

Biography | February 2024

When Tedi Papavrami arrived in France at a young age, he was faced with a country and a culture that were entirely foreign to him. Moved out of natural curiosity paired with a great yearning to master the French language – also to overcome initial loneliness – he plunged into reading Stendhal, Proust, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Kafka... all in French. What makes Tedi a unique and rare musician is his curiosity for everything that lies beyond borders. Along with his elevated artistic and intellectual standards, it helps him bridge the immense gap between his original background and new horizons.

Therefore, when translator Jusuf Vrioni passed away, it came as no surprise when Tedi Papavrami took up the task of translating into French the works of Albanian author Ismail Kadare, whom he had known as a child. That incursion into literature also provided him for the first time with “a means of leading a professional existence apart from the violin.” He continued in that vein by publishing an account of his own youth, *Fugue pour violon seul*, in French. Unanimously hailed by the press, the book recounts his trajectory as a child prodigy in Albania and his passage to the West and freedom. Moreover, when actress Jeanne Moreau met Tedi in a television programme, she did not hesitate to recruit him to play the role of Danceney, the violinist, alongside Catherine Deneuve, Rupert Everett and Nastassja Kinski in Josée Dayan’s TV mini-series adaptation of Choderlos de Laclos’s *Dangerous Liaisons*.

Such a wide range of activities and interests would probably not have been possible without an exceptional musical precocity coupled with long hours of practice from a very early age. The violin was always part of Tedi’s life. He was introduced to it at the age of five by his father, a brilliant teacher with many years of pedagogical experience. Tedi progressed very rapidly, and within three years he was performing Sarasate’s *Airs Bohémiens* with the Tirana Philharmonic Orchestra. At the age of eleven he tackled Paganini’s *Concerto No. 1* with the fearsome cadenza by Emile Sauret.

The year was 1982. Albania had isolated itself from the rest of the world for decades. French flautist Alain Marion, who had come to give a concert in Tirana, heard the child prodigy play – and promptly arranged for him to come to Paris with a bursary from the French government. Tedi went on to study with Pierre Amoyal at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique; he also appeared on popular television programmes and gave many concerts at that time.

Having reached the end of his studies by the end of fifteen, Tedi went on perfecting his instrumental and musical skills on his own. In the meantime, he and his parents had fled Communist-led Albania and settled for good in France; back home, however, the regime punished those family members who had stayed behind with severe sanctions and reprisals that would remain in force until the government finally fell in 1991. Before that event, however, Tedi and his parents had to leave Paris in order to avoid Albanian embassy officials who were on their tail. Friends helped them relocate near Bordeaux.

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Tedi Papavrami won several important international prizes in the 1990s and embarked on a brilliant solo and chamber music career. He has collaborated as concerto soloist with conductors of the likes of Kurt Sanderling, Armin Jordan, Emmanuel Krivine, Manfred Honeck, François-Xavier Roth, Thierry Fischer, Gilbert Varga and M. Aeschenbacher. He was also a member of the Schumann Quartet (piano quartet) for nine years. He has performed in recitals and on disc with chamber music partners such as Philippe Bianconi, Nelson Goerner, Martha Argerich, Maria Joao Pires, Viktoria Mullova, Gary Hofmann, Marc Coppey, Paul Meyer and Lawrence Power.

Tedi has been completing his artistic activity with a number of recordings ever since 1990. Released in 2014, his CD featuring the 6 solo violin sonatas by Eugène Ysaÿe and the same composer's sonata for two violins alongside his colleague Svetlin Roussev was simultaneously awarded two of the most outstanding French distinctions: the Diapason d'Or and the Choc de l'Année (Classica magazine). Tedi has also proven his hand as a transcriber: his solo violin arrangements of 12 Scarlatti sonatas and of the Bach Fantasy and Fugue BWV 542 (originally for organ) are available from the Ries & Erler music publishing house in Berlin. He has frequently performed the complete J. S. Bach sonatas and partitas for solo violin in public – a repertoire of which he is particularly fond and has recorded, along with the solo violin sonata of Béla Bartók, the 6 Ysaÿe solo violin sonatas and the 24 Paganini Caprices.

For many years, Tedi has been presenting the complete Beethoven violin sonatas with pianist François-Frédéric Guy: their recording was released in 2017. Along with cellist Xavier Phillips, they have been pursuing their work on the complete Beethoven piano trios, which they will record soon. On renowned pianist Martha Argerich's new 2019 release entitled *Rendez vous* (Avanti Classics), he appears alongside her and cellist Misha Maisky in the Beethoven triple concerto.

Tedi Papavrami now lives in Geneva, Switzerland, where he is violin professor at the Haute École de Musique. He plays a violin made for him by violinmaker Christian Bayon.

Short version

Tedi Papavrami was born in Albania, played at the age of eight with the Tirana Philharmonic Orchestra and then studied with Pierre Amoyal at the Conservatoire National Supérieur.

Tedi Papavrami has performed with various partners such as Nelson Goerner, Martha Argerich, Maria Joao Pires, Viktoria Mullova or Gary Hofman and under renowned conductors including Kurt Sanderling, Manfred Honeck, François-Xavier Roth and Thierry Fischer.

Since 1990, numerous CDs by Tedi Papavrami have been released, e.g. Eugène Ysaÿe Six Sonatas for Solo Violin, which received the Diapason d'Or as well as the Choc de l'année. Together with Mischa Maisky and Martha Argerich, Papavrami can be heard in Beethoven's Triple Concerto on Argerich's album "Rendez-vous", released in 2019 on Avanti Classics. In 2021 he released "Bach Sonatas & Partitas" and "Rendezvous with Martha Argerich Vol.2" on Alpha.

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