



Francesco Palazzo

First Recording

PHOENIX
CLASSICS

4D
AUDIO
RECORDING



J. S. Bach
C. Franck
F. Lattuada
F. Alfano
L. Ferrari-Trecate
S. Calligaris
B. Bartolozzi
S. Gubaidulina



FRANCESCO
PALAZZO
Fisarmonica
Classica

DIGITAL STEREO



GEMA BIEM SIAE STEMRA
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MADE IN E. E. C.

24 BIT™
PROCESSING

For this recording **24 - BIT** technology was used for "High Quality Sound." **SMB**

Recording Dates: 1999 December 9/10 - 2000 - February 26/27

Location: Auditorium Phoenix - Montebelluna (TV) Italy

Recording Engineer and Mastering: Giovanni Bettin

Recorded using (H. D. E. S.) Microphones, exclusive make

Classic Accordion: "ZEROSSETTE" - (1998) Castelfidardo (AN) - Italy

4D Audio recording - A new dimension in clarity and realism

Editing: Paolo Carrer - Infinity Studio (Treviso) - Italy

Artistic Production: Giovanni Bettin - © 2000 - PHOENIX

Cover: Francesco Palazzo - Photos by : Tiziana Portoghese

Concept & Design: "Phoenix Audiosystem" Montebelluna (TV) Italy

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

DIE KUNST DER FUGE BWV 1080

Contrapuncti N. 1 - 2 - 9 • Toccata e Fuga BWV 565

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822-1890)

Prélude, Fugue et Variation

FELICE LATTUADA (1882-1962)

Improvviso

FRANCO ALFANO (1876-1954)

Nenia

LUIGI FERRARI-TRECATE (1885-1964)

Pantomima umoristica

SERGIO CALLEGARIS (1941)

Preludio Corale e Finale

BRUNO BARTOLOZZI (1911-1980)

Madrigale di Gesualdo

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA (1931)

De profundis



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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**DIE KUNST DER FUGE BWV 1080** (Trasc. S. di Gesualdo) *

- [1] **Contrapuncto N. 1** (4,43)
[2] **Contrapuncto N. 2** (3,15)
[3] **Contrapuncto N. 9** (3,15)

Toccata e Fuga in re minore BWV 565 (Trasc. F. Palazzo) * (9,23)

- [4] **Toccata** - Adagio. Prestissimo. (Lento), (Allegro), Prestissimo. (3,07)
[5] **Fuga** - Recitativo. Adagissimo. Presto. Adagio. Vivace. Molto adagio. (6,16)

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822-1890)**Prélude, Fugue et Variation** (Trasc. F. Palazzo) * (10,05)

- [6] **Prélude** Andantino (3,33)
[7] **Lent** (0,41)
[8] **Fugue** Allegretto ma non troppo (2,44)
[9] **Variation** Andantino (3,07)

FELICE LATTUADA (1882-1962)

- [10] **Improvviso** (Rev. S. di Gesualdo) * (6,08)
Allegro moderato, Meno mosso e stravagante, Tempo I, Più mosso

FRANCO ALFANO (1876-1954)

- [11] **Nenia** Lentamente *ma elastico* (Rev. S. di Gesualdo) (7,59)

LUIGI FERRARI-TRECATE (1885-1964)

- [12] **Pantomima umoristica** (Rev. S. di Gesualdo) * (4,29)

Moderato, Lentamente, Tempo di Valzer Moderato, Vivo

SERGIO CALLEGARIS (1941)**Preludio Corale e Finale** (Rev. F. Palazzo) * (7,36)

- [13] **Preludio** Moderato e maestoso assai (3,26)
[14] **Corale** Adagio (2,43)
[15] **Finale** Allegro tumultuoso e deciso (1,27)

BRUNO BARTOLOZZI (1911-1980)

- [16] **Madrigale di Gesualdo** (9,24)

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA (1931)

- [17] **De profundis** (Rev. F. Palazzo) * (12,14)

Total Time: (78,51)

* Prima registrazione mondiale

* World Première Recording

FRANCESCO PALAZZO
Fisarmonica Classica

For this recording, the instrument uses an "unicum", i.e. a prototype designed by me on the basis of a series of reflections and insights (matured during the course of my musical experience) into several problems, especially of a technical-executive and timbric nature, which seemed to me still unresolved.

The instrument was realized in 1998, thanks to the knowledge and skilled hands of craftsmen of the well-known accordion factory "Zerosette" of Castelfidardo, to whom I express my deepest gratitude for having met my absolutely simple requests in creating a wonderful instrument. In fact, it has two manuals with an overall range of forty-nine keys in the right and forty-eight in the left, for an overall range of six octaves, extending to seven with the use of the transposing registers. The composition of the registers is: 16' - 8' - 8' - 4' for the right manual, and 8' - 4' - 2' for the left (Hz 32,70 - 4186).

