

Paganini Reverie

fantasy for piano

Karim Al-Zand

(2013)

PROGRAM NOTE:

“Another piece based on Paganini’s 24th caprice?” That was my thinking when pianist Chris Janwong McKiggan approached me to write a short work for his project, a recording of new compositions inspired by the virtuosos violinist’s most famous work. After writing *Paganini Reverie*, I can see why composers have been so drawn to this simple theme: it provides the perfect balance of stricture and scope, limitation and latitude. My piece is a loose fantasy on the theme, the immediate inspiration for which comes from an evocative chapter in Heinrich Heine’s *Florentine Nights*. The passage describes a Paganini performance in vivid detail, the protagonist recounting a waking dream prompted by the virtuoso’s playing, each musical change of mood triggering a fantastical new scene.

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DURATION:

ca. 6'

He was the man-planet, around whom the universe moved, sounding with measured solemnity and in blessed rhythm....sounds that the ear never hears, but rather only the heart can dream of, when it rests during the night on the heart of its beloved.

—Heinrich Heine on Paganini, from *Florentine Nights*

for Christopher Janwong McKiggan

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Improvisatory throughout; as if in a dream

♩=40
serene, placid

pp

a tempo
still calm, but now with warmth

p

poco accel. - - - - *a tempo*

becoming more impassioned *suddenly held back* *rit.* - - - -

take time *take time* *receding*

♩=60

sub p *poco f* *p*

♩=76

ringing bells *scherzando*

f *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *f*

8va *8va* *8va*

♩=66 (sub.) ♩=60 *accel.* - - - -

singing, expressive *hushed at first* *becoming more intense*

f *p* *cresc.*

(accel.) -

tr³ start slowly
ff
molto
very swiftly, scampering
Red. ^

take time
mp
7
8va
let ring
p
manic, but legato, liquid
3x
3x
sempre p
sub. f
p
♩ = 69
Sub. ^
Red. ^

f
p
2x
2x

poco cresc.
f
p
3x

f
p
ten.
2x
3x

cresc.
f
2x

2x

more detached

2x

molto
smooth again

p *sub.f* *p* *f*

f *p* *f*

2x

8^{va} 3x (ad lib) (ad lib) very slowly

ff *p* *f* *niente*

fifths fade away to nothing; accents remain, then

pp

♩ = 48- hyper-romantic, in a haze

(8^{va})

ppp very delicately

poco f molto espres.

take time

(8^{va})

First system of a musical score. It consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate treble clef staff. The grand staff contains complex chordal textures with many triplets. The separate staff contains a melodic line with a long slur and a dashed line above it. The key signature has one flat.

Second system of the musical score, continuing the complex textures and melodic line from the first system.

rit. - - - ♩ = 58
grand, majestic

Third system of the musical score. It includes the instruction "rit." followed by a dashed line and a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 58. The instruction "grand, majestic" is written below the staff. The music features a mix of complex textures and melodic passages.

♩ = 48-
take time

Fourth system of the musical score. It includes a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 48- and the instruction "take time" above the staff. The system shows dynamic markings: *più f*, *ff*, *mf*, and *p*. The music continues with complex textures and melodic lines.

molto rit. - - - as before (♩ = 40) *poco rit.*

Fifth system of the musical score. It includes the instruction "molto rit." followed by a dashed line, "as before" with a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 40, and "poco rit." at the end. The music concludes with complex textures and melodic passages.

a tempo

as before

(♩=69)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system is marked "a tempo" and "pp". It features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a harmonic accompaniment. The second system is marked "as before" and "(♩=69)". It features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a harmonic accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics.