of seventeen children. Vinzenzia died on 8 January 1849 in Wiener Neustadt. See AHMP, Praha I, Staré Město, Kostel sv. Martina ve zdi, Birth Records 1772–1784, book MAR N6, fol. 65; Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wiener Neustadt-Neukloster, Sterbebuch 1856–1867, sig. 03-03, fol. 195.

⁸⁸ Friederika Ernestina Theresia Proch was born on 4 March 1805 in Vienna. She received her first music lessons from her mother, then from the *regens chori* and headmaster Anton Herzog. She continued her piano and composition studies privately in Vienna with Simon Sechter. See Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Maria Treu, Taufbuch 1803–1809, sig. 01-008, fol. 102; Luib, "Biographische Skizzen".

⁸⁹ "Wienerisch Neustadt im Juli 1822", *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, 8 August 1822, 379.

⁹⁰ Proch was born in Vienna on 22 July 1809. He received his first violin lessons at the age of seven from Tomasini, the principal violinist of the Esterházy Kapelle. After moving with the family to Wiener Neustadt, where his father was a jurist from 1819 onwards, Proch received violin lessons from the municipal violinist Smolleck and from Benesch, and basso continuo and composition lessons from the *regens chori*, Anton Herzog. Proch also sang soprano at the church for several years. Between 1828 and 1832 he studied law in Vienna and then worked at the Viennese Magistrate. In 1826 and 1833/34 he performed successfully as a violin virtuoso, mostly with his own compositions. From 1834 to 1867 he was a member of the Viennese Hofkapelle. From 1837 to 1840 he was also Kapellmeister at the Theater in der Josefstadt, after which he became Erster Kapellmeister at the Theater am Kärntnertor. In addition to his duties, he worked as a singing teacher. He died on 28 December 1878 in Vienna. See Rychnovsky, "Heinrich Proch", 763; Boisits, "Proch, Heinrich".

⁹¹ Grochovskij considered Benesch to be one of the Czech musicians who were active in Russia: as a violinist in Orenburg and Samara, and also as an army musical director. However, this seems to be a mistake, probably resulting from confusion with a different Benesch. See Grochovskij, *Čeští hudebníci na Rusi*, 303.



Figure 1

Portrait of Joseph Benesch (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung, POR0015501, https://digital.onb.ac.at/rep/osd/?BAG_3820720; reproduced by permission)

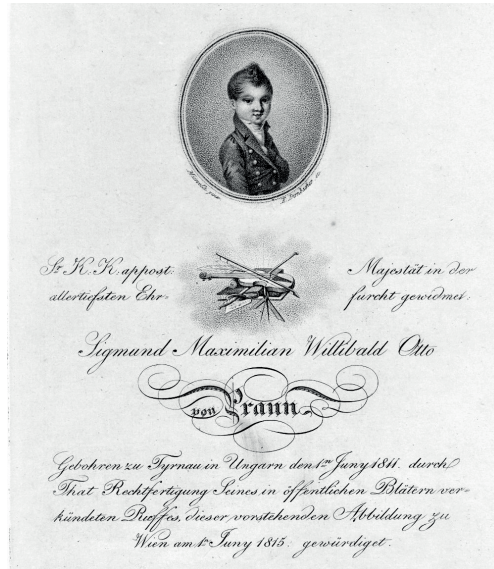


Figure 2

Benesch's pupil Sigismund von Praun (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung, POR0013328, <https://digital.onb.ac.at/rep/osd/?10E95871>; reproduced by permission)



Figure 3

Benesch's pupil and brother-in-law Heinrich Proch (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung, POR0013551, <https://digital.onb.ac.at/rep/osd/?10D23CD7>; reproduced by permission)

SCALA 1820:

A C C A D E M I A.

Domenica 8 ottobre. Grande accademia vocale ed istrumentale, data nella sala del ridotto ad un' ora pomeridiana dal professore e concertista di violino *Giuseppe Benesch*, al seguito di *Sigismondo L. B. de P.* ungherese, virtuoso di violino nell'età di 9 anni, membro dell'imperiale reale unione di musica nella Stiria, e dell'imperiale reale istituto filarmonico di Venezia.

In detta accademia concorsero graziosamente pel canto, i virtuosi *Teresa Bertrand*, *Nicola Tacchinardi*, e *Nicola Levasseur*.

P R O G R A M M A.

Parte I.

- I. Sinfonia a grande orchestra.
- II Cavatina, *Cimentando i venti e l'onde*, del maestro *Rossini* cantata dalla *Bertrand*.
- III. Concerto per violino di *Rode*, con accompagnamento di grande orchestra eseguito dal suddetto *Sigismondo*.
- IV. Duetto del maestro *Cimaraosa* cantato da *Tacchinardi* e *Levasseur*.
- V. Polonese per violino con accompagnamento di grande orchestra, composto ed eseguito dal professore *Benesch*.

Parte II.

- I. Sinfonia a grande orchestra.
- II. Duetto per violino e chitarra di *Giuliani*, eseguito da *Sigismondo* e da un dilettante al suo seguito.

Figure 4

Concert programme of Benesch's concert at La Scala, Milan 1820 (Chiappori, *Continuazione della seria cronologica*, 30)

no 6057
6057

MH 11689/C
FF.


6.
Ländler

pour la
Guitarre

composees et dediees
Mademoiselle Barone Marie de Wetzlar.

par
Jos. Benesch.

Oeuvre 2.



MH - Zw. 11689

Figure 5
6 Ländler pour la Guitarre, Op. 2, title page (Wienbibliothek im Rathaus [A-Wst], MH 11689C; reproduced by permission)

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for guitar. The score is written on aged, slightly yellowed paper with some wear and tear at the corners. It consists of three systems of music, each beginning with a measure number (1., 2., 3.) and a treble clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The first system (measures 1-4) features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the melody with more complex rhythmic patterns. The third system (measures 9-12) concludes with a 'Fine' marking. At the bottom of the page, the instruction 'Da Capo al Vegno il Fine.' is written in cursive.

Figure 6

6 Ländler pour la Guitarre, Op. 2, first page (Wienbibliothek im Rathaus [A-Wst], MH 11689C; reproduced by permission)

Joseph Benesch in Ljubljana (1822–1828) and the Meeting with Paganini in Trieste

At the turn of the nineteenth century Ljubljana was a small, provincial town. Nevertheless, its cultural life, consisting of theatrical performances and musical concerts, was comparable with that of other towns belonging to the Austrian monarchy. The Philharmonic Society of Ljubljana, founded in 1794 as the first institution of its kind in the Habsburg Empire, was the leading music institution in that town. It organized academies (concerts) and contributed to various musical events and, from the 1820s, also to musical education. Foreign-born musicians (“immigrants”) played a dominant role in the promotion of musical life in Ljubljana. They brought their knowledge, skills, ideas and personal connections with the major musicians and contemporary repertoire to Ljubljana and took a leading role in the development of instrumental virtuoso performance, chamber, choral and symphonic music. Ljubljana attracted from outside mainly young, unknown musicians who were still at the beginning of their careers. One of them was also the then completely unknown nineteen-year-old Franz Schubert (1797–1828), who unsuccessfully applied for the vacant position at the newly founded Public Music School (*Öffentliche Musikschule*) in 1816.⁹² In addition to foreign-born resident musicians, a number of musicians stopped off to give concerts in Ljubljana on their way to Italy, so Benesch was certainly not the first violin virtuoso heard by audiences in Ljubljana.

The first real violin virtuosos to perform in Ljubljana in 1817 and 1818 were Karol Józef Lipiński (1790–1861) and Joseph Böhm. To hear Paganini, Lipiński travelled to northern Italy in 1817 and performed in several cities on the way, including Ljubljana.⁹³ During his fourteen-day stay in Ljubljana, Lipiński gave one private and one public concert and “magically attracted” the audience at his concert on 29 December 1817. Six months after Lipiński, in June 1818, Joseph Böhm played together with Johann Peter Pixis (1788–1874) in Ljubljana with “feeling and grace” and a tone of “pleasant acoustic melodiousness”.⁹⁴ Lipiński and Böhm set the bar for violin virtuosity for both violinists and audiences in Ljubljana, where Benesch performed for the first time almost two years later, in April 1820, and then again in four concerts during the 1821 Congress.

At that time violin lessons were given in Ljubljana only at the Public Music School and privately. Private violin lessons were announced sporadically in the newspapers from 1814 onwards.⁹⁵ Recognizing the lack of a permanent violin school, Benesch applied in

⁹² Zupančič, “Impact of Foreign-Born Musicians”.

⁹³ Missing the virtuoso in Venice, the “Polish Paganini”, as he was later called by Paganini, finally caught up with the latter in Padua in April 1818 and played with him twice in Piacenza (17 April and 24 May 1818). Later, when rivalry had destroyed their friendship, Paganini wittily replied to the question of which violinist he considered the best in the world: “I do not know the first, but second is certainly Karol Lipiński”. See Halski, “Paganini and Lipiński”, 277.

⁹⁴ MM, “Kunst-Notiz”, *Laibacher Wochenblatt zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*, 19 June 1818; Concert programme, “Ein großes Doppel Concert”, 10 June 1818, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, NUK, Ljubljana.

⁹⁵ One of the first advertisements for private violin lessons was that of Michael Fackler, who was a singer, actor and composer in the travelling German operatic troupe of Franz Xsaver Deutsch,

August 1822 to the Governorate of Ljubljana for permission to open a private establishment with separate violin lessons for beginners and advanced pupils using the best instruction manuals and works, asking for exclusivity.

Most Esteemed Imperial and Royal State Government! Since the most obedient signatory has decided to choose Ljubljana as his permanent place of residence, he has conceived the idea of establishing a public violin school to meet the wishes of several music lovers here. Both complete beginners and those who already play the violin are to be taught in separate lessons on the violin according to the best instruction manuals and works. He therefore most obediently begs the Most Esteemed Imperial and Royal State Government not only to grant him its most gracious permission but also graciously to offer protection to his enterprise in such a way that he cannot be harmed by anyone else through the establishment of a similar institution alongside his own.⁹⁶

He was admitted on the recommendation of the Philharmonic Society, with the Society's leadership confirming the need for such a private music school in a letter dated 14 October 1822:

[...] moreover considering the praiseworthy musical virtues displayed by Benesch during his stay here, it can only be desirable that so able a musician should be in a position to found such a music teaching institution in Ljubljana, where the lack of teachers of practical music is in any case prevalent, and which the petitioner, given his recognized theoretical and practical musical abilities, is able to direct. The advantages that arise from the establishment and existence of such an institution are too manifold not to deserve great approval. The lack of employable violinists is so palpable that even a moderately sized orchestra is hardly conceivable without the participation of amateurs, whether in church music, the theatre or other settings. On account of the adverse present circumstances, the core assets of the local cathedral church have become so depleted that now practically nothing can be spent on music (whereas in the previous decade there was enough for an increase in the number of capable salaried persons), so that this church's music staff, uncertain of its income, has had to relocate or seek a livelihood in a different

active in Ljubljana between 1813 and 1815. Fackler offered one hour of piano, violin and singing lessons daily, beginning on 1 April 1814. See "Nachricht", *Intelligenzblatt zur Laibacher Zeitung*, 22 March 1814.

⁹⁶ "Hochlöbliches K. K. Landes-Gubernium! Da der gehorsamst Gefertigte sich entschlossen hat, Laibach zu seinem bleibenden Aufenthaltsort zu wählen: so ist er gesonnen, um den Wünschen mehrerer hiesigen Musikfreunde zu entsprechen, eine öffentliche Violinschule zu errichten, worin sowohl gänzlich Anfangsgrunde, als auch bereits Spielende, in abgesonderten Stunden Unterricht auf der Violine nach den besten Schulen und Werken erhalten. Er bittet daher gehorsamst: Ein Hochlöbl. K. K. Landes-Gubernium wolle gerufen, ihm nicht nur hierzu die gnädigste Erlaubniß zu ertheilen, sondern sein Unternehmen auch dergestalt gnädigst in Schutz zu nehmen, daß er darin von niemand anderen durch Errichtung einer ähnlichen Anstalt neben der seinigen, beeinträchtigt werden könne". See "Einreichungs-Protokoll des k.k. Guberniums zu Laibach", *Delovodnik* 1822 (10812–16760), AS 14, Arhiv Republike Slovenije (AS), Ljubljana, fol. 583; "Einreichungs-Protokoll des k.k. Guberniums zu Laibach", *registratura VIII*, fasc. 55 (1821–1822), no. 159, AS 14, AS, Ljubljana.

occupation. By establishing a violin school, it is to be hoped that this shortage will over time be remedied by local pupils.⁹⁷

In October Benesch announced in the newspaper the opening of the new Violin School, where he offered lessons for violin, fortepiano and guitar.⁹⁸ By the end of the year he had also given five concerts where he mainly performed his own compositions and attracted an audience in Ljubljana.⁹⁹ After one of the concerts a critic wrote that Benesch already enjoyed a good reputation in the city and described his violin playing as “brilliant, with correct bowing and gentle execution of the whole, overcoming not small difficulties with great assurance and pleasing grace”. All these qualities made him an important contemporary musician, and he proved also to be a skilful composer.¹⁰⁰ His violin technique displayed “great assurance and purity of intonation, power and fullness of tone and truly brilliant double stops, octaves, trills and staccato”.¹⁰¹

In April 1823 he married the pianist Friederike Proch in Wiener Neustadt.¹⁰² Only a month later she introduced herself to the audience in Ljubljana with a performance of her

⁹⁷ “[...] wenn ferner die lobenswürdigen musikalischen Vorzüge, die Benesch während seines demahligen Hierseyns an den Tag gelegt hat, erwogen werden; so muß es nur wünschenswerth seyn, daß durch einen so tauglichen Tonkünstler zu Laibach, wo ohnehin der Mangel an practischen Musikmeistern vorherrschend ist, eine solche Musikunterrichts-Anstalt errichtet werden möchte, welcher Bittsteller nach seinen anerkannten theoretisch- und praktischen musikalischen Fähigkeiten vorzustehen vermag. Die Vortheile, die durch die Gründung und das Bestehen einer solchen Anstalt entstehen, sind zu mannigfaltig, als daß sie sich nicht der hohen Genehmigung erfreuen sollten. Der Mangel an brauchbaren Violinspielern ist so fühlbar, daß ein nur mittelmäßig besetztes Orchester weder bey Kirchenmusicken, noch im Theater oder anderen Gelegenheiten ohne Mitwirkung der Dilletanten kaum denckbar ist. Durch widrige Zeitverhältnisse ist das Stammvermögen der hiesigen Dommkirche so erschüttert worden, daß auf Musick, (so durch den sich in früherem Jahrzehnt mehrere besoldete fähige Individuen vermährten), itzt kaum etwas verwendet werden kann, und dieses Kirchenmusickpersonale daher aus Mangel eines gewissen Verdienstes sich von hier entfernt, oder sein Fortkommen in einer anderen Beschäftigung suchen mußte; – durch Errichtung einer Violinschule ist es zu hoffen, daß durch einheimische Zöglinge diesen Mangel nach und nach abgeholfen werde.” “Einreichungs-Protokoll des k.k. Guberniums zu Laibach”, registratura VIII, fasc. 55 (1821–1822), no. 159, AS 14, AS, Ljubljana.

