

Cesare Pugni:
Esmeralda and Le Violon du diable

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Edited and Introduced by

Robert Ignatius Letellier

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

Cesare Pugni: *Esmeralda* and *Le Violon du diable*,
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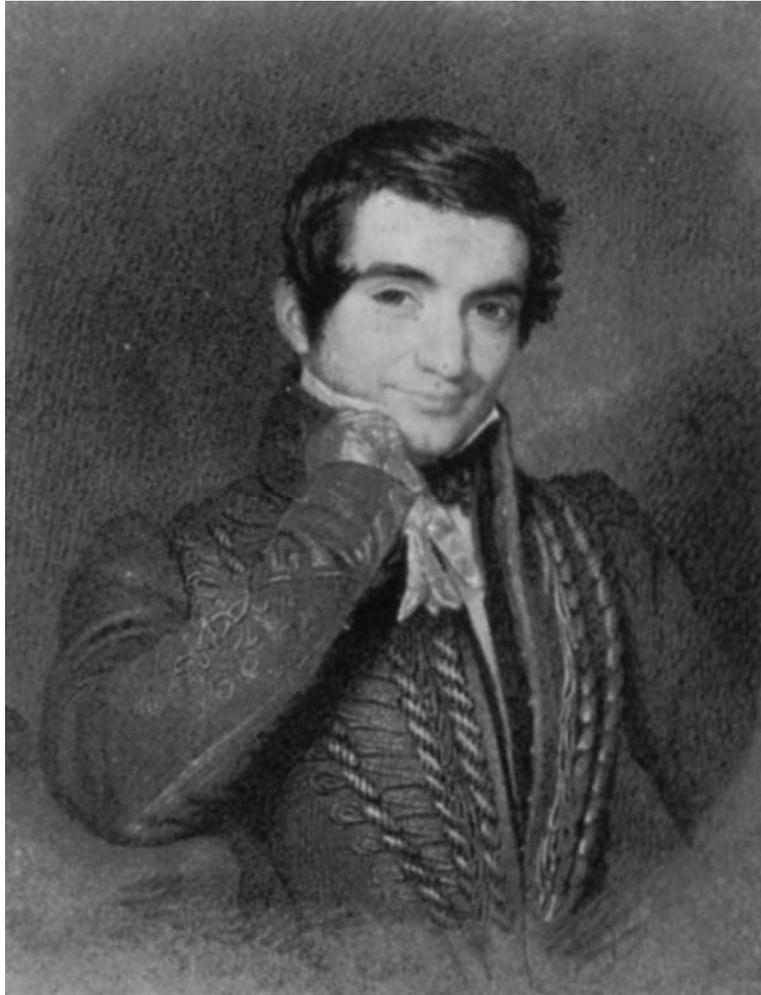
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Cesare Pugni in London (c. 1845)

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INTRODUCTION

Esmeralda

Ballet in 3 acts and 5 scenes

Scenario and choreography: Jules Perrot

Music: Cesare Pugni

Sets: William Grieve

Costumes: Mme Copère

Machinery: D. Sloman

First performance: London, Her Majesty's Theatre, 9 March 1844

Principal dancers: Carlotta Grisi (Esmeralda), Jules Perrot (Pierre Gringoire), Arthur Saint-Léon (Febo), Louis-François Gosselin (Claude Frollo), Antoine-Louis Coulon (Quasimodo), Adelaide Frassi (Fleur-de-Lys), Mme Copère (Aloisa)

The ballet is based on the story of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), somewhat altered and without the final catastrophe. It depicts the hopeless love of the deaf and hunchbacked Quasimodo for the gypsy girl Esmeralda. She has inadvertently become the wife of the student poet Gringoire during the follies of the Cour de Miracles, and is also being pursued by the evil archdeacon Claude Frollo. Her principal rescuer from Frollo's attempted abduction is the handsome Captain Phoebus, with whom Esmeralda falls in love. Frollo's jealous intrigues cause her to be accused of murder, and she is awaiting execution when Quasimodo exposes Frollo as the real villain. The early versions of the ballet have this happy ending.

The poet Gringoire is captured by pickpockets and taken to their lair, 'the Court of Miracles'. There he is condemned to be hanged for the crime of having no money in his pockets. He will be reprieved only if some woman among those present will consent to marry him. The young Esmeralda, moved to pity, consents to the bargain, but the archdeacon of Notre Dame de Paris, Claude Frollo, enamoured of her, plans to possess her that very night. The gang who have taken them prisoner, together with Frollo's servant and henchman the hunchbacked Quasimodo, are foiled by the arrival of the officer Captain Phoebus. Love between Phoebus and Esmeralda blossoms immediately, although he is engaged to marry Fleur-de-Lys. Esmeralda and her husband Gringoire are invited to dance at the wedding as an entertainment. Forgetting all prudence, Esmeralda and Phoebus turn towards each other, and dance together to the despair of the bride and the indignation of the guests. Leaving the crowd, they declare their mutual love. Frollo, who has been watching unseen, throws himself at Phoebus, and stabs him. Esmeralda is accused of Phoebus' murder, and condemned to death. Just as the gallows are being erected, Phoebus appears. Frollo's blow was not mortal after all. Reunited with him, Esmeralda shows the crowd who the real villain is.

The ballet was reasonably successful, and Carlotta Grisi was pronounced the perfect personification of Esmeralda, combining the innocent gaiety of Fanny Cerrito, the sparkling coquetry of Fanny Elssler, and the ineffable poetry of Marie Taglioni. A year after the London premiere, Grisi introduced two of the variations from *Esmeralda* into Mazilier's *Le Diable à quatre*. Another great Esmeralda, especially praised for her superlative dramatic interpretation, was Fanny Elssler, prima ballerina of the first performance in St Petersburg on 21 December 1848. Her partners were Didier (Quasimodo), Perrot (Gringoire), and Golts (Frollo). Elssler chose the part again for her farewell performance at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in March 1851. Cyril Beaumont recounted an

anecdote passed on by Prince Egalytchev, who was an eyewitness on that occasion. So many bouquets, over 300, were thrown on the stage at the end of the first act that Elssler used them in place of a sofa in the second. In this act she used to write her lover's name, Febo, on a wall in chalk, instead of composing it with cut-out letters according to established tradition. But that evening the ballerina wrote Moscow in Cyrillic letters ('Mockba') which set off an ovation that seemed endless.

Esmeralda was in the vein of historical romantic dance that had given rise to *La Sylphide* and *Giselle*. It was almost half a century before this vein was exhausted, lasting into the Second Empire until the death of Saint-Léon, one of the leading figures of the last phase of the Romantic ballet. In spite of the great interpretive opportunities it offered, *Esmeralda* made little enduring impression in England, France and Italy. On the other hand, when it reached Russia, it immediately established itself in the repertory. The ballet became immensely popular and was repeatedly revived and adapted. Fanny Elssler enjoyed one of her biggest triumphs in the title role. Among other distinguished ballerinas who danced the role were Marie Petipa, Carolina Rosati, Nadejda Bogdanova, Claudia Cucchi, Eugenia Sokolova, Virginia Zucchi, and Matilda Kschessinskaya. For the production of 1888 by Marius Petipa, Riccardo Drigo was asked to compose several new numbers, including the *Esmeralda Pas de Deux* and the *Diana and Acteon Pas de Deux*. These became very popular in their own right.

Other notable versions of the ballet include:

- 1) Arthur Saint-Léon (after Jules Perrot), Berlin, Court Theatre, 19 January 1847;
- 2) Hippolyte Monplaisir (after Perrot), New York, Park Theater, 18 September 1847;
- 3) Domenico Ronzani (after Perrot), Milan, La Scala, 31 January 1854; with scenery by Filippo Peroni and Luigi Vimercati; principal dancers: Caroline Pochini, Effisio Catte, Domenico Rossi;
- 4) Ferdinando Pratesi (after Perrot), Milan Canobbiana Theatre, spring 1865;
- 5) Marius Petipa (after Perrot), St Petersburg, Bolshoi Theatre, 17 December 1886; then at the Maryinsky Theatre, 21 November 1899;
- 6) Agrippina Vaganova (after Perrot), Leningrad, Kirov Theatre, 3 April 1935, with scenery by V. Khodasevich;
- 7) Nicholas Beriozoff (from the original), London, Festival Hall, 15 July 1954; scenery Nicola Benois; principal dancers: Nathalie Krassovska, John Gilpin, Anton Dolin, London Festival Ballet.

Cesare Pugni was born in Genoa on 31 May 1802, and studied in Milan from 1815 to 1822 with Antonio Rollo and Bonifazio Asioli. He made his debut as a composer at La Scala in 1826 with the opera *Elerz e Zulmida*. He became a cymbalist in the theatre orchestra, and on the death of Vincenzo Lavigna was appointed musical director. He later moved to Paris where he became director of the Paganini Institute. There he met the great choreographers of the time and started an artistic collaboration that was to prove one of the most productive in the history of ballet. He began working closely with Jules Perrot, first in Paris, then in London. He later followed him to St Petersburg and became official composer of the Imperial theatres in St Petersburg. His most famous collaboration, with Marius Petipa, now followed, lasting until his death on 26 January 1870.

