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COMMENTS

Opera is considered to be the ultimate musical art form in that it combines all the artistic mediums: orchestra, vocal soloists chorus, drama, dance, stage crafts (set design, lighting and costumes), etc. Especially rich and prodigious is the Italian operatic heritage, and clarinetists lay claim to a very special link to that heritage through Ernesto Cavallini.

Cavallini lived in Milan, the opera capital of the work, where he played in the La Scala Opera orchestra. His tenure there was during one of the richest and most productive periods in operatic history including original productions of the works of Rossini (1792-1868), Mercadante (1795-1870) of whom he became a close friend, Donizetti (1797-1848), Bellini (1801-1835), Verdi (1813-1901), Ponchielli (1834-1886), Leoncavallo (1825-1919), and Puccini (1858-1924). Most of these great composers knew Cavallini personally and wrote special solos for him. (And today's clarinetist should keep in mind that he played a six-keyed, boxwood clarinet!)

A composer as well as a virtuoso performer, Cavallini wrote many works for the clarinet including the *Thirty Caprices* and a long list of solos. As would be expected, his compositional style was influenced by

dramatic Italian opera. The *Caprices* are unique in their expressive character and approach to virtuosic flair. As the clarinetist studies and begins to better understand the style, he or she should strive for flexibility of tempo, tonal color, rhythmic and intensity inflection, speedy controlled fingers and nimble articulation. This flexibility will lead not only to "grande espressione" but also a vastly enriched musical personality.

The Labanchi studies emanate from a wonderful, musical spirit and are great fun when performed with imaginative operatic expression. The Magnani studies serve to maintain and stabilize nimble fingers and articulation. The Gambaro, although not as sophisticated as the Cavallini, should be practiced "con gusto" applying the grand Italian style and flexibility. Imaginative use of new found musical resources can make them attractive musical studies.

The metronomic markings are selected primarily to enhance the style and feel of the musical expression, not merely to challenge the ability to master dazzling speeds. As in all the volumes of this series of *Artistic Studies*, breath marks are placed frequently as a guide to stabilizing performance.

David Hite
Fort Myers, FL
1987

THIRTY CAPRICES

B-390

for CLARINET Six Caprices. Opus 1

ERNESTO CAVALLINI
(1807-1874)
Edited by DAVID HITE

Allegro moderato $\text{♩}=90 / \text{♩}=72$

1. *f* *sempre con forza*

5

10

20

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