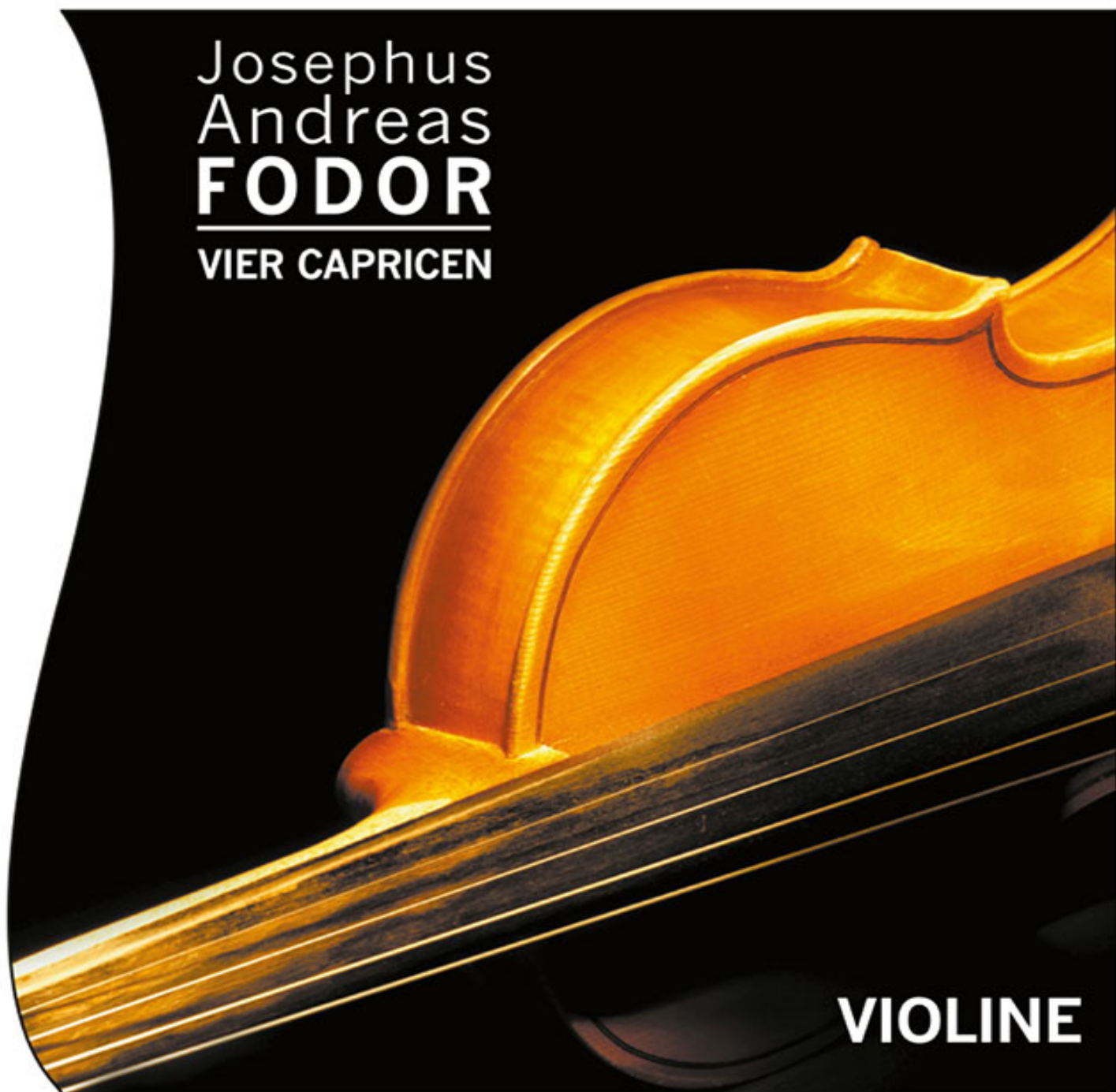




Bisel Classics

Josephus
Andreas
FODOR
VIER CAPRICEN



VIOLINE

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Preface

Josephus Andreas Fodor was the eldest of three brothers from a Dutch musical family and arguably the most prolific composer of the three with a tentative 127 violin duets, 42 quartets, and 19 concertos to his credit along with a small collection of works for different instruments. Carel Antonⁱ, his youngest brother's output rivals this with three symphonies, eight fortepiano concertos, an opera and a large number of chamber pieces. Carel Emanuelⁱⁱ, the second brother less so but his relatively early death compared to his two siblings may account for just one symphony, and a number of concertos and sonatas for keyboard. After his studies with Benda in Berlin, it seems likely that Josephus travelled with Carel Emanuel to Paris in 1780. There they would have met Joseph Legros, the director of the *Concert Spirituel* and it was in the *Salle des Cent Suisses* at the Tuileries Palace that Josephus was to give his Paris debut, the concert that was to launch his international career. Carel Emanuel also found a position with Legros as a performer and both brothers augmented their income with teaching though it is not certain that Josephus ever appeared in the *Concert Spirituel* after his debut performance. Josephus taught in Paris from 1787 but with the onset of the French Revolution and the closure of the *Concert Spirituel* in May 1790 both brothers must have had the feeling it was time to move on. We do not know what became of Carel Emanuel but Josephus immigrated to St. Petersburg in 1792 where he occupied a position in the Imperial Chapel and where he spent the remaining thirty-six years of his life.

Surprisingly, the solo violin is barely represented in the life's work of Josephus Fodor, but he reserved for it the most serious forms in his two sets of sonatas, the '*Six Sonates pour le violon*', Op.28, the '*Six Sonates pour le violon*', Op.29 and the two books of caprices, the '*Caprices pour le Violon seul*' Livre 1 et 2. Like so many composers works from that period, this list is not definitive and we may safely assume that many more compositions have not survived intact, but the first three *caprices* in this edition were disseminated widely across Europe and extant parallel editions may nowadays be found in Belgium, Denmark, and several locations in the Czech Republic. The fourth caprice is taken from an early 19C ms copy made by a Dean of Beroun in the Czech Republic, Josef Antonín Seydl (1775-1837). Neither of the two books of caprices as they were published have survived intact nor can we say with any certainty what form the original publication took, or if indeed all of the caprices were published. There are several other examples in the catalogue of works of editions that take a three work binding: the '*Trois Duos pour deux Violons*', Opus 16, the '*Trois Duos pour deux Violons*', Opus 23, and the '*Trois Duos concertants pour deux Violons*', (WoO) to name a few. To complicate matters further, in the Belgian collection, the first three *caprices* are described as Preludes.

Returning to the Beroun collection we have a remarkable document in the collection of '*Caprice a Fermy*' compiled by Josef Antonín Seydl. Seydl was a passionate collector of music and literature and a frequent performer but whose principal legacy was as one of the leading lights of the Czech reformation. His tastes in music were broad and he drew upon a wide variety of sources for his collection. The composers he chose to include. Fodor, Král, Kreutzer (Rodolphe), Mestrino, Kauer, Stamitz and Benda represents a snapshot of popular taste around the year 1825 or shortly thereafter when Seydl made the copy. These are not the