⁹⁸ Joseph Benesch, “Neu errichtete Violinschule”, *Intelligenzblatt zur Laibacher Zeitung*, 29 October 1822.

⁹⁹ Concert programmes, 11 September 1822 (“Ein Großes Vocal und Instrumental Concert”), 20 September 1822 (“Gewöhnliche Gesellschafts-Akademie”), 4 October 1822 (“Gesellschafts-Akademie”), 8 November 1822 (“Eine Große musikalische Akademie”), 30 December 1822 (“Zum Besten der öffentlichen Musik-Schule”), Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana.

¹⁰⁰ P., “Kunst-Notizen”, *Illyrisches Blatt zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*, 9 March 1821.

¹⁰¹ “Correspondenz-Nachricht: Laibach, im December 1823”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Unterhaltungsblatt für Freunde der Kunst, Literatur und des geselligen Lebens*, 17 February 1824, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=thz&datum=18240217>.

¹⁰² Joseph Benesch and Friederika Proch were married on 8 April 1823 in Wiener Neustadt. See Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wiener Neustadt-Hauptpfarre, Trauungsbuch 1815–1843, sig. 02-13, fol. 108.

own Variations for piano with orchestra.¹⁰³ In Ljubljana, where her uncle Caspar Maschek was one of the leading musicians, she also gave private music lessons from November 1823 onwards.¹⁰⁴ Between 1823 and 1826 she appeared seven times on the stage of the Philharmonic Society as a soloist and accompanist to her husband.¹⁰⁵ She performed in Ljubljana only until May 1826, as she gave birth to her first son, Friedrich Joseph Ernst, in Wiener Neustadt five months later.¹⁰⁶

In addition to his work as a private teacher and concert performer (soloist) in Ljubljana, Benesch was also the musical and orchestral director¹⁰⁷ of the Philharmonic Society (“Musik- und Orchester Direktor der Philharmonischer Gesellschaft”) and temporarily of the Estates Theatre Orchestra between 1823 and 1828. It was common that musical and orchestral directors of the Philharmonic Society also worked at the Estates Theatre, where they earned extra money, as was the case with Maschek and Benesch. At that time the distinction between the two functions was still very loose, as they complemented each other. Nevertheless, the Kapellmeister’s role was comparable to that of today’s conductor, whereas the orchestral director’s role was occupied by the first violinist, who was the equivalent of a leader (concertmaster) today. The Kapellmeister also had to attend to the singing school, while the orchestral director often rehearsed and conducted overtures and symphonies and supervised the tuning-up of the orchestra. These overlapping roles, where the two men shared the work and the credit, can also be observed in the reviews of Maschek as Kapellmeister and Benesch as orchestral director, where it is actually stated that Maschek “celebrated the most beautiful triumph with the orchestra”, while Benesch impressed the critic with “the precision of the choir’s entries and the accuracy of the orchestra”.¹⁰⁸

One of the most important highlights of Benesch’s life was certainly the appearance of Niccolò Paganini in Trieste in 1824. It was Paganini’s second visit to the city after 1816 and one of the most important events for musicians and music-lovers in the wider region. Paganini was known in Ljubljana at this time only by name from local journals that reported on him from 1815 onwards as “the greatest living violinist”¹⁰⁹ and

¹⁰³ Concert programme, “Gewöhnliche Gesellschafts Akademie”, 30 May 1823, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Benesch, “Unterricht im Violinspielen”, *Intelligenzblatt zur Laibacher Zeitung*, 14 October 1823; Friederike Benesch, “Unterricht im Clavierspielen”, *Intelligenzblatt zur Laibacher Zeitung*, 14 October 1823.

¹⁰⁵ She performed on the Philharmonic Society Concerts on 30 May 1823, 3 December 1823, 2 September 1825, 21 October 1825, 2 December 1825, 7 April 1826 and 26 May 1826.

¹⁰⁶ Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wiener Neustadt-Neukloster, Taufbuch 1824–1841, sig. 01-04, fol. 49.

¹⁰⁷ The musical leadership of the Philharmonic Society Orchestra was in the hands of the Kapellmeister and the orchestral director. The leaders of the orchestra were either amateurs or paid professionals, and until the 1830s they usually changed from concert to concert. Initially, most of them were foreign-born local musicians such as Eissler, Höller and Schwerdt. Frequently, military musical directors such as Paul Micheli and Carl Handschuh helped with the performances in Ljubljana.

¹⁰⁸ Cvetko, *Zgodovina glasbene umetnosti na Slovenskem*, 2:168–169.

¹⁰⁹ The local periodical mentioned Paganini first in 1815, when it reported on his concert in Genoa, and then in 1819 on his appearance in Rome. In 1824, a few months before his concerts in

possibly from personal recollections by visiting musicians such as Lipiński and Böhm. Since Benesch had probably missed Paganini during his own Italian music tour, he now got another opportunity to hear the great master, who gave three concerts at the Teatro Grande in Trieste in the late autumn.¹¹⁰

Benesch and the eminent violinist Eduard Franz Jaell travelled to Trieste to hear the master and present him with an honorary diploma from the Philharmonic Society. Jaell, originally from Graz, was already known to audiences in Ljubljana, where he was a regular guest.¹¹¹

Paganini was invited to Trieste both times by the Samengo family,¹¹² merchants from Genoa. On the second occasion, in 1824, Samengo gave a soirée to which Jaell and Benesch were also invited. Before hearing Paganini play, Jaell was skeptical of Paganini's musical abilities and thought he was just showing off. He therefore brought along volumes of Classical music and invited Paganini to play "concertos" (probably quartets) by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven with him and other amateurs.¹¹³ Paganini accepted the proposal and took up the violin, stood in front of the lectern and turned the music books upside down,

Trieste, the *Illyrisches Blatt* published a detailed article on his life and musical achievements. See W. Z., "Oesterreichische Staaten: Italien", *Vereinigte Laibacher Zeitung*, 27 October 1815, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-CJL00MT>; "Paganini der größte lebende Violinspieler", *Illyrisches Blatt zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*, 20 August 1824, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-AR1DGQA2>.

¹¹⁰ He gave concerts in Trieste on 3 November, 15 November and 10 December 1824.

¹¹¹ Eduard Jaell was born in Graz in 1793. As early as 1815 he may have appeared in Ljubljana as orchestral director of the Estates Theatre. In 1817 he made his debut in Vienna, where he lived between 1818 and 1830 as a respected violinist and member of the orchestra at the Theater an der Wien and as leader of Hatwig's private orchestra, where Franz Schubert played the viola. Jaell also gave a first performance of Schubert *Ouverture im italienischen Stile* on 1 March, 1818. He also performed in Klagenfurt, Florence and Graz. From 1821 to 1841 he played eight times in Ljubljana as a violin virtuoso and conducted concerts as orchestral director of the Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1823 he became an honorary member of the Philharmonic Society in Ljubljana and the Musikverein in Graz. In 1830 he moved to Trieste, where he taught violin, cello and piano. Around 1844 he returned to Vienna with his family and settled in Brussels at the end of 1847. He died there in 1849. See Concert programmes, 30 November 1821 ("Gewöhnliche Gesellschafts Academie"), 4 December 1821 ("Eine grosse musikalische Accademie"), 21 November 1823 ("Eine Große musikalische Akademie"), 21 February 1825 ("Ein grosses Vocal und Instrumental Concert"), 11 October 1830 ("Vocal und Instrumental Concert"), 12 August 1840 ("Vocal und Instrumental Concert"), 12 November 1841 ("Vocal und Instrumental Concert"), 19 November 1841 ("Vocal und Instrumental Concert"), Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana; Harrandt and Kornberger, "Jaell, Familie"; Lindmayr-Brandl, "Music and Culture", 21.

¹¹² Paganini enjoyed playing chamber music with the "celebre professore dilettante" (famous amateur musician) Agostino Samengo in Trieste, about which Paganini comments: "Sometimes we play duets; but we find no satisfactory music except an occasional duet by Spohr or Meyerbeer; all other composers are stale – but less so those by Ghebart, which are not available here". See Vyborny, "Paganini as Music Critic", 472.

¹¹³ It is known that Paganini enjoyed the quartets of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven while playing music privately with friends. Paganini recognized the pre-eminence of Beethoven's quartets, while many of his contemporaries, including Spohr, did not. See Stowell, "Henryk Wieniawski", 74.

reading his part so completely in the reverse direction without pausing that Jaell was amazed and convinced of Paganini's miraculous abilities.¹¹⁴ Benesch and Jaell presented Paganini with an honorary diploma from the Philharmonic Society with an accompanying letter (dated on 11 and 14 October 1824) in which the Philharmonic Society invited Paganini to give a concert in Ljubljana.¹¹⁵ Paganini accepted the diploma but declined the proposal to perform in Ljubljana. The reason for this was probably a promise he had made in 1819 to Prince Metternich that if he were to make his debut beyond the Alps, he would first play in Vienna. He kept his promise when he made his debut outside Italy in Vienna in 1828.¹¹⁶ Paganini described the occasion of receiving the diploma and meeting with Jaell and Benesch in a letter to his friend, the lawyer Luigi Germi, in the following words:

So I will tell you, also as a friend, that even before hearing me play the Philharmonic Society of Ljubljana sent me here a delegation to make me a member of the said society, and brought me its diploma. For the concert, then, there came especially to hear me play the violin the main members of the said society, among whom was the well-respected professional violinist Mr. Benesch, the teacher of that little baron [Praun] who was the organizer of this concert; they, together with other members of the Philharmonic Society who had come from neighbouring centres, occupied a portion of the theatre. I should also mention, to make you laugh, a witty reply given that evening at the theatre by another very able professional violinist, a certain Mr. Jähl, a German living here, to the above-mentioned Benesch. The latter had told him after hearing me: We can all make our wills. No, replied Jähl, because I am already dead.¹¹⁷

It is possible that Germi knew von Praun, since Paganini referred to him only as "Baroncino". Maybe Paganini had heard Praun at the concert on 30 May 1824 at the Teatro Sant'Agostino in Genoa, where he himself had given two concerts during the same month (14 and 21 May),¹¹⁸ and probably called Benesch a "well-respected teacher" for this reason.

In the following year, 1825, Benesch began planning a tour and wished to give a

¹¹⁴This anecdote was told to Giovanni Tagliapietra by an old amateur player who was among the gathering that evening, and played the viola part with Paganini in the quartet. See "Memorie d'un Contemporaneo di Niccolò Paganini per G. Dr. Tagliapietra", *L'Arte rassegna di musica, drammatica e coreografia*, 31 May 1878.

¹¹⁵Tonazzi, *Paganini a Trieste*, 30; Kuret, *Ljubljanska filharmonična družba*, 55.

¹¹⁶Borer, "Twenty-Four Caprices", 11.

¹¹⁷"Ti racconterò poi, anche in amicizia, che prima ancora di farmi sentire, una Società filarmonica di Lubiana mandò qui una deputazione per aggregarmi a detta Società, e me ne portò il diploma. Per l'accademia poi, sono qui appositamente venuti, per sentire il mio violino, i principali membri di detta Società, e tra gli altri il classico professore di violino signor Benesch, maestro di quel Baroncino [Praun] che ha dato costà accademia; i quali, con altri filarmonici venuti da altri paesi del vicinato, occuparono un sito nel teatro. Ti aggiungerò pure, per farti ridere, un'arguta risposta data in quella sera al teatro da altro abilissimo professor di violino, certo signor Jähl, tedesco, che qui dimora, al sudetto Benesch. Gli diceva questi, dopo avermi sentito: Possiamo far tutti testamento.— No, gli rispose il Jähl, perchè io sono già morto." See Belgrano, *Imbreviature di Giovanni Scriba*, 402.

