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# SAINT-SAËNS

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INTRODUCTION ET  
RONDO CAPRICCIOSO

for Violin and Orchestra  
Op. 28



Eulenburg

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CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

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INTRODUCTION ET  
RONDO CAPRICCIOSO

for Violin and Orchestra  
Op. 28

Edited by/Herausgegeben von  
Maria Egelhof and Wolfgang Birtel



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# PREFACE

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‘Nobody knows more about music all over the world than Monsieur Saint-Saëns’, said Claude Debussy in praise of his fellow composer. There can be few, one might add, who have left behind such an extensive body of work, representing every musical genre: Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921) composed symphonic and dramatic music, vocal and chamber music, piano, military and ballet music – and, with *L’Assassinat du Duc de Guise* in 1908, the first original film music.

This French musician favoured the violin repertoire in particular with two sonatas, three concertos and a series of smaller works with piano or orchestral accompaniment. Some of the inspiration for these doubtless came from his friendship with the Spanish violinist Pablo de Sarasate, who delighted audiences with his circus tricks and his sweetly languishing tone on the violin. Sarasate gave Saint-Saëns many tips as to what was technically possible on the violin – and the composer dedicated his third violin concerto and the *Rondo Capriccioso* to him. It is without doubt also from his acquaintance with Sarasate that the composer acquired a fondness for Spanish tone colour and folk

tunes, most clearly felt in the *Introduction et Rondo capriccioso* Opus 28, in the *Havanaise* Opus 83 and in the *Caprice andalou* Opus 122.

‘With his magical bow Pablo de Sarasate took my compositions all over the world’, wrote Camille Saint-Saëns in an article for the *Revue Musicale* in 1908. It was for Sarasate that he composed the *Rondo capriccioso*, which is still a highlight of the Romantic violin repertoire today. In the same article, Saint-Saëns described the piece as ‘composed in the Spanish style’: such exotic touches were very popular with audiences at that time. *Introduction et Rondo capriccioso* was written in 1863 and published in 1870.

An introductory recitative alternates between lyrical and playful passages. It then leads into the Rondo, where the composer gives the violin an opportunity for a furious technical firework display: this is an effective bravura piece to show off the abilities of any virtuoso violinist.

Wolfgang Birtel

English translation: Julia Rushworth

