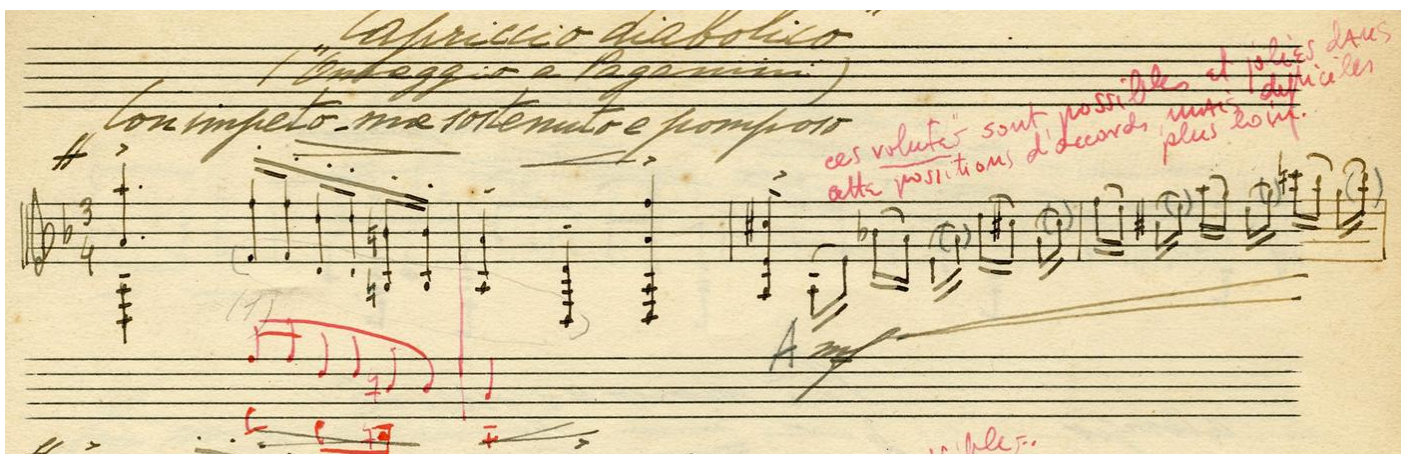


M.C. Tedesco – Capriccio Diabolico ‘Omaggio a Paganini’

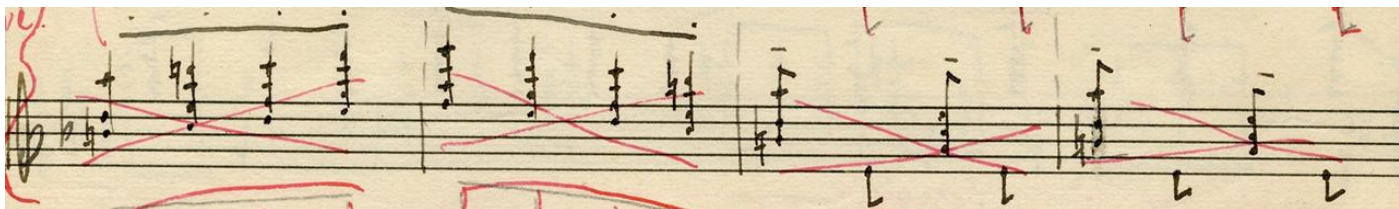
Notes

This piece is one of the most famous written by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Apart from the manuscript, two different editions exist, by Andrès Segovia (the music was written for him) and Angelo Gilardino. Indeed, the manuscript is completely unplayable (Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Capriccio Diabolico 'Omaggio a Paganini', 1935), and Segovia made his own edition out of it (Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Capriccio Diabolico 'Omaggio a Paganini', 1967). However, Tedesco was notoriously very much not satisfied with the way Segovia arranged his piece and Gilardino, years later, created a new edition much closer to the original (Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Capriccio Diabolico 'Omaggio a Paganini', 2006). One of the main changes by Gilardino compared to Segovia's version was a *Coda* of a full page that Segovia had taken out because he simply didn't like it. While Gilardino created a technically playable version, adapting all the impossible parts so it would fit, he didn't take into account the dynamic wanted by the composer compared to the notes written. As such, some parts are playable only at a medium-slow tempo, but Tedesco wanted a really fast tempo. This should also be taken into consideration when trying to play the piece.