¹¹⁸Tonazzi, *Paganini a Trieste*, 32.

concert in Leipzig. To this end he wrote a letter to C. F. Peters,¹¹⁹ a well-known Leipzig publisher, offering his violin compositions for publication and announcing plans for a concert tour with his wife. It seems that he did not go on the afore-mentioned concert tour the following year but instead began teaching at the newly founded Philharmonic Society School (Gesellschafts-Lehranstalt) for stringed instruments (Streichinstrumente), performing in at least nine concerts organized by the society that year.¹²⁰

As was customary at the time, he probably held group lessons and taught a total of sixteen pupils on the violin and cello, which was undoubtedly very different from his earlier private lessons with musically gifted aristocratic children. Nevertheless, unlike his predecessors Caspar Maschek and Franz Sokol, he was the first real violin teacher in Ljubljana. Sokol was originally a clarinetist and taught violin at the Public Music School until 1822, when Maschek, who was a cellist, succeeded him. Although they were all broadly trained musicians, there was a great difference between them regarding their pedagogical competence in respect of the violin. We know from the school report that Maschek was not a diligent violin teacher, for the school supervisors complained that his violin pupils were “not being able to hold the instrument properly, playing scales out of tune and performing with too little musicality”.¹²¹ In contrast, Benesch, who was himself a virtuoso, had already trained two well-known violin virtuosos, Praun and Proch. Unfortunately, no further details on his violin lessons and curriculum are known up to date, but we can infer the repertoire studied in the violin lessons from the programme of the final examination (concert) in 1827. Benesch’s violin students played mainly works by his contemporaries, as well as their teacher’s compositions and various violin duets.¹²² Duets of this kind were popular violin pieces at the time and belonged to the teaching material used at the Prague Conservatory and elsewhere. In addition to the activity of his private “Violinschule” (Violin School), Benesch taught the forte-piano privately in bourgeois households; one of his pupils was Josephine (Jožefina) Terpinč (née Češko, Zeschko; 1805–1885).¹²³

¹¹⁹On 20 August 1825 he sent a letter to the well-known publisher C. F. Peters in Leipzig, offering his violin compositions for publication. In this letter he mentioned that the newspapers in Vienna and Milan were already publishing advertisements and publicity about him, and since he was planning a concert tour the following year with his wife, who was an excellent pianist, he would like to become better known in that area and to give a concert there. Among the pieces offered were violin compositions that he had played and probably composed in Ljubljana. See Joseph Benesch to C. F. Peters, 20 August 1825, Mus. Autogr. J. Benesch A 001, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main (D-F).

¹²⁰He performed in the Philharmonic Society Concerts on 7 January 1825, 10 February 1825, 20 May 1825, 2 June 1825, 2 September 1825, 23 September 1825, 21 October 1825, 2 December 1825, 26 December 1825.

¹²¹Budkovič, *Razvoj glasbenega šolstva na Slovenskem*, 1:31.

¹²²His students played violin duets by Bierlingen, L. Jansa and G. B. Viotti and violin pieces by J. Haydn, L. Jansa and J. Mayseder. See Concert programme, “Einladung zur öffentlichen Prüfung welche mit den Zöglingen des philharmonischen Gesellschafts-Streich-und Blas-Instrumental Institutes”, 28 August 1827, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana.

¹²³From the correspondence of the siblings Jožefina and Valentin Zeschko we learn that she was the student of Benesch. See Correspondence of Josephine Terpinč and Valentin Zeschko 1828–1858,

Besides teaching and performing with the Philharmonic Society, Benesch still gave occasional concerts abroad. In October 1827 he undertook two concerts with his wife in Prague, where the local newspaper *Prager Zeitung* billed him as “brilliant even in comparison with the great master Paganini”.¹²⁴ After the concert the critic of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* conceded that Benesch is a “valiant violinist of great ability and popularity” but that he would probably have pleased them even more if the *Prager Zeitung* had not raised expectations too high by comparing him to Paganini, about whose art they heard many wondrous words.¹²⁵ Since Paganini did not perform outside Italy until several months later (Vienna, March 1828), critics and musicians could only judge the quality of his playing from hearsay. A little over a year later Paganini gave six concerts in Prague;¹²⁶ ironically, Prague proved for him an even more bitter experience, as audiences were sparse and reviews were negative, making him out to be the most “vicious, stingy and greedy man”.¹²⁷

Around the same time, when the Philharmonic Society closed its music school for lack of funds, Benesch left Ljubljana. He gave his last benefit concert there on 7 November 1828¹²⁸ and then returned to Vienna. His departure was a great loss for Ljubljana. During his six-year stay he had performed in over forty concerts as a soloist and chamber musician and in more than eighty concerts as an orchestral director. He had conducted Beethoven’s symphonies with “energy and circumspection” and appeared as a soloist mainly with his own virtuosic works, though occasionally with compositions by his contemporaries.¹²⁹ Although he mostly performed together with his wife, he also played a few times with local pianists such as Elenoroe Hauck, Amalie Oblack, Karl Ullepitsch and Julie Kogl, the daughter of one of the founders of the Philharmonic Society in Ljubljana; to Julie Kogl the Benesch couple dedicated the Concert Variations for violin and piano.¹³⁰

[December] 1827, letter 8, sig. LJU/0296, no. 35, ZAL, Ljubljana, http://www.zal-lj.si/project/si_zal_lju-0296_s-35_ovoj-ii_pismo-8/.

¹²⁴“Nichtpolitische-Nachrichten”, *Prager Zeitung*, 14 October 1827.

¹²⁵“Nacrichten: Prag”, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 26 December 1827, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=aml&datum=18271226>.

¹²⁶Branberger, “Paganini v Praze”, 22–24; Neill, *Nicolò Paganini*, 209–211.

¹²⁷Paganini gave concerts in Prague in December 1828 and wrote a letter from Prague to Germi on 10 January 1829, describing the experience: “If you only knew how many enemies they have stirred up against me! You would not believe it! I do no harm to anyone, but those who do not know me consider me the most vicious, stingy and greedy man”. See Belgrano, *Imbreviature di Giovanni Scriba*, 420.

¹²⁸The proceeds of the benefit concerts, which were frequently organized by Philharmonic Society, went to a charity, often also to the soloist to reward them with vital income during the music tour, shortly before retirement or when artists left Ljubljana and moved elsewhere.

¹²⁹Benesch performed compositions by P. Rode, R. Kreutzer, L. Spohr, C. Czerny, L. Maurer, P. Pixis, J. Mayseder, L. Jansa, L. de Saint-Lubin and H. Proch.

¹³⁰“Variations Concertantes pour Pianoforte et Violon composes et dediées A Mademoiselle Julie de Kogl par Frederique et Joseph Benesch”.

In Ljubljana Benesch wrote several compositions, three of which are preserved in the National and University Library (Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica).¹³¹ They were donated to the Philharmonic Society by the clerk Anton Schmidt from Ljubljana,¹³² whose signature is on the cover of the score (“der löbl. Philharm. Gesellschaft verehret Ant. Schmidt”).

Closely connected with the Philharmonic Society was Benesch’s former pupil and brother-in-law Heinrich Proch. He became an honorary member in 1828, and several of his compositions were performed at the Society’s concerts in the following years, including *Nebo v dolini* in Slovenian (“in krainischer Sprache”) for voice and piano.¹³³ In 1830 he dedicated three of his Polonaises for Orchestra to the Philharmonic Society.¹³⁴ Benesch visited Ljubljana twelve years after his departure and gave a concert there in 1840,¹³⁵ this being his last visit to the city.

¹³¹ *Grandes Variations sur un thème original* (D), Op. 11; *Variations brillantes de l’Opera: “Il Crociato” de Meyerbeer*, Op. 12; *Prémier Concertino pour le Violon avec accompagnement d’Orchestre ou de Quartour ou de Pianoforte*, Op. 14.

¹³² Schmidt has been often confused with the Vienna-based physician and violinist Anton Schmith (1762–?) and even with Wolfgang Schmith.

¹³³ Concert programme, “Zweites Concert der philharmonischen Gesellschaft in Laibach”, 6 November 1846, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana.

¹³⁴ Concert programmes, 27 August 1830 (“Philharmonische Gesellschafts Akademie”), 3 September 1830 (“Große Vocal und Instrumental Concert”), 1 October 1830 (“Philharmonische Gesellschaft Akademie”), Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana.

¹³⁵ At the concert he performed his own Concertino and Variations and *Elegie* by H. Ernst. Benesch was also the first performer of Ernst’s works in Ljubljana. See Concert programme, “Vocal Instrumental Concert”, 25 September 1840, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana.

3. 1238. Neu errichtete Violinschule. (1)
 Da sich der Geseftigte entschlossen hat, Laibach zu seinem beständigen Aufenthalt-
 orte zu wählen, so ist er gesonnen, um dem Wunsche mehrerer Musikfreunde zu ent-
 sprechen, eine Violinschule zu errichten, wozu er auch bereits von einem hochlöbl. k. k.
 Landesgubernium die hohe Bewilligung erhalten hat. In dieselbe werden nicht nur gänzlich
 Anfängende, sondern auch bereits Spielende, in abgesonderten Stunden, aufgenom-
 men; sie erhalten wöchentlich 3 Stunden Unterricht, und werden nach den besten Schu-
 len und Werken gebildet, wofür die Erstern monatlich zwey Gulden, die Letztern aber
 drey Gulden zu entrichten haben. Auch gibt der Geseftigte Privatunterricht auf der
 Violine, dem Fortepiano und Guitarre. Wer an einem oder dem andern Unterrichte
 Theil zu nehmen wünscht, habe die Güte, sich auf dem St. Jacobi-Platze im Mar-
 schen Hause No. 148, im 1sten Stocke rückwärts, von 2 bis 4 Uhr Nachmittags zu melden.
 Joseph Benesch,
 Componist und Tonkünstler.

Figure 7
 Advertisement for Benesch’s private Violin school (Joseph Benesch, “Neu errichtete
 Violinschule”, *Intelligenzblatt zur Laibacher Zeitung*, 29 October 1822)

1825
 20 Aug
 Leipzig
 C. F. Peters
 Leipzig

Handwritten text in cursive script, including the address: *Herrn C. F. Peters Buchhändler in Leipzig.*

Figure 8
 Letter of Joseph Benesch to the publisher C. F. Peters, 20 August 1825 (Frankfurt am Main
 [D-F], Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Mus. Autogr. J. Benesch A 001;
 reproduced by permission)

Mit hoher Bewilligung
wird heute Samstag den 2. December 1826,
im Saale des deutschen Ordens-Hause
Joseph Benesch
ein großes

Vocal- und Instrumental- Concert

zu geben die Ehre haben.

Zum Vortrage kommende Stücf.

Erste Abtheilung.

- 1.) Ouverture aus der Oper: Oberon, von Carl M. von Weber.
- 2.) 8^{te} Concert (in modo di Scena cantante) für die Violine von L. Spohr, vorgetragen von Concertgeber.
- 3.) Scena e Cavatina aus der Oper Balduino, von S. Mercadante, gefungen von Fräulein Sophie Lienhard.
- 4.) Große Variationen für 2 Forte-Piano zu 8 Hände mit Orchester-Begleitung, von F. Kalkbrenner, vorgetragen von Fräulein Therese Freyinn von B. Frau Marie von W. Fräulein Julie v. K. und Fräulein Marie v. K.

Zweyte Abtheilung.


- 1.) Ouverture zu der Oper: Freyschütz von C. M. von Weber.
- 2.) Concertant-Variationen für Forte-Piano und Violine von P. Pixis, vorgetragen von Frau v. W. und dem Concertgeber.
- 3.) Cavatine von N. Vaccaj, gefungen von Fräulein Sophie Lienhard.
- 4.) Drey russische Arien varirt, für die Violine von L. Maurer mit Orchester-Begleitung, vorgetragen vom Concertgeber.

Der Eintritts-Preis ist 20 kr.

Der Anfang ist um 7 Uhr.

Figure 9

Concert programme for Joseph Benesch's Concert, 2 December 1826, Philharmonische Gesellschaft, Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-Q12G8YPK> (Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije – dLib.si)



Hochlöbliches K. K. Landes-Gubernium!

Da der gesonnt Gesehtigte sich mittheilhaftig
sah, Laibach zu seinem bleibenden Ansehens-
fallort zu wählen: so ist er gesonnt, um
den Wunsch unverschiedenartig Meister
zu unterstützen, und öffentliche Ansehens-
beweisung, sowie so wohl gänzlich Ansehens-
als auch bewirkt Ansehens, in abgesehener
Ansehens Ansehens auf der Ansehens auf den
Ansehens Ansehens und Ansehens Ansehens. So
bittet er zu gesonnt:

sein Hochlöbliches K. K. Landes-Gubernium
wollen geneigt, ihm nicht nur seine die würdigste
Ansehens zu unterstützen, sondern seine Ansehens
auf Ansehens würdigst in Ansehens zu Ansehens,
daß er Ansehens von Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens
Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens,
Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens,
Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens Ansehens.

