

**BACH** & ITALY VOL. 6

**BACH**  
**BUSONI**

COMPLETE  
TRANSCRIPTIONS, ARRANGEMENTS  
AND CONTRAPUNTAL PIANO WORKS  
*INCLUDES WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS*

---

**C**HIARA **B**ERTOGLIO  
PIANO

# BACH | BUSONI

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPTIONS, ARRANGEMENTS AND CONTRAPUNTAL PIANO WORKS

## CD I: CHORALES AND REMINISCENCES

### J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI

#### TEN CHORALE PRELUDES BV B 27 <sup>(n)</sup>

- |      |   |      |
|------|---|------|
| [01] | KOMM, GOTT SCHÖPFER, HEILIGER GEIST AFTER BWV 667 (1ST VERSION) | 2:00 |
| [02] | WACHET AUF, RUFT UNS DIE STIMME AFTER BWV 645                   | 3:14 |
| [03] | NUN KOMM', DER HEIDEN HEILAND AFTER BWV 659                     | 4:43 |
| [04] | NUN FREUT EUCH, LIEBEN CHRISTEN GMEIN AFTER BWV 734A            | 2:09 |
| [05] | ICH RUF' ZU DIR, HERR JESU CHRIST AFTER BWV 639                 | 3:26 |
| [06] | HERR GOTT, NUN SCHLEUSS DEN HIMMEL AUF AFTER BWV 617            | 2:02 |
| [07] | DURCH ADAMS FALL IST GANZ VERDERBT AFTER BWV 637                | 1:28 |
| [08] | DURCH ADAMS FALL IST GANZ VERDERBT AFTER BWV 705                | 3:45 |
| [09] | IN DIR IST FREUDE AFTER BWV 615                                 | 2:35 |
| [10] | JESUS CHRISTUS, UNSER HEILAND AFTER BWV 665                     | 4:59 |

- |      |   |      |
|------|---|------|
| [11] | CHORALE PRELUDE KOMM, GOTT SCHÖPFER, HEILIGER GEIST AFTER BWV 667<br>(2ND VERSION) – WORLD PREMIERE <sup>(c1)</sup> | 1:55 |
| [12] | CHORALE PRELUDE AUS TIEFER NOT AFTER BWV 686<br>WORLD PREMIERE <sup>(c1)</sup>                                      | 3:45 |

### F. BUSONI

- |      |  |      |
|------|--|------|
| [13] | CHORALE PRELUDE [ALLEIN GOTT IN DER HÖH SEI EHR] BV 256A<br>(EDITIO MINOR OF THE FANTASIA CONTRAPPUNTISTICA) <sup>(n2)</sup> | 3:23 |
|------|--|------|

### J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI / C. BERTOGLIO

- |      |  |      |
|------|--|------|
| [14] | CHORALE PRELUDE DAS CALVARIUM AFTER SO GEHT DU NUN, MEIN JESU, HIN BWV 500 | 2:14 |
|------|--|------|

### F. BUSONI

- |      |   |       |
|------|---|-------|
| [15] | ALBUMBLATT NO. 3 IN DER ART EINES CHORALVORSPIELS [CHRIST LAG IN TODESBANDEN] BV 272A <sup>(c1)</sup> | 4:10  |
| [16] | FANTASIA NACH JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH BV 253 <sup>(c1)</sup>  | 11:22 |

**J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI**FANTASIE, FUGE, ANDANTE UND SCHERZO BV B 42 AFTER BWV 905, 969, 844 <sup>(c1)</sup>

[17] FANTASIE	1:19
[18] FUGE	2:27
[19] ANDANTE	2:19
[20] SCHERZO	1:48

**F. BUSONI**

[21] SONATINA BREVIS IN SIGNO JOANNIS SEBASTIANI MAGNI BV 280 <sup>(c1)</sup>	4:56
---	------

**CD 2: COUNTERPOINT****J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI**ARIA MIT VERSCHIEDENE VERÄNDERUNGEN, "GOLDBERG VARIATIONS" BV B 35  
AFTER BWV 988 <sup>(A)</sup>