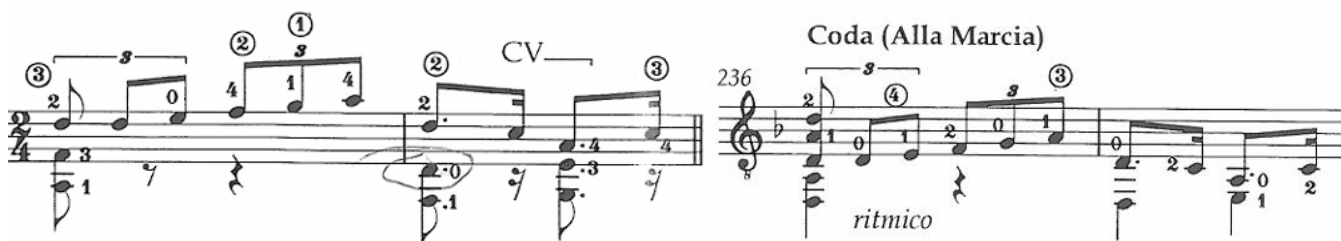
An interesting feature of the manuscript is also that it contains Segovia's comments, handwritten in French, at the attention of Tedesco. In these lines, he would comment the music, criticize the difficult and impossible sections and offer his solutions to some of the problems. It allows us to understand better Segovia's way of thinking and of approaching the works dedicated to him.



At the very beginning, we can already see Segovia's mark, as he suggests an alternative and comments on the facts that the arpeggio pattern is quite hard to play and will become even more complicated in the variations brought later by Tedesco : bars 1-4



- Manuscript : A rapid succession of chords, with marked dynamic 'Vivace e ritmico', crossed out by Segovia in red. It is indeed impossible to play the chords at the required tempo : bars 84-87
- Gilardino's edition : He kept the chords as written by Tedesco, even though it is still impossible to play at the demanded dynamic : bars 84-85
- Segovia's edition : We can see here that he took out all of the chords, only to keep the melodic line. It makes it quite easy to play the part at the required tempo, but the musical text is now quite impoverished : bars 84-87



- Manuscript : Tedesco writes a Coda 'Alla Marcia' that lasts 24 bars : bars 234-237
- Gilardino's edition : He respects the score and writes the Coda, that is completely playable : bars 234-237
- Segovia's edition : He doesn't include the Coda goes straight to the Sostenuto (which is bar 260 for the other editions) : bars 234-236

Tuning

In this piece, the 6th string is already tuned in D, increasing the range. My idea here would be to tune the 7th string in E (so one full tone **higher** than the 6th string), to facilitate some of the passages and allow the playability of some chords, while keeping the intended tuning of the composer as the whole piece (and therefore fingerings) were written to accommodate to 6=D. Depending on the skills of the player, it could also be possible to switch the tuning of the 6th and 7th string.

6=D / 7=E / 8=C **OR** 6=E / 7=D / 8=C

Non solvable issues

Unfortunately, some passages remain unplayable even with the help of the 8-string guitar (see examples below), often because the pitch of the problematic notes are in the medium or high range, or because the stretch between two notes on the fretboard is technically not possible.

While I will not list all of the impossibilities that cannot be solved with the 8-string guitar, I will try to find all of the places where we **can** offer solutions (or alternatives) with the extra basses.



Tedesco wrote an extra high D, which is unplayable on a guitar (highest note is commonly a B, rarely a C). The extra basses are obviously no use here : bars 120-122

Possible improvements

In this piece, even with all the problems in the score, we unfortunately cannot find so many solutions with the 8-string guitar. Only a few places could be improved following the exact score, but sometimes can also make it even more difficult. In this case, solutions only use the 7th string, as the 8th string cannot offer new feasible fingerings given the speed or the finger stretch.