Joseph Benesch

Figure 10

Request to open a private violin school (Ljubljana, Arhiv Republike Slovenije [AS], AS 14, registratura VIII, fasc. 55, no. 159; reproduced by permission)

Joseph Benesch in Vienna (1828–1873) and the Influence of Niccolò Paganini

In the Biedermeier era Vienna was the third-largest city in Europe after London and Paris and, as Louis Spohr describes in his *Memoirs* (1812), “indisputably the capital of the musical world”.¹³⁶ Concert performances by virtuosos were the main attraction for the Viennese audience. In addition to local artists, many visiting virtuosos shaped Viennese musical life, and the influx of “immigrants”, especially from Bohemia, increased. Viennese concert life was comparable to that of London or Paris.¹³⁷ In the period 1826–1827 the number of concerts in Vienna was two to three times higher than in Ljubljana.¹³⁸ Generally speaking, concert programmes did not differ much between one European city and the next. They consisted of a predetermined sequence of musical genres, and the soloist featured in a concert appeared only two or three times during that concert.¹³⁹

Since a travelling virtuoso needed in the first instance to conquer the Viennese public, the city attracted ambitious young musical talents from Bohemia, Hungary, Germany, Moravia, Silesia, Italy and Poland, with a particularly high proportion of musicians from Bohemia. However, staging a public concert in Vienna was expensive and difficult, as musicians were forced to find their own concert halls, assemble competent musicians and attract audiences large enough to cover concert costs. Only a few theatres were available as concert venues, since they were either fully booked or prohibitively expensive. Since there was no official concert hall in Vienna before 1830, musicians turned to churches, the university auditorium, the chambers of the regional government (Niederösterreichisches Landhaus), restaurants, dance halls or private homes to perform their music. The Society of the Friends of Music (Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, also known as the Musikverein)¹⁴⁰ was an important organization for concert life in Vienna. It held one major music festival (*Musikfest*) each season, four Society Concerts and about sixteen smaller evening entertainments (*Abendunterhaltungen*). The concerts were performed and attended by its members, a mixture of amateur and professional musicians. Benesch was a member from the end of 1828.¹⁴¹ He performed in various Viennese halls, mostly with his wife,

¹³⁶Brown, *Louis Spohr*, 72.

¹³⁷In the period from 1826 to 1827 111 concerts were given in Vienna, 125 in London and 78 in Paris. See Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 83.

¹³⁸In Ljubljana there were more than twenty-seven major concerts in 1826 alone (all organized by its Philharmonic Society), the concert programmes for 1827 being lost.

¹³⁹After the overture the soloist usually played a movement from a concerto. The three movements of a concerto were rarely played consecutively as an uninterrupted unit. The second piece, separated from the first by a vocal ensemble or solo, usually consisted of a series of variations on a popular melody. Most of the brilliant or popular pieces were performed again at the end. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 99.

¹⁴⁰Originally, concerts had taken place mostly in private circles. The first large-scale concerts took place from 1815 onwards at the Großer Redoutensaal at the Hofburg and in the Riding School (Winterreitschule). Smaller concerts were initially held at the society’s office in Singerstrasse, from 1819 onwards in the Rotenturmstrasse and from 1820 onwards at the Gundlhof in the Tuchlauben. The society had its headquarters in the Tuchlauben, where there was a hall for a maximum of 700 people. It was not until 1870 that the present Musikverein building was completed.

¹⁴¹“Stand der Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde mit Ende 1828”, *Monatsbericht der*

and a few times with his brother-in-law Heinrich Proch. This kind of teaming up of family members was a common practice aimed at keeping costs low, and is seen also among some of his violinist contemporaries such as Spohr, who performed with his wife, a harpist, and even Paganini, who often shared his concerts with his mistress Antonia Bianchi, an opera singer. Social gatherings were also often organized privately by officials and merchants, and so there were even more house concerts for families and friends than ones held in public halls during the 1820s.¹⁴²

Another obstacle was the distrust of unknown local or foreign musicians and the suspicion that they would cheat their audiences or not pay their bills. As a result, they had difficulty with engaging orchestras and had to resort to hiring individual musicians. As a rule, only established musicians could hire orchestras such as the ones of the theatres or the Friends of Music. Consequently, newly arrived artists first had to make a name for themselves by seeking out the city's amateur music societies and performing and composing for them gratis or for a reduced fee. It could take six months before a musician managed to give a public concert in Vienna. The competition was fierce, costs high, and music critics particularly harsh.¹⁴³

Benesch had to surmount all these barriers soon after his new move, at the end of 1828, to Vienna, where “gaining recognition meant proving oneself a master”.¹⁴⁴ The competition among violinists in Vienna was one of the toughest in Europe, for in addition to local violinists such as Böhm, Clement, E. Jaell, Mayseder, Léon de Saint-Lubin (1805–1850), Schuppanzigh, Slawik, Spohr, Ernst among many others, there were visiting violinists of international fame. The outstanding names among them came from Paris. P. F. de Sales Baillot, Rodolpho Kreutzer, C. P. Lafont, Jacques Mazas (1782–1849), and Pierre Rode increased the quality even further and set new standards in violin playing.

As if this competition among violinists was not tough enough, there was also the greatest of them all: the “Wizard of the South”, Paganini, whom a Viennese audience heard for the first time in March 1828 and who drove up expectations. His fame spread throughout Europe with an extended concert tour between 1828 and 1831, which was Paganini's first one outside Italy. His name and reputation, however, had been known to the Viennese for a decade through travellers from Italy, including the violinists Joseph Böhm and Joseph Mayseder (1789–1863), who had heard him play there during their concert tours.¹⁴⁵ With his first concert in Vienna on 29 March 1828, at the age of forty-six, Paganini immediately achieved a triumph and caused a *furor* never seen before.¹⁴⁶ He gave fourteen concerts in Vienna, accompanied by an orchestra (conducted by Hildenbrand, Schuppanzigh and Fradl) that “fevered with the audience and overwhelmed the artist with enthusiastic demonstrations of all kinds”.¹⁴⁷ The opening concert brought together

Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde der Oesterreichischen Kaiserstaates, 1829, 93.

¹⁴² Devaux, “Joseph Mayseder”, 13.

¹⁴³ Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 87–89.

¹⁴⁴ Brown, *Louis Spohr*, 72.

¹⁴⁵ Rowe, *Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst*, 28–29.

¹⁴⁶ “Erstes Concert des Hrn. Nicolo Paganini”, *Wiener-Theater Zeitung*, 5 April 1828, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=thz&datum=18280405>.

¹⁴⁷ Prod'homme, *Nicolo Paganini*, 26.

the most famous musicians in Vienna, including also Benesch.¹⁴⁸ The best Viennese violinists – Mayseder, Jansa, de Saint-Lubin, Matthias Strebinger (1807–1874) and Böhm – agreed that Paganini was incomparable and that it was madness to compete with him. After Paganini's appearance in Vienna Mayseder withdrew from concert life and gave only private concerts, but he later dedicated his *Airs variés*, Op. 40, to the great master. Nevertheless, there were some intrepid “imitators” who did not give up and whose playing style was compared to Paganini's. Besides Joseph Treichlinger (1808–?),¹⁴⁹ who gave a much-acclaimed concert à la Paganini on 26 December 1828,¹⁵⁰ Joseph Panny,¹⁵¹ Joseph Slawik, Joseph Benesch, the latter's former pupil Sigmund von Praun and Heinrich Ernst followed this style of playing.

The enthusiasm for Paganini spread like wildfire, so that Viennese fashion became entirely à la Paganini, a phenomenon not limited to music.¹⁵² His fame echoed beyond Vienna and also reached the circles of the aristocracy in Ljubljana,¹⁵³ where Benesch was still living at that time. Many violinists wanted to meet the famous artist, and one of those lucky ones was Jakob Lorber (1800–1864) from Kaniža (in today's Slovenia). He attended the concert, took a single lesson from Paganini and used this to market himself still many years afterward, when he was introduced in a newspaper as a “violin professor using the famous Paganini method”.¹⁵⁴ This tremendous euphoria caused by Paganini also meant that the reputations of the other violinists became considerably diminished, since it transformed the criteria for evaluation. Some of the best violinists, if they were lucky, were given such sobriquets as “Bohemian Paganini”, “Polish Paganini”,¹⁵⁵ “Second

¹⁴⁸Borer, “Twenty-Four Caprices”, 14.

¹⁴⁹Treichlinger was a violinist of the Imperial Court Opera Orchestra in Vienna.

¹⁵⁰“Concert-Anzeigen”, *Der Sammler*, 23 December 1828; “Concert des Hrn. Jos. Treichlinger”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 13 January 1829; Prod'homme, *Nicolo Paganini*, 26.

¹⁵¹Panny was born on 23 October 1794 in Kohlmitzberg. He studied under his father and later in Vienna, where he formed a friendship with Paganini, making several joint tours with him. Later they separated and he made a successful tour of German cities, founding a music school in Mainz, where he died on 7 September 1838. See Bachmann, *Encyclopedia of the Violin*, 387.

¹⁵²Prod'homme, *Nicolo Paganini*, 27.

¹⁵³Valentin Zeschko wrote on 2 April 1828 from Vienna to his sister, Benesch's pupil Josephine Terpinz, the following about Paganini: “Now a new star has risen for the music world in Vienna. The violinist Mr. N. Paganini Virtuoso arrived here last week and gave a concert three days ago in the large Redoutensaal, which brought him great general applause. The entrance fee was 5 f. downstairs and 10 f. w/w [Wiener Währung] in the gallery, and his total receipts were 20,000 f. w/w. The man says that he will give one more concert for himself but will have to play twelve times for free in the Kärnerthortheater; but if the prices remain so high, I will not hear him.” See Correspondence of Josephine Terpinz and Valentin Zeschko 1828–1858, 2 April 1828, letter 13, sig. LJU/0296, no. 35, ZAL, Ljubljana, http://www.zal-lj.si/project/si_zal_lju-0296_s-35_ovoj-ii_pismo-13/.

¹⁵⁴In 1858 Lorber gave a concert in Trieste, where he performed Paganini's piece *Le Streghe*. See “Teatro Mauroner”, *Il diavoleto: giornale Triestino*, 10 September 1858.

¹⁵⁵“Polish Paganini” was used to describe the Polish violinists Karl Lipiński and later Henryk Wieniawski.

Paganini” or “another Paganini”,¹⁵⁶ but a less fortunate player could be dubbed an “unsuccessful copy of Paganini”.¹⁵⁷ When Benesch gave a concert in Vienna less than one year after Paganini’s opening concert there, a critic reported that he was a courageous virtuoso who had overcome enormous difficulties with great certainty and precision and who had been a practitioner of the “Paganini School” for years, because some of the idiosyncrasies of his role model were appearing in bright daylight. The critic goes on to say that some things might have been less conspicuous if the audience had heard Benesch before Paganini performed in Vienna.¹⁵⁸

Franz Schubert was also afflicted with Paganini-fever and could barely afford the expensive tickets to Paganini’s concert. In a now-lost letter to his friend Anselm Hüttenbrenner (1794–1868),¹⁵⁹ he wrote that he heard angels singing in Paganini’s Adagio.¹⁶⁰ Schubert, himself an accomplished violinist, entrusted the premiere of his two violin compositions, *Rondo Brillant* and *Fantasia* in C, to an aspiring Bohemian violinist and his composition student Joseph Slawik or, as he was called, the “Bohemian Paganini”. Slawik was a great sensation in Vienna in 1826 and was regarded there as a second Paganini, according to the Bohemian piano virtuoso Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870), who heard him play. When Paganini heard Slawik in Vienna, he is said to have singled him out from the very start, exclaiming, “Everyone trembles when you play”. He wrote in Slawik’s album: “‘To the very able Mr. Slavík – the Gentle One’ (*Al valente Signor Slavík – il Dolce*)”.¹⁶¹ Slawik spent the next two years studying the “Paganini method”. When he reappeared in Vienna, he was called not an insignificant imitator of the great master, but a second original.¹⁶² Although Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) was a great admirer of Slawik, confessing in his letters to not having heard anyone like him since Paganini,¹⁶³ he still considered him to rank behind the Italian.¹⁶⁴ Even though Slawik was supposed to be the successor of Paganini, he could not fulfil that expectation, since his promising career ended with his death at the tender age of twenty-seven in 1833, opening up a career path to Benesch, who replaced him at the Hofkapelle.

Therefore, it had to be Slawik’s compatriot, Böhms and Mayseder’s pupil Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, who carried on the torch as Paganini’s successor, leaving a precious legacy for violinists at the highest technical level, since his violin compositions attain the pinnacle

¹⁵⁶“Ein zweiter Paganini” (another Paganini) was how Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst was described. See “Korrespondenz”, *Didaskalia: Blätter für Geist, Gemüth und Publizität*, 1 February 1840.

¹⁵⁷“Letzterer [Joseph Treichlinger] gab eine verunglückte Kopie der Paganinischen Spielweise”. See “Die Josefstädter Bühne”, *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, 23 May 1829.

¹⁵⁸“Neuigkeiten: Wien; Concert des Hrn. J. Benesch”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 14 April 1829, 178, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=thz&datum=18290414>.

¹⁵⁹Motnik, “Anselm Hüttenbrenner”.

¹⁶⁰Deutsch, “Anselm Hüttenbrenners Erinnerungen an Schubert”, 132, 140.

¹⁶¹Vyborny, “Paganini as Music Critic”, 470.

¹⁶²Stratton, *Niccolo Paganini*, 110.

¹⁶³“I am just back from Slawik’s. A famous violinist whom I befriended. Since Paganini I have heard nothing like him; he can take 96 notes staccato on one bow, and so on; incredible.” See Opieński, *Chopin’s Letters*, 130.