[01] ARIA	1:55
[02] VARIATIO 1	1:02
[03] VARIATIO 2	1:21
[04] VARIATIO 4	0:29
[05] VARIATIO 5	0:58
[06] VARIATIO 6. CANONE ALLA SECONDA	0:49
[07] VARIATIO 7	1:00
[08] VARIATIO 8	0:57
[09] VARIATIO 10. FUGHETTA	0:55
[10] VARIATIO 11	0:52
[11] VARIATIO 13	2:57
[12] VARIATIO 14	1:06
[13] VARIATIO 15. CANONE ALLA QUINTA	2:22
[14] VARIATIO 19	0:33
[15] VARIATIO 20	1:04
[16] VARIATIO 22	0:48
[17] VARIATIO 23	1:13
[18] VARIATIO 25	3:31
[19] VARIATIO 26	1:03
[20] VARIATIO 28	1:14
[21] VARIATIO 30. QUODLIBET. ARIA DA CAPO	4:08

[22] **KANONISCHE VARIATIONEN UND FUGE (ÜBER DAS THEMA FRIEDRICH DES GROSSEN)** 7:53  
AUS J. S. BACH'S "MUSIKALISCHES OPFER" BV B 40 AFTER BWV 1079 <sup>(c3)</sup>

**F. BUSONI**

[23] **ELEGIE NO. 3 – CHORALVORSPIEL "MEINE SEELE BANGT UND HOFFT ZU DIR"** BV 249 <sup>(c3)</sup> 6:37

[24] **FANTASIA CONTRAPPUNTISTICA** BV 256 <sup>(c3)</sup> 28:16

**CD 3: HARPSICHORD**

**F. BUSONI**

[01] **WIDMUNG** <sup>(c3)</sup> 0:36

**J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI / C. BERTOGLIO**

[02] **STUDIE AFTER PRELUDE NO. 2 FROM WTC I, BWV 846 – WORLD PREMIERE** <sup>(D1)</sup> 1:59

**J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI**

[03] **STUDIE AFTER PRELUDE NO. 3 FROM WTC I, BWV 847** <sup>(D1)</sup> 1:43

**F. BUSONI**

[04] **PRELUDIO, FUGA E FUGA FIGURATA FROM AN DIE JUGEND** BV 254 AFTER BWV 850 <sup>(D1)</sup> 4:47

**J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI**

[05] **STUDIE AFTER PRELUDE NO. 6 FROM WTC I, BWV 851 – WORLD PREMIERE** <sup>(D1)</sup> 1:42

**J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI / C. BERTOGLIO**

[06] **PRELUDE NO. 17 AFTER WTC I, BWV 862 – WORLD PREMIERE** <sup>(D1)</sup> 1:43

**J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI**

[07] **PRELUDE NO. 21 AFTER WTC I, BWV 866** <sup>(D1)</sup> 2:15

[08] **KLEINE PRÄLUDIE UND FUGHETTA AFTER BWV 999 AND 961 – WORLD PREMIERE** <sup>(c3)</sup> 3:23

**FANTASIA, ADAGIO UND FUGE BV B 37 AFTER BWV 906 AND 968** <sup>(c1)</sup>

[09] **FANTASIA** 4:27

[10] **ADAGIO** 4:04

[11] **FUGE** 4:18

[12]	<b>DUETT NO. 2</b> BV B 33 AFTER BWV 803 – <i>WORLD PREMIERE</i> <sup>(c3)</sup>	3:28
	<b>CHROMATIC FANTASY AND FUGUE</b> BV B 31 AFTER BWV 903 <sup>(c1)</sup>	
[13]	FANTASY	6:46
[14]	FUGUE	5:20
	<b>CAPRICCIO SOPRA LA LONTANANZA DEL FRATELLO DILETTISSIMO</b> BV B 34 AFTER BWV 992 <sup>(c2)</sup>	
[15]	ARIOSO	2:00
[16]	FUGATO	1:59
[17]	ADAGISSIMO	2:58
[18]	MARSCHMÄßIG, SEHR GETRAGEN	1:41
[19]	FUGA. ALL'IMITAZIONE DELLA CORNETTA DI POSTIGLIONE	2:08
[20]	<b>PRÄLUDIUM, FUGE UND ALLEGRO</b> BV B 36 AFTER BWV 998 <sup>(c3)</sup>	8:56