The qualities of this instrument are mainly due to the excellent quality of the materials used for its various parts, the type of 'voices' used, and naturally a whole range of features and peculiarities suggested by the undersigned!

From J. S. Bach to our times, through new sounds

The accordion, a proteiform instrument that came on the musical scene in the early nineteenth century and still in constant evolution today, is proposed on this CD in a classic style.

There are many reasons why this instrument of popular origins, but above all tied to leisure time or amateur performances, also has a place in 'cultured' circles. This is partly due to the technical-mechanical development of the last thirty years, and partly to those few but bold musicians, such as Hugo Noth and Mogens Ellegard in Germany and Denmark, Allen Abbott in France and Salvatore di Gesualdo in Italy, who attracted the attention of the public, the mass-media and specialized circles, by giving hundreds of concerts throughout the world.

The strongpoints of the new Italian classic accordion school are due to its drawing from the old "keyboard" literature (from Claudio Merulo to J. S. Bach with *Die Kunst der Fuge BWV 1080*), recovery of the main part of the traditional Italian and foreign accordion repertory reworked and filtered through a complex work of critical revision and promotion of an original repertory of classical

origin, also thanks to the highly important contribution of composers such as Bruno Bartolozzi, Gaetano Gianni-Luporini, Pier Luigi Zangelmi and Boris Porena.

The present program fully represents the requirements of this new ideology and in fact mainly concerns the following points: the keyboard literature, several important organ compositions, recovery of the tradition and "new sound" of the accordion.

The "keyboard" literature comes from the musical repertory of the Renaissance to the 18th century, not composed for just one particular keyboard instrument in mind, but a whole range, including the organ, harpsichord, virginals, regal, piano and ... the accordion! The *Art of Fugue BWV 1080*, Bach's unfinished last work, is the most important example, but also *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, improperly translated as *The Well-tempered Harpsichord*.

Performed for the first time in 1929, after nearly two centuries of oblivion, *The Art of Fugue* soon became the subject of debate between philologists and instrumentalists who attempted to assign it an instrumental (organ, harpsichord, string quartet,

woodwinds), and bringing up a great variety of elaborate theories without ever succeeding in putting an end to the matter. There are in fact many interpretations of this work, each of which diversely illuminating the enormity of its unfinished, spiritual ... and material essence!

Contrapunctus I opens the play between "obligatory parts" and "free parts", without those continuities making up a Fugue, and with a solemn and stately gait where the "Ground", with its ancient and almost impersonal nature contrasts with the continuous embellishments in quavers, and almost creating a metamusical synthesis of stillness and motion.

Contrapunctus II is characterized by a dynamic and biting movement, mainly due to the dotted quaver and semiquaver figures which give it its rhythm 'alla Francese', and where constant imitation between the various parts and built on the 'coda' of the theme accompany the main subject.

Contrapunctus IX is decidedly instrumental, and the four-part polyphony in this case must be managed with agile skill and technical mastery. A countersubject (in counterpoint to the subject) opens the exposition, but is soon reached by the "Ground-Theme" which follows it in parallel to the end.

The **Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV 565** highlights all the drive and extroversion of a twenty-year-old Bach, but also shows his vocation for numbers and golden proportions, which certainly reflects a sensitive soul in harmony with the rhythms of the Universe rather than an intelligence merely charmed by arithmetic.

The ternary nature, with its religious, metaphysical and obscure references, dominates the entire composition. In fact, the first episode of the **Toccata** is formed of a double triptych of notes (the three embellished A's (A - G - A) followed by hemidemisemiquaver runs and by the fragment in demisemiquavers and the three phrases of semiquaver "triplets" Prestissimo) each of which supported by a genuine harmonic pillar!

In the second episode, passages of an improvised nature alternate with loud chords sustained by the pedals, then the last, in semiquaver triplets "Prestissimo", ends the **Toccata** in great solemnity and balance. In the **Fugue**, Bach uses the initial motif of the **Toccata** (A - G - A), giving rise to a pleasant 'violinistic' subject.

Compared with his later fugues, the texture of this one is certainly more elastic and freer - in fact, at times it is hard to distinguish the number and play of the parts - but here too, at least in the macroform, there is a ternary structure, also stressed by the use of the organ pedals.

Prélude, Fugue et Variation is one of the *Six Pièces pour grand orgue* written by the Belgian composer César Franck, between the years 1859 and 1862.

The main features of this composer's style are, above all, a full and chromatic harmonic language with an extraordinary sense of form and the leaning towards a contrapuntal style that is both lyrical and thematically rich. In this work, as in few others, there is a wonderful balance of language and form, between free and deep lyricism and Romantic tension.