¹⁶⁴Stratton, *Niccolo Paganini*, 142.

of violin technique and present a challenge to even the best violinists of today. Paganini heard Ernst while in Vienna and predicted a great future for him. Because Paganini's performance in Vienna had made such a deep impression on the sixteen-year-old Ernst, he followed him on a tour a year later, playing some of Paganini's unpublished works by ear and astonishing the composer. He later performed with him in Marseilles, where Ernst played with more feeling, while Paganini was able to overcome more difficulties.¹⁶⁵ Ernst's *Grande Caprice sur 'Le Roi des Aulnes'*, Op. 26, for violin solo, the transcription based on Schubert's *Erlkönig*, D 328, remains one of the most demanding violin pieces up to the present day. Among the early interpreters of Ernst's compositions was Benesch, who played his *Élegié*, Op. 10, in Ljubljana and probably also in Brno in the same year that it was published in Vienna (1840).

The musical milieu in Vienna was obviously very demanding, and the competition among violinists was among the fiercest in Europe. As aristocratic patronage declined, the income of professional musicians came to rely mainly on four areas: employment in state or private institutions such as the theatre, the church or military bands; public and private performances; composition; and teaching. Since musicians could not depend solely on income from concerts, they sought a regular income and other benefits associated with employment in state institutions, which was also the best possible option for Benesch.¹⁶⁶ The main advantages of employment with state institutions were a moderate but steady income, court protection and a state pension at the end of service. Musicians were able to supplement their income regularly by attending special public or private concerts. All these advantages attracted also Benesch, who at the end of 1828, at the age of thirty-three, returned to Vienna,¹⁶⁷ where he became a member of the Society of the Friends of Music (*Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*).¹⁶⁸ He had to establish himself in an environment where audiences and critics were far more demanding than in his former city Ljubljana. He gave first two concerts in Vienna in April 1829 at the Kärntnertheater and Landständischer Saal,¹⁶⁹ where he came across as "in every respect an excellent artist, with strong, full and beautiful tone and brilliant bravura". After the concerts and some positive reviews a public discourse about Benesch's artistic quality took place in the newspaper *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung* for two months.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Schwarz, "Ernst, Heinrich Wilhelm".

¹⁶⁶ A musician seeking employment in one of the court ensembles, state theatres or larger Viennese churches usually turned directly to the Office of the Chief Chamberlain (*Oberstkämmeramt*) responsible for the affairs of the court or asked influential persons to send letters to this office. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 23.

¹⁶⁷ It seems that he first lived in the Wiener Neustadt, where three of his children were born, and later moved to Vienna (Wieden).

¹⁶⁸ "Stand der Mitglieder der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde mit Ende 1828", *Monatsbericht der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde der Oesterreichischen Kaiserstaates*, 1829, 93.

¹⁶⁹ The concerts took place on 2 April 1829 and 26 April 1829. See M. E., "Musikalische Wegweiser", *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 28 March 1829; "Aus der musikalischen Welt", *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 23 April 1829, 196.

¹⁷⁰ "Neuigkeiten: Wien; Concert des Hrn. J. Benesch", *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 14 April 1829, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/>

Despite some bad publicity, Benesch did not give up on Vienna and tried to make a living by teaching, working for two summers as an orchestral director at the theatre in Baden, where he gave three concerts during the summers of 1829 and 1830.¹⁷¹ In the spring of 1830 he applied for the position of court chamber violinist, together with six other distinguished Austrian violinists, following the death of Ignaz Schuppanzigh.¹⁷² The applicants were judged according to “moral and religious beliefs” and political opinions as well as their musical abilities. Particular note was taken of the fact that Benesch originally came from Bratislava, which was a false statement, and that because he had previously been the orchestral director in Ljubljana, he might have strong nationalist and anti-Austrian feelings. The reasons for his failure could therefore have been more political than related to any musical shortcomings, especially since the government examined its musical applicants carefully if they came from abroad and especially from the Eastern-Austrian provinces, as was the case with Benesch. The position was given to a younger violinist born in Vienna, Georg Hellmesberger, Sr (1800–1873), a teacher at the Vienna Conservatory. Benesch was not admitted to the Hofkapelle until two years later, in November 1832, as a supernumerary without salary, and then after the death of his compatriot Slawik as a full member (1 July 1833), remaining there for the rest of his life. In August 1834, in return for his “outstanding musical abilities and proven knowledge”, he was received the title and position of deputy orchestral director at the Burgtheater, where he later became orchestral director and where the famous author of violin tutors Jakob Dont (1815–1888) was his deputy until 1871, when they both retired.¹⁷³

In addition to his many years as a private teacher, Benesch was also a professor at the Academy of Music (Akademie der Tonkunst) in Vienna,¹⁷⁴ in existence in the 1850s, where between 1852 and 1853¹⁷⁵ he taught the young Amalie Bido (1844–?), who became one of

anno?aid=thz&datum=18290414; C. F., “Noch etwas über das Concert des Hrn. Joseph Benesch, Ehrenmitgliedes der philharmonischen Gefellschaften zu Venedig und Laibach, im k. k. Hoftheater nächst dem Kärnthnerthore”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 23 April 1829; “Beleuchtung eines, in der 47. Nummer des ‘Sammlers’ von diesem Jahr erschienenen Aufsatzes über die am 2. April d. J., im k. k. Hoftheater nächst dem Kärnthnerthore, von Hrn. Joseph Benesch gegebene musikalische Akademie”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 25 April 1829; “Concert des Hrn. Benesch”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 14 May 1829; “Erwiederung eines, in der 55. Nummer des Sammlers von diesem Jahre erschienenen, Aufsatzes über das zweyte Concert des Hrn. Joseph Benesch”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 26 May 1829, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=thz&datum=18290526>; Manuel, “Erklärung”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 4 June 1829.

¹⁷¹ He gave concerts in Baden on 25 July 1829, 5 August 1829 and 12 August 1830.

¹⁷² Besides Benesch, the following violinists applied for the position: Josef Stadler, Karl Rechsetz, Anton Khayl, Franz Grütsch, Johann Hellmesberger and Franz Rabel. See Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, 24.

¹⁷³ “Im Orchester des Hofburgtheaters”, *Signale für die Musikalische Welt*, 14 March 1871.

¹⁷⁴ “Musikschulen und Musiklehrer”, *Handels- und Gewerbe-Adressenbuch der österreichischen Monarchie* 11, no. 2 (1854): 517–518.

¹⁷⁵ “Matinée Musicale”, *Neue Wiener Musik-Zeitung*, 12 February 1852; “2. Concert der Akademie

the most successful female violinists of her time. As a violin pedagogue Benesch gained public recognition towards the end of his career: “We can only give Professor Benesch unqualified praise for his hard work and diligence in training young talents to become violinists. For some years he escaped the full attention of the higher intelligentsia in the field of music, in spite of the many artists on these beautiful instruments, and it is his work as a master of this instrument that everywhere receives the recognition it deserves.”¹⁷⁶ Besides Amalie Bido, his most successful pupils were Sigismund von Praun and Heinrich Proch. While von Praun’s death at the tender age of eighteen prevented him from realizing his full potential, Proch surpassed his teacher. He became a well-known violinist and musician in Vienna, a member of the Hofkapelle plus other orchestras and a composer.

In Benesch’s nearly forty-year career as a violinist of the Imperial Hofkapelle and orchestral director of the Burgtheater, he played alongside the violinistic elite of his day: Joseph Maysedeer, Joseph Böhm, Leopold Jansa, Mathias Strebinger, Jakob Dont, Georg Hellmesberger, Sr, Heinrich Proch, Wenzel Bezdek and Joseph Hellmesberger.¹⁷⁷ All this is undoubtedly a testament to his outstanding achievements in Vienna. During all these years he remained active as a concert violinist, giving about a hundred public concerts in more than thirty different cities¹⁷⁸ and proving himself “in every respect an excellent violinist”.¹⁷⁹ He died in Vienna on 11 February 1873 and was considered “a quiet, kindly, and undemanding as well as dignified man”.¹⁸⁰ His wife Friederika had died a year earlier, on 23 February 1872.¹⁸¹ They had at least three children: Friedrich Joseph Ernst Benesch (1826–?),¹⁸² Henrietta Vinzenzia Adelheid Benesch (1828–?),¹⁸³ Elisabeth Josepha Karolina Benesch (1830–?).¹⁸⁴

der Tonkunst”, *Neue Wiener Musik-Zeitung*, 15 April 1852; Robert, “2. Concert der Akademie der Tonkunst für Ihre Gründer und Unterstützer”, *Neue Wiener Musik-Zeitung*, 22 April 1852.

¹⁷⁶“Kunstnachrichten”, *Neue Wiener Musik-Zeitung*, 21 August 1856.

¹⁷⁷Köchel, *Die Kaiserliche Hof-Musikkapelle*, 97, 100; Antonicek, “Die Stände der Wiener Hofmusik-Kapelle”, 188; Kaiserlich-Königliches Hof-Burgtheater, *Jahrbuch des Kaiserl. Königl. Hofburg-Theaters*, 10.

¹⁷⁸We have attempted to reconstruct his concerts given between 1818 and 1841 from concert programmes and newspaper reports and have arrived at the figure of eighty-seven, although the number was certainly higher.

¹⁷⁹“Notizenblatt: zum Concertwesen”, *Feierstunden für Fremde der Kunst, Wissenschaft und Literatur*, 14 January 1835.

¹⁸⁰Luib, “Biographische Skizzen”.

¹⁸¹Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wieden, Sterbebuch 1870–1872, sig. 03-21, fol. 14.

¹⁸²Friedrich Joseph Ernst Benesch was baptized on 15 October 1826 in Wiener Neustadt, when Benesch was still living in Ljubljana. Later, Friedrich Ernst worked in the office of Baron H. Puthau. See Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wiener Neustadt-Neukloster, Taufbuch 1824–1841, sig. 01-04, fol. 49; Joseph Benesch to August Schmidt, 18 January 1848, sig. AC15825052, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (A–Wst).

¹⁸³Henrietta Vinzenzia Adelheid Benesch was baptized on 20 February 1828 in Wiener Neustadt. Her godfather was Heinrich Proch. See Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wiener Neustadt-Neukloster, Taufbuch 1824–1841, sig. 01-04, fol. 73.

¹⁸⁴Elisabeth Josepha Karolina Benesch was baptized on 28 January 1830 in Wiener Neustadt. See Wien / Niederösterreich (Osten), Rk. Erzdiözese Wien, Wiener Neustadt-Neukloster, Taufbuch 1824–1841, sig. 01-04, fol. 117.

[4127] In der Kunst- u. Musikalienhandlung [2]
A. Berka & Comp.,
in der Kärntnerstraße Nr. 941, ist neu erschienen, und
auch bey B. Grimm in Pest; Streibig in Preßburg; Berra
in Prag; Greiner in Grätz; Seidl in Brünn; Kuhn und
Militowsky in Lemberg; Paternolli in Laibach, so wie
in allen übrigen Musikalienhandlungen der Oesterreich.
Monarchie zu haben:

Rondoletto für die Violine,
mit Begleitung
des Quartetts oder Pianoforte
für angehende Violinspieler.
Componirt, und seinem Schüler
Herrn Wilhelm Mayerhofer,
gewidmet
von Joseph Benesch.

Preis mit Quartett . . . 1 fl. — fr. C. M.
» mit Pianoforte . . . — fl. 36 fr. C. M.
(Eigenthum der Verleger.)

Figure 11

Advertisement for Benesch's composition Rondoletto (*Wiener Zeitung*, 5 november 1834, 1026)



Figure 12
Portrait of Joseph Benesch (© Belvedere, Vienna; reproduced by permission)



Figure 13
Portrait of Friederike Benesch (© Belvedere, Vienna; reproduced by permission)

FKBA 22088

Ihrer Majestät!

Erwünscht durch die Allerhöchste Gnade, durch die
 die Kunst der Musik von Eurer Majestät
 zu unterstützen, so wie durch die Allerhöchste Gnade,
 welche über unsrerer Tonkünstler und Tonsetzer
 durch die Gnade, daß Eurer Majestät ich
 allgnädigst erlaubten, Allerhöchste Dorenselben
 von einem gütigen Tonstück widerum zu dürfen:
 wagt die die allgnädigste Günstigkeit, noch
 in der besondern, auch die Kunst der Kunst, die
 die Allerhöchste Gnade, durch die Eurer Majestät
 Göttergallung, auch die Kunst, auch die Kunst,
 Eurer Majestät wollen allgnädigst erlauben,
 ich zu erlauben, Allerhöchste Dorenselben mit Tonstück
 für die Polina, unter dem Titel eines Concertino,
 in dieser Hoffung widerum zu dürfen.

Wien den 4^{ten} December 1839.

Joseph Benesch
 Musikant bei S. S. Hofkapelle
 und Vice Capellmeister Director des
 S. S. Hofoperntheaters

Figure 14

Joseph Benesch's request for a dedication (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, sig. 22, FKBA22088; reproduced by permission)

Mit hoher Bewilligung
wird
Joseph Benesch,
Mitglied der k. k. Hofkapelle und Vice-Orchester-Director des k. k.
Hof-Burgtheaters,
Sonntag am 22. Dezember 1839, um die Mittagsstunde
e i n
CONCERT
im Saale der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde,
unter den Tuchlauben,
zu geben die Ehre haben.