#### CD 4: ORGAN

	<b>J. S. BACH / F. BUSONI</b>	
[01]	<b>PRÄLUDIUM UND FUGE (ES-DUR)</b> BV B 36 AFTER BWV 552 <sup>(c2)</sup>	14:11
	<b>ORGEL-TOKKATA (C-DUR)</b> BV B 29 AFTER BWV 564 <sup>(c2)</sup>	
[02]	TOCCATA	5:30
[03]	INTERMEZZO	5:02
[04]	FUGA	4:38
	<b>PRÄLUDIUM UND FUGE (E-MOLL)</b> AFTER BWV 533 <sup>(D1)</sup>	
[05]	PRÄLUDIUM	1:43
[06]	FUGE	2:23
[07]	<b>PRÄLUDIUM UND FUGE (D-DUR)</b> BV B 20 AFTER BWV 532 <sup>(c3)</sup>	10:38
[08]	<b>ORGEL-TOKKATA (D-MOLL)</b> BV B 29 AFTER BWV 565 <sup>(c2)</sup>	8:46
[09]	<b>CHACONNE</b> BV B 24 AFTER BWV 1004 <sup>(c2)</sup>	13:55

### FERRUCCIO BUSONI AND JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Although it was not common to study Johann Sebastian Bach's music in Italy in the nineteenth century, Ferdinando Busoni (1834-1909), a clarinet player, used it as the foundation for his son's music education. Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) expressed gratitude for his father's unconventional instruction in the epilogue to his edition of Bach's keyboard works.

If Busoni performed Bach's compositions throughout his career, beginning on January 8, 1875 with an unspecified prelude and fugue, he was also indebted to Bach's music for the development of his unique compositional voice. At the end of his first youthful composition notebook, Busoni included a Bachian fugue in two voices in what he described as a liberal style. Tonal mutability and an avoidance of expected harmonic progressions mark the piece as setting out on a new path. Pieces imitating and building upon Bach's compositional techniques and forms became more frequent in fall 1875, when Busoni began studying at the Vienna Conservatory. Busoni completed a musical invention on December 2, 1875, dedicating it to his mother. After Busoni returned to Trieste in early 1876, he began regularly utilizing Bach's compositional techniques in his compositions, including in a fuguetta in C major (Sept. 1876) a fugue in G major (January 1877) and an invention in D major (20 June 1877). By the time Busoni received systematic composition training at the age of fourteen with Wilhelm Mayer (1831-1898), Bach's contrapuntal style had become as fundamental as his subversion of traditional tonal expectations. Mayer reinforced Busoni's fascination with Bach and showed him how to blend classical clarity and austerity with Baroque counterpoint, a combination that would last to the end of

his life. After studies with Mayer, Busoni drew closer to his mature style, which combined Lisztian virtuosity, Bachian counterpoint, Mozartian clarity, and Latin melodiousness with tonal and formal experimentation.

The music of Bach was influential throughout Busoni's career, and the pieces featured on this recording demonstrate a range of ways that Busoni responded to Bach's music, from arranging and transcribing Bach's organ pieces, to editing Bach's keyboard music, to writing new pieces that synthesize Bach's methods with Busoni's unique compositional voice.