Pugni is known above all for his enormous output of musical works, including more than 300 ballets, a dozen operas, over 40 masses, other polyphonic works and a few symphonies, among which was a *Sinfonia a canone* highly praised by Meyerbeer. This extremely prolific composer was very popular with the public, his ballets being so easy to listen to and to understand. He also found no difficulty in adapting his music to suit all sorts of choreographic needs, and many different performers. His versatility and facility in composition helped him succeed in his international career, even when they set limits on his artistic achievement. His time in Paris with

Perrot was marked by an extraordinarily intense activity, which became even more evident when he reached Her Majesty's Theatre in London. Here Pugin presented some of the most renowned ballets of the 19th century, such as *Esmeralda* and the *Pas de Quatre* (in 1844 and 1845 respectively), which still find their place in some modern repertoires. He also worked with Saint-Léon, Paolo Taglioni, Marius Petipa, and some of the greatest dancers of the century. Some of his ballets already well-known in Europe were transferred to St Petersburg, although he also composed new ballets for that city.



Jules Perrot & Carlotta Grisi in *Esmeralda*

Le Violon du diable

Fantastic Ballet in 2 acts

Scenario and choreography: Arthur Saint-Léon

Music: Cesare Pugni

Sets: Despléchins and Thierry

Costumes: Lormier

First performance: Paris Opéra, 19 January 1849, with Fanny Cerrito, Arthur Saint-Léon and Jean Coralli

Urbain, a young violinist, is deeply in love with the beautiful Hélène de Vardeck, but she prefers her suitor Saint-Ybars. The sinister Doctor Matheus offers Urbain the power to play his violin so irresistibly as to win the heart of his beloved, but in return he asks for the player's soul. Urbain refuses, and the doctor breaks his magic instrument. Everything works out for the best through the intervention of a holy man, Pater Anselm, the violinist's friend and master. He provides Urbain with another violin possessing beneficent powers no less effective than the evil forces of the first. When it is discovered that Urbain is not only a distinguished instrumentalist, but also a youth of noble heritage, his marriage with Hélène is approved, and the ballet ends with an independent *divertissement* based on a theme of hothouse flowers which transport their gardener to the land of roses where he marries their queen.

Arthur Saint-Léon (1821-1870) had married the famous dancer Fanny Cerrito (1817-1909) in 1845. They were to be separated five years later and divorced in 1851, but in the meantime worked well together. Saint-Léon was not only a choreographer, he was the best dancer of his day, after Jules Perrot. His elevation and *ballon* were exceptional. But he was also a violinist, a virtuoso in the tradition of Paganini. He played with an accomplishment and brilliance much admired by Adolphe Adam. In the review written in 1847 for *La Fille de marbre* (which Saint-Léon had adapted from *Alma*, 1842), Théophile Gautier had suggested that "Saint-Léon, as well as being a dancer and choreographer, is an excellent violinist, according to what people say who have heard him. Surely it must be possible to find a subject that will show off his talents as both dancer and musician" (*La Presse*, 25 October 1847). The result was *Le Violon du diable* in which he devised the role of the violinist Urbain for himself.

The ballet was a revival and elaboration of an earlier version called *Tartini il violinista* (with scenario by Saint-Léon after Gavarini, choreography by Emmanuele Viotti, and music by Saint-Léon, Felis and Pugni, first performed in Venice at La Fenice on 29 February 1848). The posters for the Venetian entertainment describe the ballet as "taken from an opera by Gavarini and written by Arthur Saint-Léon, with music by Saint-Léon and Felis, except the second act music composed by Cesare Pugni". At the Paris premiere, however, subject and choreography were attributed exclusively to Saint-Léon, and the music exclusively to Pugni.

The ballet was well received. The music was praised: "M. Pugni's score is very pleasing. In the second act one singles out a charming waltz and a number of captivating themes". The *mise-en-scène* and choreography were also admired: "The inn at Roscoff, the Chateau du Poulighein, the farm, the green-house, and the rose kingdom are all pictures full of colour, splendour and attraction...The dances in general are delightfully imagined" (*Le Corsaire*, 22 January 1849). There were also some critical comments: "Coralli is a bit plump for the devil. If he had not taken care to have little horns peeping out of his wig, and thrown in a terrifying glare from time to time, he might have been mistaken for an abbé..." *Le Corsaire* further observed that "Fanny Cerrito exhibits her rare and diverse qualities, but is perhaps not dramatic enough; at her first appearance one could describe her as a cold and pallid statue revolving on a marble pedestal. Elssler would have made a memorable interpretation of the part!...In the *pas de deux* with her husband, all Cerrito's gestures were of the greatest tenderness. It would be difficult to find more grace, freshness, lightness, or elevation".