Vorkommende Stücke:

1. Ouverture von Proch.
2. Concertino für die Violine (D), componirt und vorgetragen vom Concertgeber.
3. Der Hefpfer, Gedicht von J. G. Seidl, vorgetragen von Fräulein Josephine Planer, Mitglied des k. k. priv. Theaters in der Josephstadt.
4. Grand Duo du couronnement für Harfe und Pianoforte, von Herz und Labarre, vorgetragen von Fräulein Therese Weilingmayer und Frau Friederike Benesch.
5. Lied mit Chor und Orchester-Begleitung, von Proch, gesungen von Herrn Müller.
6. Variationen über Motive aus Robert der Teufel, für die Violine, componirt und vorgetragen vom Concertgeber.

Aus besonderer Gefälligkeit für den Concertgeber haben Semmtliche Mitwirkende ihre Leistungen, so wie Herr Carl Grobzl, Orchester-Director des k. k. priv. Theaters in der Josephstadt, die Leitung des Orchesters übernommen.

Eintrittskarten à 1 fl. C. M. und Sperrsitze à 2 fl. C. M.
sind in der Kunsthandlung des Herrn Ant. Diabelli et Comp. am Graben zu bekommen.

Der Anfang ist um halb 1 Uhr.

Druck bei J. B. Wallishausser.

Figure 15

Concert programme printed on silk, cover for the dedication request (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, sig. 22, FKBA22088; reproduced by permission)

Benesch's Concert Performances and His Violin Repertoire

Benesch was a typical violin virtuoso of his time in terms of the repertoire that he played. When virtuosos did not perform their own compositions, they played the repertoire of their contemporaries, for it was only after the middle of the nineteenth century that concert programmes began to favour older works by deceased composers, and what we know today as the standard repertoire developed. This was also the case in Benesch's repertoire, in which we find not only his own compositions, but also works by his contemporaries such as Rode, Kreutzer, Mayseder, Jansa, Saint-Lubin, Proch, Spohr and Ernst, which he mainly performed at the beginning of his career.

In the following table the content of sixty-four concerts has been reconstructed to the extent that is possible, corresponding to about half of all Benesch's public performances. For this purpose concert announcements, reports and reviews published in the newspapers of the time, as well as concert programmes, were studied. In many cases the newspapers only reported place and time without detailing the programme. Since the reports and concert programmes were not written as accurately in the past as they are today, we cannot always determine exactly which compositions were played. The generic term "variations" leaves us uncertain, for example, about what theme the variations were based on (or exactly what opus number was performed), hence how varied the repertoire actually was. Therefore, it may appear that in many instances Benesch played the same pieces over and over again, whereas his repertoire was in reality much more varied.

Table 1

A list of Benesch's solo performances between 1818 and 1841

Date	City	Organiser / Location	Performed repertoire
1 Nov 1818	Brno	Ständisches Theater	P. Rode: Violin Concerto
Apr 1820	Klagenfurt	[?]	[?]
12 Apr 1820	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Variations, J. Benesch: Polonaise
8 Jun 1820	Venice	[?]	[?]
9 Jun 1820	Venice	[?]	[?]
10 Jun 1820	Venice	[?]	[?]
11 Jun 1820	Venice	[?]	[?]
10 Aug 1820	Mantua	Regio Teatro	[?]
Aug 1820	Mantua	Regio Teatro	[?]
8 Oct 1820	Milan	Teatro alla Scala	J. Benesch: Polonaise, J. Benesch: Variations
20 Oct 1820	Milan	<i>Teatro della Canobbiana</i>	J. Benesch: Second Polonaise, P. Rode: Violin Concerto

16 Feb 1821	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	P. Rode: Adagio and Rondo, J. Benesch: Polonaise
23 Feb 1821	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	P. Rode: First Violin Concerto, Belledro / Polledzo: Variations, J. Benesch: Third Grand Polonaise
9 Mar 1821	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Mayseder: Polonaise
16 Mar 1821	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	R. Kreutzer: Concerto for two Violins (with Johann Georg Altenburger)
17 Dec 1821	Graz	Ständisches Theater	J. Benesch: Overture from the Violin Concerto, J. Benesch: Grande Polonaise
14 Jul 1822	Wiener Neustadt	Ständisches Theater	L. Spohr: Double Violin Concerto (with Heinrich Proch), J. Benesch: Variations in D
11 Sep 1822	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Violin Concerto, J. Benesch: Variations on popular theme "Die Schildwache", J. Benesch: Polonaise
20 Sep 1822	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	Moscheles / Mayseder: Variations for Forte-Piano and Violin, J. Benesch: Polonaise
4 Oct 1822	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Polonaise
8 Nov 1822	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: First Polonaise
4 Dec 1822	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Polonaise
30 Dec 1822	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	R. Kreutzer: Second Potpourri

Table 1
(continued)

5 Mar 1823	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Violin Concerto, J. Benesch: Variations, J. Benesch: Rondo
23 May 1823	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Polonaise
30 May 1823	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Variations
22 Jul 1823	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Violin Concerto
3 Dec 1823	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Mayseder: Violin Concerto in E minor, J. Benesch: Variations on the theme of “La Sentinelle”
7 Jan 1825	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	L. Spohr: Eighth Violin Concerto
10 Feb 1825	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Rondo alla Pollaca
20 May 1825	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Brilliant Variations
23 Sep 1825	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	L. Jansa: Marche de Cherubini
21 Oct 1825	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. N. Hummel: Grand Septet
2 Dec 1825	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Grand Violin Concerto, J. Benesch: Grand Variations
13 Jan 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Mayseder: Variations, E. v. Lannoy: Grand Concerto Variations for Piano-forte and Violin and Quartett Accompaniment (with Julie Kogl)
10 Feb 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	L. Spohr: Violin Concerto
14 Apr 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Rondo

2 Jun 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Variations on the theme of "La Sentinelle"
16 Jun 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	C. Czerny: Concert Variations for Piano and Violin (with Eleonore Hauck)
3 Nov 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Polonaise
20 Nov 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	H. Proch: Violin Concerto
24 Nov 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. N. Hummel: Concerto for Piano-forte and Violin with Orchestra (with Amalie Oblack), L. W. Maurer: Three Russian Concert Arias
2 Dec 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	L. Spohr: Eighth Violin Concerto, P. Pixis: Concert Variations for Piano-forte and Violin, L. W. Maurer: Three Russian Concert Arias
9 Dec 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	L. Blahetka / L. de Saint-Lubin: Variations for Pianoforte and Violin (with Karl Ullepitsch)
13 Dec 1826	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Grand Rondo
15 Oct 1827	Prague	Ständisches Theater	[?]
Oct 1827	Prague	Saal "Beim Dauscha"	[?]
7 Nov 1828	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Violin Concerto in E major, J. Benesch: Rondo Brillant in E minor
2 Apr 1829	Vienna	Kärntnertortheater	J. Benesch: Violin Concerto, J. Benesch: Grand Polonaise, J. Benesch: Variations on a theme of Rossini

Table 1
(continued)

26 Apr 1829	Vienna	Landständischer Saal	J. Benesch: Violin Concerto in D major, J. Benesch: Variations on a Theme from Rossini's opera <i>Eduardo and Christina</i> , J. Benesch: Grand Rondo
25 Jul 1829	Baden bei Wien	[?]	[?]
5 Aug 1829	Baden bei Wien	[?]	[?]
12 Aug 1830	Baden bei Wien	[?]	[?]
5 Dec 1830	Vienna	Redoutensaal	J. Benesch: Concertino, J. Benesch: Variations
26 Dec 1832	Vienna	Großer Universitätsaal	J. Benesch: Concertino, J. Benesch / H. Proch: Concerto for two Violins on the Barcarole from the opera <i>La Muette de Portici</i> by D. Auber (with H. Proch)
14 Apr 1833	Vienna	Großer Universitätsaal	J. Benesch: Variations
7 Dec 1834	Vienna	Großer Universitätsaal	J. Benesch / H. Proch: Concerto for two Violins on the Barcarole from the opera <i>La Muette de Portici</i> by D. Auber (with H. Proch)
6 Jan 1835	Vienna	Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	J. Benesch: Concertino in E minor, J. Benesch: Variations on an original theme
Jun 1835	Vienna	Private Concert	J. Benesch: Concertino in E minor
28 Jan 1838	Vienna	Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	J. Benesch: Concertino, J. Benesch: Variations

29 Dec 1839	Vienna	Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	J. Benesch: Concertino, J. Benesch: Variations on Motives from the opera <i>Robert le diable</i> by Meyerbeer
25 Jan 1840	Brno	Ständisches Theater	[?]
25 Sep 1840	Ljubljana	Philharmonische Gesellschaft	J. Benesch: Concertino, H. Ernst: Elegie, J. Benesch: Variations
26 Dec 1841	Vienna	Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde	J. Benesch: Second Concertino, J. Benesch: Fantasy on Motives from the opera <i>La Cenerentola</i> by Rossini

Benesch's *Oeuvre*

Benesch's compositional *oeuvre*, which includes more than fifty compositions, consists mainly of violin works, at least twenty-two pieces for guitar and two string quartets. His violin compositions were mainly performed by himself, as was the custom at the time, since virtuosos usually composed particularly idiomatic compositions for their personal repertoire, which were originally intended not to be played by other violinists but instead to distinguish themselves from the competition. Other performers of his compositions were predominantly his pupils, to whom he actually dedicated some. A few are relatively simple, so it can be safely assumed that these early works served primarily pedagogical purposes.¹⁸⁵

Almost all his compositions have survived through nineteenth-century prints; only three are autograph manuscripts, and a few are manuscript copies. They are preserved in Vienna, Ljubljana, Prague, Munich and Coburg. We know of a few further compositions from music catalogues, concert programmes, newspaper reports and advertisements, as well as from letters that Benesch wrote to music publishers.

The Italian music tour, during which he came into contact with the repertoire of the greatest Italian opera masters and violinists of his time, undoubtedly had a great

¹⁸⁵ Benesch published *Sei valzer per la chitarra* (Six valse for the guitar) with Ricordi in October 1820 and dedicated it to Giovanni Pichel, who may have been his pupil. Interestingly, Paganini, who had mastered the guitar, also published a few months earlier with the same publisher Ricordi two sets of sonatas for violin and guitar (Opp. 2 and 3) and six guitar quartets in addition to the caprices. Benesch's other composition from this period, *Variations pour le violon avec accompagnement de deux Violons, Alto et Violoncelle*, was published by Artaria around 1821 and dedicated to his pupil in Trieste Amalie de Peppeu. See Joseph Benesch, *Sei Valzer per Chitarra*, Cat. Nr. 888, Archivio Storico Ricordi, Milano, https://www.digitalarchivioricordi.com/en/people/display/10876/Joseph_Benesch?mode=catalogo.

influence on his composing. His compositional style, with its emphasis on violin virtuosity, reflects the period of the flourishing *style brillant*. Benesch was probably familiar with Paganini's works from the time of his trip to Italy, as the latter published some of them in Milan, where Benesch published his own works around the same time and also became acquainted with Paganini's friends. It is therefore not surprising that Benesch followed the latest fashion of composing violin variations on popular operatic melodies, especially those by Gioachino Rossini, which also served as inspiration for Paganini, who published with Ricordi in 1819 the variations *Non più mesta*, Op. 12, on Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.

Following the example of Paganini and some other contemporaries, Benesch composed seven violin works (with piano or orchestral accompaniment), one of them together with Heinrich Proch. These are virtuosic transcriptions of themes from operas that were popular in his time, especially ones from Rossini's works: *Eduardo e Cristina*, *La Cenerentola* and *Elisabetta*. Since Rossini's operas were already very popular in major cities and were frequently performed during his Italian tour, Benesch's violin transcriptions also served as a "shortcut" to achieve increased name-recognition, since famous operatic themes and their composers were well known. It is likely that Benesch heard the first performance of Rossini's opera *Eduardo e Cristina*, which premiered in Venice in the spring of 1819 (Teatro San Benedetto) and was performed twenty-four times that season, while Benesch was also living in the city.

Leaving aside Rossini's operas, Benesch also wrote variations on operatic themes by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (*La Muette de Portici*), Giacomo Meyerbeer (*Il crociato in Egitto* and *Robert le Diable*), and Ferdinando Orlandi (*La dama soldato*), who was a singing teacher during Benesch's stay in Milan. It seems that Benesch composed variations on popular operatic melodies either while still in Italy or relatively soon after his trip to Italy, probably in Ljubljana, where some of them were performed and from where he offered them in a letter to the music publishers Peters in Leipzig and Artaria in Vienna. Although the variations on Rossini's *Eduardo e Cristina* are based on a theme that had already been used several times, they were considered original at the time and a "high point" in Benesch's *oeuvre*.¹⁸⁶ In addition to popular operatic melodies, other popular, well-known melodies also served as the basis for these kind of transcriptions (musical adaptations), which had an almost irresistible public appeal. For example, Benesch also composed violin variations on the popular theme "Die Schildwache", which had been popular since the end of the eighteenth century.