Busoni began transcribing Bach's music after he heard Bach's organ *Prelude and Fugue* in D major, BWV 532 performed at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. Kathi Petri, who was with him at the time, reportedly suggested that he consider how those same sounds from a pipe organ could be recreated on piano. Busoni recorded his first transcription of the same Prelude and Fugue within a week. According to Edward Dent, "This was not merely the beginning of his transcriptions, but



what was of far deeper import, it was the beginning of that style of pianoforte touch and technique which was entirely the creation of Ferruccio Busoni (Dent, *Ferruccio Busoni*, 1933).” Although pianist-composers like Franz Liszt (1811-1886) had previously transcribed Bach’s organ works for piano, Busoni was the first to recreate the massiveness of sound of the organ on the piano. He accomplished this through note doublings and other textural means. For instance, in his piano transcription of Bach’s organ *Prelude and Fugue* in E-flat major, BWV 552, he maintained that chords needed to be played in blocks, rather than arpeggiated. He also sought to achieve bolder sound in his transcriptions by inserting note doublings and triplings on the piano. Although octave doublings were common in Bach transcriptions, Busoni was even more liberal than his contemporaries in adding them. This is evident, for instance, in his arrangement of the *Prelude and Fugue* in D Major, BWV 532. In the opening measure alone, Busoni tripled the single pedal line. In other places he quadrupled the lines. He added as many notes as would fit in his hands to approximate the sound of the organ pedals and manuals combined. Busoni’s alterations also included idiosyncratic attempts to add color reflecting organ registrations. Hugo Leichtentritt claimed that Busoni was able to bring out the most unusual colors at the keyboard, thereby creating a wealth of timbral and dynamic shades (Leichtentritt, *Ferruccio Busoni*, 1916). Dent has also likened Busoni’s tone colors to that of brass instruments (Dent, *Ferruccio Busoni*, 1933). Busoni’s transcription (1893) of the Chaconne from the Violin Partita number two in D Minor, BWV 1004, stands apart from most of his other transcriptions in that the original piece is for a string instrument rather than



organ. Yet if Johannes Brahms, in his transcription of the same piece for left hand alone (1877), offered a fairly literal translation, Busoni infused the piece with the massive sound he used in his other organ transcriptions. Busoni also sought to translate the music of Bach for the modern pianist in a more literal manner throughout much of his large-scale editorial project of the complete keyboard works of Bach. His edition of the “Goldberg Variations” reflected his interest in bringing a work that was considered too long and complex for late nineteenth and early twentieth century audiences into the concert hall. He suggested shortening the piece by nine variations, and he also altered notes and inserted musical lines. Yet he included options for more literal renderings. He created an open score that left most alterations in ossia lines so that performers could choose between what he had written and what Bach had composed. Busoni’s version of Book I of the *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier* includes detailed formal analyses and scholarly notes along with ideas for interpretation, including pedagogical arrangements of several of the preludes and fugues, some of which are included on this recording. Busoni’s editorial comments in book two, by contrast, are aimed at more

fully at elucidating Bach's compositional methods and structure as perceived by Busoni.

By 1907, an experimental compositional style became more central to Busoni's works. Even so, many of his subsequent compositions still include direct references to or quotations of Bach's music. Busoni's third piano elegy, for instance, develops fragmented portions of the chorale melody, "Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr." However, rather than being written in a neo-Baroque style, the piece draws upon Busoni's more experimental compositional techniques, such as unconventional scales and arpeggios based on unrelated triads. The piece also explores bitonality when an A major chorale melody appears over an E-flat pedal point in the bass. The third elegy subsequently became the basis for the opening of the *Fantasia contrappuntistica* (1910 and 1921 versions). To this chorale prelude, Busoni melded his the main theme of the Contrapunctus I and Contrapunctus XIX from Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge*, BWV1080. Busoni's own voice is equally present in the piece in terms of the architectural structure, harmonic complexity, and an exploration of the technical and coloristic possibilities of the piano. A melding of Busoni's and Bach's styles is also evident in the *Fantasia nach Bach* (1909), written in memory of Busoni's father. Busoni selected three motivically related chorale melodies that had previously been set by Bach (BWV 766, BWV 703, and BWV 602). Busoni positioned these quotations within newly composed material. Busoni features the minor third and the ascending scalar fragment (F, G, A-flat) from the first chorale melody in the opening prelude. This motivic connection unites the quotations and the newly composed sections. The *Fantasia* ends with ethereal quasi-atonal arpeggios of juxtaposed thirds. Busoni