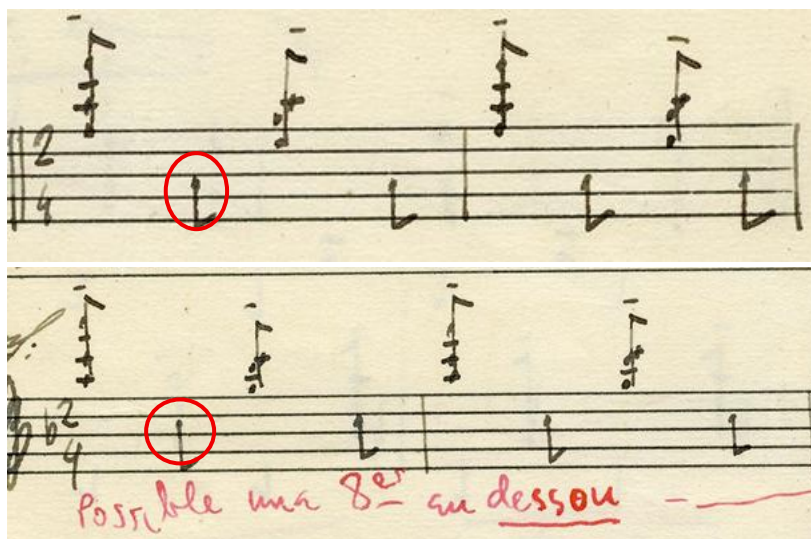
- Bar 221 – 2) : The chords are currently unplayable as too many fingers are needed to play all the notes with 6=D. With an added string tuned in E, the chords are now easy to play as the bass will end up in the barré used for the rest of the notes.
- Bars 242-243 – 3) : The chord is currently unplayable as C and Bb are too far apart with 6=D. With an added string tuned in E, the chord is now possible with Bb in position VI.
- Bars 253-255 – 4) : With a string in E, the bass line is now easily playable while playing and articulating the chords with the other fingers.

Alternatives

Some alternatives can also be found, where we cannot exactly play what is written but, with the help of the 8-string guitar, we can offer new ideas to find a closer way to the original score. These possibilities are of course a suggestion, as every artist could have a different opinion on these artistic choices.

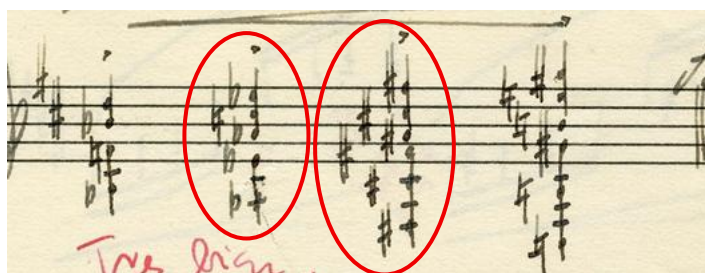
- Bars 102-103, 108-109 – 1) : The notes could technically be played in this section, but given the dynamics (*Di nuovo Vivace*), the succession is too hard. By octaviating down both the A and C to the 5th and 8th string, it will be much easier to play the chords as the A and C will be open strings.

Interesting sections



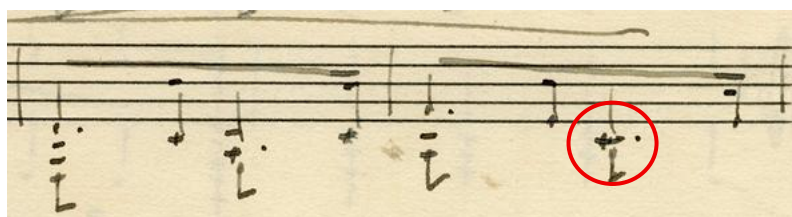
1) Bars 102-103 ; 108-109 (Alternative)

Playing those note an octave lower with 5=A and 8=C as open strings makes the chord succession realistic.



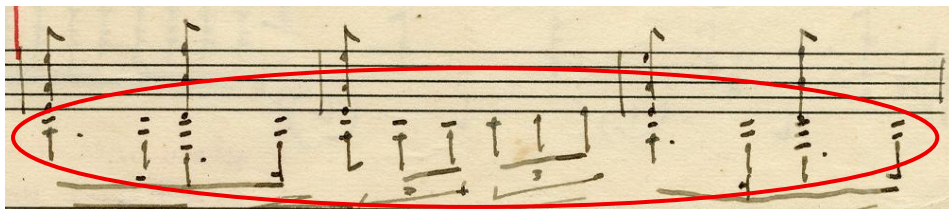
2) Bar 221

With 6 or 7 = E, the chords are now playable as the bass enters the barré.



3) Bars 242-243

With 6 or 7 = E, the chord is now possible with the Bb on the string tuned in E.



With 6 or 7 = E, the whole bass line becomes easily possible to play.

4) Bars 253-255

Works Cited

Castelnuovo-Tedesco, M. (1935). *Capriccio Diabolico 'Omaggio a Paganini'*.

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Castelnuovo-Tedesco, M. (2006). *Capriccio Diabolico 'Omaggio a Paganini'*. BMG Ricordi Music Publishing, Milano.