Alongside the variations for violin on popular operatic themes, the Variations, Op. 11, were another of Benesch's frequently performed works. After one of the many performances, they were described in 1833 as "beautiful and effective, but infinitely difficult". Two years later, the writer criticized the compositional practice of the Variations at the time, calling them, rather, "études on a selected theme" because of their specifically

¹⁸⁶C. F., "Noch etwas über das Concert des Hrn. Joseph Benesch, Ehren mitgliedes der philharmonischen Gefellschaften zu Venedig und Laibach, im k. k. Hoftheater nächst dem Kärnthnerthore", *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 23 April 1829.

idiomatic style, which could no longer be called music. Nevertheless, they were received by the audience with “thunderous applause”.¹⁸⁷

Besides the variations for violin on popular operatic themes plus those on original themes, Benesch also composed two violin concertinos, a number of other virtuosic pieces (Polonaises, Rondeau Brillant, Rondo alla Polacca, Fantasia Brillante, etc.) and several salon pieces for violin. He composed his Concert Variations for violin and piano together with his wife Friederika Benesch and the already mentioned Double Variations for two violins (on a popular melody from the opera *La Muette de Portici*) and orchestra together with his former pupil, later brother-in-law and friend Heinrich Proch.

Apart from his early editions in Milan, Benesch only published with a handful of publishers in Vienna. For purely practical reasons, and because of the frequent unavailability of either orchestra or performance venue, he brought out most of his violin compositions in multiple variants, such as with orchestral, string quartet or piano accompaniment, so they would suit a variety of occasions and performance formats. It was common at the time for musicians to dedicate their works to influential figures – other musicians, publishers, fellow citizens, students, or family members – and Benesch was no exception. Dedications were an important stimulus to buyers, who often became aware of them through music advertisements in periodicals.¹⁸⁸ Even after the decline of the patronage system, dedications were retained for practical reasons: to return a gift, to solicit performances, to advertise works, to enhance the status of the composer, to communicate the composer’s lineage and taste, to claim a personal relationship with the dedicatee, to suggest the musical style of a work or to contribute to the composer’s fame or brand name.¹⁸⁹

Many composers used dedications to convey their private relationships with fellow composers or non-composers, as well as with friends and family members who were not composers. This type of dedication was indicated by the name of the dedicatee and the relationship to the dedicator (“composée et dédiée à son ami”), as in the case of Benesch, who dedicated pieces to two of his friends, Henri Proch¹⁹⁰ and Jean Hlawa.¹⁹¹ Reciprocal dedications between composers were also very common, often exchanged between those who lived in the same city or at least between friendly acquaintances.¹⁹² The practice of mutual dedication can be observed between Benesch and Proch,¹⁹³ who dedicated original compositions to each other. Dedications to pupils were also common, strengthening the bond between teacher and student (and enhancing their respective reputations). Moreover,

¹⁸⁷“Notizen: Concert”, *Der Sammler*, 27 April 1833.

¹⁸⁸In most music periodicals of the time all advertisements for new publications were grouped together on the last pages of the issue, where a list of pieces, arranged by publisher, appeared. See Green, *Dedicating Music*, 97, 104.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁹⁰Benesch dedicated to Proch his Variations, Op. 8 (*Variations brillantes [in E] sur un theme favori de l’Opera: Elisabetta, de Rossini pour le violon avec accompagnement de Pianoforte*).

¹⁹¹Benesch dedicated to Hlawa his Op. 26 (*Conzert-Rondeau pour le Violon avec accompagnement de Piano*).

¹⁹²Green, *Dedicating Music*, 45.

¹⁹³Proch dedicated to Benesch his first String quartet, Op. 12 (*Premier Quatuor concertant pour deux Violons, Alto et Violoncelle*).

the public recommendation of a dedicatee (the pupil) sent a message to society that the compositions were also suitable for learners. Benesch dedicated pieces to two of his pupils: Wilhelm Mayerhofer¹⁹⁴ and Adolphe Schrittwiesser.¹⁹⁵

Dedications to other eminent personalities, even other composers, served a promotional purpose and were more economically profitable. For example, Benesch dedicated his first string quartet (published in 1865) to the prominent violinist Ferdinand Laub (1832–1875), who was appointed as a chamber virtuoso to the Prussian king in 1856. From 1866 onwards Laub was a violin professor at the Moscow Conservatory and performed regularly as *primarius* of the String Quartet of the Russian Music Society (the “Moscow Quartet”), also premiering the first and second string quartets of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.¹⁹⁶ It is not clear whether Laub ever performed the string quartet Benesch dedicated to him.

Since dedications to famous personalities were overall the most effective, musicians used this type of dedication to link their reputations to individuals who possessed greater fame, prestige and wealth, hoping to promote themselves and achieve financial success.¹⁹⁷ In December 1839 Benesch asked the Emperor of Austria, Ferdinand I (1793–1875), for prior permission to dedicate his second concertino to him, as was customary and necessary when dedicating compositions to important personages. The respected Viennese composer Joseph Weigl (1766–1846) advised against it, since Benesch was not famous enough and this composition was, in his opinion, of insufficient quality. In the event, Ferdinand I refused Benesch’s request for a dedication, but he gifted him fifty florins.¹⁹⁸ The piece was performed the same month in the hall of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde and was described by a critic as a piece of music that “must also be praised for its composition”, but had been better received by the audience a few years earlier.¹⁹⁹

Benesch’s virtuosic violin pieces are idiomatically written in the *style brillant*, which is characterized by liveliness, radiance and grandeur, coupled with virtuosity and bravura, as well as contrasting dynamics, articulation and tempi. As for violin virtuosity, Benesch’s compositions feature double stops, artificial harmonics, huge stretches of the left hand (tenths and broken tenths), complex double stops and trills, fast chromatic passages in the highest registers of the instrument, and a juxtaposition of fast passages with melodic and ornamental passages, down-bow, up-bow, thrown and flying staccatos (even in double stops), passages with broken chords, rapid successions of octaves as a means of displaying virtuoso bravura. Unlike Paganini and some other contemporaries, Benesch did not use *scordatura*, left hand *pizzicati* and their combination with bowed notes, harmonics with double stops, *ricochet spiccato*, quick leaps or other group-breaking techniques, and the so-called military heroism was not so obviously expressed in his works.

¹⁹⁴Benesch dedicated to Mayerhofer his Op. 16 (*Rondoletto für die Violine mit begleitung des Quartetts oder Pianoforte für angehende Violinspieler*).

¹⁹⁵Benesch dedicated to Schrittwiesser his Op. 25 (*Air varié pour le Violon avec accompagnement de Piano*).

¹⁹⁶Zupančič, “At the Crossroads”, 9.

¹⁹⁷Green, *Dedicating Music*, 78–79.

¹⁹⁸“Dedikationbitte des Joseph Benesch für sein Concertino für Violine”, sig. 22, FKBA22088, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

¹⁹⁹“Konzert”, *Der Adler*, 31 December 1839.

Nevertheless, his compositions were regarded by the Viennese critics of his time as solid, tasteful and effective, proving that Benesch was no stranger to the musical *Zeitgeist* even though he shunned the newest tastes and trends,²⁰⁰ and they were much applauded in concerts and warmly received by audiences.

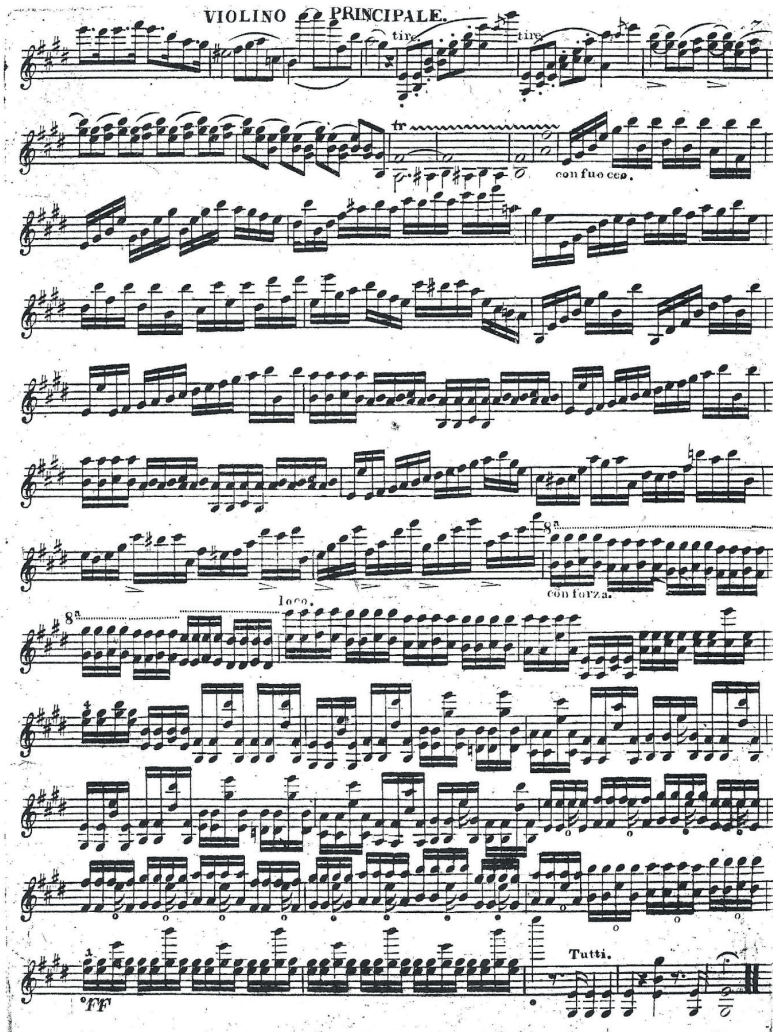


Figure 16
Joseph Benesch, Concertino, Op. 14 (Glasbena zbirka, NUK, Ljubljana; reproduced by permission)

²⁰⁰“Concert des Hrn. Benesch”, *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur und geselliges Leben*, 14 May 1829.

Conclusion

Benesch grew up in the Bohemian musical milieu at a time when patronage to support musicians was diminishing and a more affluent bourgeois society was emerging – and with it the model of the public concert. Consequently, it was also the time when the phenomenon of the virtuoso emerged and became the new ideal of public music performance, and when a standard violin repertoire began to develop. Benesch aspired to become such a virtuoso and therefore, like many prominent violinists of his time such as Böhmer, Lipinski, Mayseder and Spohr, embarked on a concert tour to Italy early in his career, where he gave more than seventeen public concerts. On these occasions he mainly played his own compositions, tailored to his performance style, in order to stand out from the competition, as was the custom at the time. During his travels in his formative years he thereby came into contact with various violinistic traditions that were already beginning to merge: the Bohemian one of his homeland, the Viennese one during his private violin studies in Vienna, the French one through the repertoire he performed, and of course the Italian one during his musical tour, when he perfected his violin skills with Italian violin masters, and especially via years of studying the so-called Paganini method.

Soon after the tour he remained in Ljubljana for six years, where he enjoyed the highest recognition as a soloist, composer, teacher and orchestral director. Achieving this status in Vienna became unattainable, for there he had to prove himself against the toughest competition imaginable, both as a violin virtuoso on the one hand and as a composer of an appealing virtuoso repertoire on the other. Although he played alongside members of the Viennese violin elite such as Mayseder, Slawik, Böhm, Jansa and Hellmesberger in the most renowned orchestras in Vienna and made several successful solo appearances, we must nevertheless classify him as an excellent orchestral player and also orchestral leader rather than as a virtuoso or musical genius of the calibre of Paganini or Ernst.

Benesch wrote more than fifty compositions, most of them for violin. Since the repertoire he composed was not intended to be played by other violinists, with the exception of his students, the market was limited and distribution depended on his own performances. To be successful as a virtuoso, one certainly had to be something of a keen marketer in order to promote one's concerts and compositions and offer something enigmatic to the audience, as exemplified by Paganini. For Benesch, whose personality is described as “a quiet, friendly and undemanding as well as dignified man”, perhaps this simply was not a good fit.

In terms of difficulty and the exploitation of a demanding violin idiom, which Benesch's compositional style undoubtedly exhibits, we can conclude that he stands between Rode, Kreutzer and Mayseder on the one hand and Paganini on the other. But since Paganini's compositions were closely guarded as “trade secrets” and therefore not readily available to his competitors, and since Paganini's overall violin technique was unattainable by most of his contemporaries, this is also one of the reasons why Benesch was not able fully to integrate Paganini's violin idiom into his own work.

Benesch was undoubtedly an able violinist and composer, but probably he lacked the spark of genius to create something original: something we would call “catchy” in terms of today's popular musical landscape. In the idiom of the time, this would probably have

required more *bel canto* lyricism and playfulness to enliven the dry technique of the pure virtuoso style itself. Significantly, not many of Benesch's then-famous contemporaries, such as Jansa, Lipinski and Mayseder, have withstood the test of time and found a place in today's violin repertoire, although their works were repertoire staples at the time and frequently performed. Only the works of Paganini and Ernst seem to hold their own on concert stages to this day, while those of Viotti, Rode and Kreutzer are considered more in the nature of practice material played by aspiring violin virtuosos in their formative years.

Although he did not reach the highest ranks like Paganini and a handful of others, Benesch was an important member of the violin generation that made a decisive contribution to violin playing and composition at a time when the standard violin repertoire was beginning to emerge, paving the way for the phenomenon of the travelling violin virtuoso that we still witness today.

Appendix: List of the Works of Joseph Benesch

As can be seen from the following list, the opus numbers of Benesch's works are incomplete and muddled. No works corresponding to Opp. 1, 3–4, 9, 13, 17, 24, 27 have been found, but these may correspond to works without opus numbers.