The composition is permeated with an archaic mood, similar to the architectural style of Romantic cathedrals: in the 'Andantino cantabile' of the **Prélude** the beauty comes precisely from the melody's simplicity and spontaneity, whereas the structural sobriety of the **Fugue**, without any particular contrapuntal devices but simply sustained by a supporting Subject, contributes to the feeling of rigour; the **Variation**, returning to motifs from the **Prélude**, and enhanced only in the accompaniment which sustains the melody with perpetually moving semiquavers, finally conveys the feeling of a synthesis of diverse forces and energies in a single harmonic fabric.

Improvviso, by Felice Lattuda, **Nenia** by Franco Alfano, and **Pantomima Umoristica** by Luigi Ferrari-Trecate, are three important pieces of Italian accordion music of the Fifties. The first highly lyrical, the second

impressionist, and the third playful, reflect in a lesser way the needs of a language which, starting from late Romanticism, evolved in an increasingly more complex and polytonal way.

Originally written for the traditional accordion (i.e. with left manual having bases and precomposed chords) in the Eighties, they were re-elaborated for concert accordion with single-note left manual, with strict critical revision work by Salvatore di Gesualdo.

Clearly Romantic in style, **Preludio, Corale e Finale** by the composer of Argentine origin, Sergio Calligaris.

Here too, the three-movement piece recalls well-known allegories and models, and for its assonance, also certain famous nineteenth-century piano compositions.

In the three movements of this piece, with the restless and passionate nature of the first, obscure with heavenly the second, and then turbulent and virtuosic the last, Calligaris uses a not too modern and innovative but interesting and certainly well-structured language, mainly based on modes built on whole-tone scales and chromatic sequences typical of the post-Debussy French school.

Madrigale di Gesualdo, by Bruno Bartolozzi, is certainly one of the most important compositions of the new Italian accordion culture.

Written in the Seventies (a time full of artistic

and cultural events) by a composer highly aware of the "sound" of the instrument and able to penetrate the very subtlest of its colour shades, this piece unfolds like a genuine Klangfarbenmelodie (Schoenberg-style melody in timbres), proposing poetic melodic fragments alternating with chordal zones among constant changes of reed registers and pitch and everything perfectly in line with the variegated and "Expressionist" ante-litteram style of the great Italian madrigal composer Gesualdo da Venosa, and certainly also with the personality of his quasi-namesake, accordion player Salvatore di Gesualdo, to whom the piece is dedicated.

The last work presented on this CD is a genuine reference point on the international contemporary accordion music scene. Written for Friedrich Lips in 1978, today, **De Profundis** by Sofia Gubaidulina is one of the most performed and requested accordion compositions.

The language used by the Tartar composer is highly variegated and personal, and is sustained by an eclectic knowledge, merging various techniques and also carried by a surprisingly expressive spontaneity. The work is clearly of religious inspiration (*De profundis clamavi ad te Domine*, Psalm 129), but I believe the universality of the theme it holds can be perceived, i.e. Man's need to free himself of his suffering and achieve a state of joy and beauty.

In **De Profundis** one can distinguish three large periods, characterized by growing tension, starting from the darkest and deepest tonal regions of the instrument, gradually driving the thematic material towards the higher and brighter regions. However, while the two peaks reached are lost almost immediately, only the last, at the end of the work, is definite and finally represents the fullness and joy that can be reached at the cost of great sacrifice and effort, in order to be fully appreciated.

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Translation: Jan Filip

CURRICULUM

FRANCESCO PALAZZO, was born in Martina Franca in 1969, studied with Salvatore di Gesualdo and obtained the diploma in 1994 (the first in Italy) at the "L. Cherubini" Conservatory of Florence, completing his training through humanistic studies, Composition, Choir music and Choir conducting. After playing in Italy's main cities (Verona, Lucca, Rome, Naples, Bari, Taranto, Martina Franca, Lecce, etc.) for important Concert Associations and Italian Conservatories, in recent years he undertook a personal technical and expressive research, also based on comparison with other instruments, which encouraged him to re-establish his performing technique on new bases and to design a new concert instrument more in line with the renewed artistic requirements. He has been teaching accordion at the "N. Piccinni" Conservatory of Bari since 1993, while carrying on concert and teaching activities at the same time. He also revises music and transcribes works for his instrument, drawn mainly from the organ repertory and in part already published.

Critical remarks:

«... Francesco Palazzo is a highly talented musician, gifted with wonderful expressive and technical qualities; hence an element that raises the accordion to unexpected artistic heights ...»

Aldo Ciccolini

«... A pondered touch and strict tone-control ... A highly reasoned Bach, with no concessions to superficiality or any forcing ... When played this way, the classical accordion becomes a truly noble instrument...»

(L'Arena)

«A technically flawless execution and deeply emotional interpretation ... With his accordion he cuts notes of pure crystal ...»

(Il Corriere di Roma)

«The intensity of his interpretation and his technical mastery could not be further from the stereotype of the accordion ... It was almost a concert-lecture ...»

(Barisera)