Arthur Saint-Léon & Fanny Cerrito in *Le Violon du Diable*

ESMERALDA

GRAN BALLO

Composto dal S.^o

PRIMO

Per il Reale Teatro di Londra e riprodotto dallo Stesso sulle Scene

del R. Teatro alla Scala

MUSICA

DEL M.^o **CESARE PUGNI** *RIDOTTI*

PER

Piano Forte

LA CORTE DEL MIRACOLI.

INTRODUZIONE.

Allegro.

The musical score is presented in four systems. The first system begins with the tempo marking 'Allegro.' and the title 'INTRODUZIONE.' The music is written for piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and chords. There are first endings marked with the number '8' and dashed lines. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the fourth system.

The image displays a musical score for piano, organized into five systems. Each system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. The first system shows a complex texture with many beamed notes. The second system continues this texture. The third system features a more rhythmic bass line with eighth notes. The fourth system includes a dashed line above the treble staff, possibly indicating a breath mark or a specific articulation. The fifth system concludes with a few final notes and rests, including a double bar line.

The image displays a page of musical notation for piano, consisting of four systems of two staves each. The music is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The first system features a simple melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left. The second and third systems show more complex textures with chords and arpeggios. The fourth system concludes with a final cadence. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Allegro giusto.

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of five systems of staves. Each system contains a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegro giusto.' and the dynamic is marked 'f' (forte). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics. The first system begins with a treble clef staff starting on a G4 note and a bass clef staff starting on a G2 note. The music progresses through five systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs at the end of the fifth system.

SPOSALIZIO DI ESMERALDA

Allegretto

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems. The first system is marked 'Allegretto' and includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a dynamic marking of 'p'. The music features a prominent sixteenth-note pattern in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The subsequent systems continue this rhythmic texture with various melodic and harmonic developments.

The image displays a musical score for piano, organized into five systems. Each system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes various note values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. There are also dynamic markings like *mf* and *f* throughout the piece. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the fifth system.

Allegro giusto

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of staves. The first system is marked "Allegro giusto". The second system includes a "tremolo" instruction. The score features complex rhythmic patterns and chordal textures.

meno mosso

più mosso

This musical score is for a piano piece. It consists of five systems of staves. The first system is marked 'meno mosso'. The fourth system is marked 'più mosso'. The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The first system features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the melody and bass line. The third system shows a change in the bass line. The fourth system is marked 'più mosso' and features a more active bass line. The fifth system concludes the piece with a final cadence.

The image displays a page of musical notation for piano, consisting of five systems of staves. Each system contains a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several dynamic markings: *meno mosso* (slower) and *più mosso* (faster). The piece concludes with a double bar line and a key signature change to two flats.

BALLABILE

Allegro

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems. Each system contains two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' at the beginning. The music is in 3/4 time and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte) and 'p' (piano). The piece is titled 'BALLABILE' and is part of a larger work called 'Esmeralda'.

This musical score is for a piano piece, likely in the style of a 19th-century composer. It consists of five systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The music is written in a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 2/4 time signature. The first system includes a dynamic marking of *8* (likely *ff*) and a fermata over the final measure. The second system features a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The third system has a *rit.* marking. The fourth system has a *rit.* marking. The fifth system has a *rit.* marking. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a dense texture of chords and arpeggios. The notation includes various ornaments and slurs, and the overall style is highly technical and expressive.

This page of musical notation, titled "Esmeralda" and numbered "13", contains five systems of piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings like accents (>) and slurs. The piece features a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands, including arpeggiated figures and dense chordal passages. The first system begins with a treble clef staff containing a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. The subsequent systems continue this texture, with the right hand often playing more melodic or arpeggiated parts and the left hand providing harmonic support through chords and bass lines. The notation is dense and detailed, typical of a classical piano score.

The image displays a page of musical notation for piano, consisting of five systems of staves. Each system contains a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The notation is highly detailed, featuring complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various articulations. Dynamic markings such as *p* and *cres.* are present throughout the score. A dashed line is drawn above the first system, and a *p* marking is placed above the second system. The overall style is characteristic of early 20th-century piano music.

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The music is written in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, slurs, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a complex rhythmic pattern in the treble staff with a steady bass accompaniment. The second system continues this pattern with some melodic development in the treble. The third system features a more active treble line with some slurs and a consistent bass accompaniment. The fourth system shows a change in the treble line's texture, with some notes marked with an '8' above them, possibly indicating an eighth note. The fifth system concludes the page with a final cadence in both staves.

Allegretto .

The musical score is written for piano and consists of four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system begins with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The music is characterized by a highly rhythmic and technically demanding right-hand part, often featuring sixteenth-note patterns and triplets. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth-note patterns. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the fourth system.