At the end of each entry I indicate a library where a copy (not necessarily the earliest edition) can be found. The approximate year of a composition was determined from newspaper reports and advertisements, letters and the earliest known performances. Most of Benesch's surviving music is in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Musikverein) in Vienna (A-Wgm). The locations of the remaining works are given as follows:

A-Wn (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek)

A-Wst (Vienna, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus)

CZ-Pnm (Prague, Národní muzeum české hudby)

CZ-Pu (Prague, Národní knihovna České Republiky)

D-Clb (Coburg, Landesbibliothek)

D-Mbs (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Musikabteilung)

SI-Lng (Ljubljana, Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Glasbena zbirka)

WORKS WITH OPUS NUMBER

Op. 2: *6 Ländler pour la Guitarre*, for Guitar. Date of composition: before 1821. Dedicated to Baronesse Marie de Wetzlar. Autograph. A-Wst.

Op. 5: *Variations pour le violon avec accompagnement de deux Violons, Alto et Violoncelle*, for violin and string quartet. Date of composition: before 1821. Dedicated to Amalie de Pepeu. Earliest known edition: Milan: Ferd. Artaria. A-Wgm.

Op. 6: *Ière Polonaise pour violon principal avec accompagnement de deux violons, alto et basse*, for violin and string quartet. Date of composition: before 1821. First recorded performance: 8 October 1820. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Haslinger & Leidesdorf. A-Wgm.

- Op. 7:** *2de Polonoise pour le Violon avec accompagnement de 2 Violons, Alto et Violoncelle*, for violin and string quartet. Date of composition: before 1821. Dedicated to Baron Jean Victoir de Schmidburg. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Sauret & Leidesdorf. A-Wgm.
- Op. 8:** *Variations brillantes (in E) sur un theme favori de l'Opera: Elisabetta, de Rossini pour le violon avec accompagnement de Pianoforte*. Dedicated to his friend Henri Proch. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Joseph Czerný. A-Wgm.
- Op. 10** (with Frederike Benesch): *Variations Concertantes pour Piano-forte et Violon*, for violin and piano. Dedicated to Julie de Kogl. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Sauer & Leidesdorf. A-Wgm, A-Wn.
- Op. 11:** *Grandes Variations sur un thème original (D)*, for violin and orchestra/string quartet. Date of composition: before July 1822. First recorded performance: probably 14 July 1822. Dedicated to Ferdinand le Froyer. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Jos. Trestensky, 1831. SI-Lng, A-Wgm.
- Op. 12:** *Variations brillantes de l'Opera: "Il Crociato" de Meyerbeer*, for violin and orchestra/string quartet/piano. Dedicated to François Reim. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Artaria, 1832. SI-Lng, A-Wgm, A-Wn, A-Wst.
- Op. 14:** *Prémier Concertino pour le Violon avec accompagnement d'Orchestre ou de Quartour ou de Pianoforte*, for violin and orchestra/string quartet/piano. Date of composition: before 1823. First recorded performance: 5 March 1823. Dedicated to Joseph Benoît. Earliest known edition: Vienna: A. Berka, [1835]. SI-Lng, A-Wgm, D-Mbs.
- Op. 15:** *Variationen für die Violine mit Begleitung des Pianoforte für angehende Violinspieler*, for violin and piano. Dedicated to Gottfried Carl, Baron von Eichelburg. Earliest known edition: Vienna: A. Berka. A-Wgm, A-Wn.
- Op. 16:** *Rondoletto für die Violine mit begleitung des Quartetts oder Pianoforte für angehende Violinspieler*, for violin and string quartet/pianoforte. Dedicated to his pupil Wilhelm Mayerhofer. Earliest known edition: Vienna: A. Berka, 1834. A-Wgm, A-Wst.
- Op. 18:** *Variations pour le violon avec accompagnement de Quatuor ou Pianoforte*, for violin and string quartet/pianoforte. Dedicated to Jacques noble de Mikuli. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Ant. Diabelli, 1836. A-Wgm, A-Wn, CZ-Pnm.
- Op. 19:** *Variations sur un theme original pour le violon avec accompag. de Quatuor ou de Pianoforte*, for violin and string quartet/pianoforte. Dedicated to J. G. Beer. Earliest known edition: Vienna: A. Diabelli, 1836. A-Wgm.
- Op. 20:** *Deuxième Concertino avec Pianoforte in D*, for violin and piano. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Diabelli, 1841. CZ-Pu, CZ-Pnm, D-Mbs.
- Op. 21:** *Fantasie brillante pour le Violon avec accompagnement de pianoforte*, for violin and piano. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Witzendorf, 1842. CZ-Pnm.
- Op. 22:** *Le Désir: Andantino pour Violon avec accompagnement de Pianoforte*, for violin and piano. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Mechetti, 1852.
- Op. 23:** *Morceaux de Salon: introduction et Air varié pour le violon avec accompagnement de pianoforte*, for violin and piano. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Glöggl. D-Clb.
- Op. 25:** *Air varié pour le Violon avec accompagnement de Piano*, for violin and piano. Dedicated to his pupil Adolphe Schrittwiesser. Earliest known edition: Vienna: H. F. Müller Veuve. A-Wgm, A-Wn.
- Op. 26:** *Conzert-Rondeau pour le Violon avec accompagnement de Piano*, for violin and

piano. Dedicated to his friend Jean Hlawa. Earliest edition: Vienna: A. O. Witzendorf, 1858. A-Wn, CZ-Pu.

Op. 28: *Quatuor (G) pour deux Violons, Alto et Violoncello*, for string quartet. Dedicated to Ferdinand Laub. Earliest known edition: Vienna: F. B. Geitler, 1865. D-Mbs.

Op. 29: *Morceaux de Salon: pour le violon avec accompagnement de Piano*, for violin and piano. Dedicated to Leopoldine Gerstle. Earliest known edition: Vienna: F. Glöggel, 1870. A-Wn, A-Wst.

Op. 30: *2tes Quartett für 2 Violinen, Viola und Violoncell*, for string quartet. Date of composition: 20 July 1871. Dedicated to Franz Meirner. Earliest known edition: Vienna: Carl Haslinger. A-Wgm.

WORKS WITHOUT OPUS NUMBER

1) *Sei valzer per la chitarra*, for guitar. Date of composition: before 17 October 1820. Dedicated to Giovanni Pichel. Milan: Ricordi, 1820.

2) *Dritte Große Polonaise*, for violin and [string quartet?]. Date of composition: before 1821. First recorded performance: 23 February 1821.

3) *Rondeau Brillant in A dur mit Quartett Begleitung*, for violin and quartet. Date of composition: before 29 September 1823. First recorded performance: 5 March 1823.

4) *Rondeau alla Polacca in D moll mit Quartett Begleitung*, for violin and quartet. Date of composition: before 10 February 1825. First recorded performance: 10 February 1825.

5) *Variationen in D-dur über ein Thema von Rossini aus der Oper Eduardo et Christina mit Orchesterbegleitung*, for violin and orchestra. Date of composition: before 20 August 1825.

6) *Variationen in A dur über ein Thema aus der Oper Cenerentola von Rossini mit Orchesterbegleitung*, for violin and orchestra. Date of composition: before 20 August 1825.

7) *Variationen für die Violine über das beliebte Thema "Die Schildwache"*. First recorded performance: 11 September 1822.

8) *Concert-Variationen für die Violine über die "Sentinelle" für die Violine mit Orchester Begleitung*, for violin and orchestra. First recorded performance: 3 December 1823.

9) *Rondo Brillant in E minor*, for violin and [?]. Date of compositions: before November 1828.

10) *10 österreichische Ländler*, for guitar solo. Date of composition: before 1828. Earliest known edition: Mainz: Franz Zimmermann.

11) (with Heinrich Proch) *Doppel Variationen über das beliebte Fischerlied O seht! Wie golden strahlt die Sonne! Aus der Oper Die Stumme von Portici für zwey Violinen mit Begleitung des Orchesters, des Quartetts und Pianoforte oder des Pianoforte allein*, for two violins and orchestra/string quartet/piano. Date of composition: before December 1832. First recorded performance: 26 December 1832. Dedicated to Anton Victor, Erherzog von Oesterreich. Earliest known edition: Vienna: A. Berka, 1835.

12) *Quatre chansons allemandes*. Date of composition: before 1837. Earliest known edition: Mainz: Franz Zimmermann.

13) *Le même pour le Violon avec acc. de Pianoforte*, for violin and piano. Date of composition: before 1837. Earliest known edition: Vienna: A. Diabelli.

14) *Variationen über Motive aus der Oper "Robert der Teufel"*, for violin and piano. Date of compositions: before December 1839. First recorded performance: 29 December 1839.

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JOSEPH BENESCH: POZABLJENI VIOLINIST S ČEŠKEGA IN POSNEMOVALEC NICCOLÒJA PAGANINIJA V OKVIRU SREDNJEEVROPSKE VIOLINSKE TRADICIJE

Povzetek

Violinist in skladatelj Joseph Benesch (1795–1873) je bil v svojem času cenjen glasbenik, a je danes, podobno kot številni njegovi violinski sodobniki, povsem pozabljen. Odraščal je v glasbeno stimulativnem okolju na Češkem na prelomu dveh obdobjev – v iztekajočem se obdobju glasbenega mecenstva na eni ter v obdobju vzpenjajočega se meščanstva, pojava fenomena potujočega virtuozu in enigmatičnega Niccolòja Paganinija (1782–1840) na drugi strani. Njegova izredna violinska nadarjenost je že v rani mladosti pritegnila grofa Philippa Benitusa Johanna von Swéerts-Sporcka (1753–1809), ki je želel poskrbeti za njegovo nadaljnjo glasbeno izobrazbo v Pragi. Ker se žalujoči starši po smrti dveh otrok niso bili pripravljeni ločiti od najstarejšega sina Josepha, je z glasbenim šolanjem nadaljeval pri očetu Matthiasu Beneschu (1767–1852) ter vaškem organistu iz Třešťa Wenzlu Horzalki (1769/1774–1835). Med letoma 1812 in 1814 je bil učiteljski pripravnik v mestecu Potěhy, kjer bi moral naslediti svojega strica Franza Benescha (1751–1829). Ker učiteljskega poklica ni čutil za svoje poslanstvo, se je leta 1814 odpravil v središče glasbenega življenja, na Dunaj, kjer se je violinsko izpopolnjeval pri rojaku Martinu Schlesingerju (1754–1818) ter igral v zasebni kapeli Franza Thaddausa Freiherra von Zinnicq[ue]a.

Leta 1819 se je Benesch s svojim učencem, osemletnim čudežnim dečkom Sigmundom von Praunom (1811–1830), odpravil na glasbeno turnejo po Italiji in leta 1820 prvič nastopil v Ljubljani, nato pa še štirikrat med ljubljanskim kongresom. Glasbena turneja po Italiji, kjer je prišel v stik z najnovejšimi operami in najboljšimi violinisti, je močno zaznamovala njegov nadaljnji violinski in skladateljski razvoj. Kmalu po turneji se je mudil v Dunajskem Novem mestu in tam spoznal družino Proch ter začel poučevati njihovega sina Heinricha. Vezi z družino Proch in njihovo sorodstvo s pomembnim ljubljanskim glasbenikom, Gašparjem Maškom, so zagotovo pripomogle k Beneschevi selitvi v Ljubljano. Avgusta 1822 je ljubljanski gubernij zaprosil za dovoljenje za odprtje zasebne violinske šole in se še istega leta poročil s pianistko Friederiko Proch (1805–1872). Med letoma 1823 in 1828 je bil v Ljubljani orkestrski direktor Filharmonične družbe (Philharmonische Gesellschaft), od leta 1826 tudi violinski učitelj njene šole. Občasno je deloval kot orkestrski direktor Stanovskega gledališča (Ständisches Theater) in sodeloval kot solist ali orkestrski direktor pri več kot devetdesetih koncertih v Ljubljani. Leta 1824 je v Trstu spoznal Niccolòja Paganinija in mu skupaj z Eduardom Jaellom (1793–1849) izročil častno diplomu Filharmonične družbe.

Ko je Filharmonična družba v Ljubljani leta 1828 zaprla svojo glasbeno šolo, se je Benesch vrnil na Dunaj, kjer je po Paganinijevem gostovanju, še posebej med glasbeniki, vladala nepopisna evforija. Zaradi močno zvišanih izvajalskih kriterijev, neizogibne primerjave s Paganinijem in neizprosnih kritikov se je Benesch na dunajskih odrih le stežka uveljavil kot virtuoz. Finančno varnost je našel kot član orkestra prestižne Dunajske dvorne kapele in dvornega gledališča (Hofburgtheater), ki ga je pozneje kot orkestrski direktor tudi vodil. V svoji dolgoletni orkestrski karieri je igral ob boku takratne

violinske dunajske elite: Josepha Maysederja (1789–1863), Josepha Böhma (1795–1876), Georga Helmesbergerja starejšega (1800–1873), Josepha Slawika (1806–1833) in Jakoba Donta (1815–1888). Poučeval je na Akademiji za glasbeno umetnost, delujoči v 50. letih 19. stoletja, in napisal več kot 50 del, večinoma za violino, pa tudi za kitaro in godalni kvartet. Med violinskimi deli, ki jih je izvajal kot del osebnega repertoarja na več kot sto koncertih, izstopajo variacije oz. »transkripcije« znanih opernih del, poloneze in druge izrazito virtuozne skladbe, ki so napisane v značilnem *style brillant* in odražajo duh Paganinijevega časa.