writes "Pax" and morendo as the music slowly ebbs and dies away. Towards the end of his life, Busoni created a set of six sonatinas, some of which were patterned after the music of other composers. The fifth sonatina ("Sonatina brevis in signo J.S. magnis," 1918) is based loosely on Bach's Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 905. But Busoni quotes only small fragments, such as the first two bars of the fugue, before breaking off into his own contrapuntal elaborations. If Busoni quoted the chorale, "Christ lag in Todesbanden" in the *Albumblatt* number three, he reused material from the piece once again in his last great work, *Doktor Faust*, in the Duchess of Parma scene.

Busoni joined others of his generation, such as Max Reger (1873-1916), in looking to Bach as a means to distance himself from romanticism without a retrogressive attitude. Bach's counterpoint enabled Busoni's modernist musical experimentation by providing a framework for new sonorities, new textures, and new treatments of the musical language. Busoni talked in his maturity of music that was eternally young and inventive, yet it was based on timeless compositional techniques that he discovered in his youth in the music of Bach.

Erinn Knyt © 2023

### BACH-BUSONI: A PERFORMER'S VIEW

An often-told anecdote recounts that Busoni's wife was once introduced as "Mrs Bach-Busoni". Indeed, the nexus between Bach's music and Busoni's interpretation is so tight and historically fundamental that no discourse about the reception of Bach – particularly, but not exclusively, at the piano – can ignore the role of Busoni. Busoni's interpretation of Bach is idiosyncratic, original,



highly personal, but also extremely perceptive, with some impressive intuitions and insights which often predate many “discoveries” of the historically informed practice movement. By studying and observing Busoni’s interpretations of Bach one never fails to find something valuable, interesting, and thought-provoking, even when, occasionally, some of Busoni’s views may be questionable.

My adventure with “Bach-Busoni” began at the time of my doctoral research under Kenneth Hamilton, with whom I studied the importance of instructive editions of Bach’s music for the reception of Bach in Italy. Ken kindly suggested that I perform Busoni’s version of the Goldberg Variations at my doctoral recital; after which my recording project “Bach & Italy” took off, with Da Vinci Classics’ cooperation. Although works by “Bach-Busoni” were included in vols. 1 and 2 of that recording project, as the hundredth anniversary of Busoni’s death came nearer we decided to create a parallel itinerary, integrated with, but also different from “Bach & Italy”, and focusing on the complete Bach-Busoni for solo piano, two hands.

One challenge, of course, was to select which works had to be included. There is a continuum ranging from Busoni’s original works (all of which, in some ways, may be said to be inspired by Bach!) down to some of his editions which could easily be mistaken for modern “Urtext” publications. Clearly, a choice had to be made. The range and scope of this recording project thus included, at one end of the continuum, those original works by Busoni which bear clear marks of their Bachian inspiration and are conceived as homages to Bach; at the other end, those editions in which significant elements reveal the editor’s personality and meaningfully modify

Bach’s original. In fewer words, the “Bachian” works by Busoni and the “Busonian” interpretations of Bach. Of course, other choices could have been possible, but these criteria seemed to be both consistent and interesting.

Another challenge was to combine the works within the four CDs which resulted from that selection. Many itineraries were possible, and they frequently collided. Eventually, we decided to opt for some internal consistency within each CD, but, more importantly, to suggest some paths which can be trodden within this collection, and which I will briefly outline here.

One red thread, perhaps the most obvious, is the relationship organ/piano. There are many works transcribed after organ originals: the D-major *Prelude and Fugue* (after BWV 532), the C-major *Tocatta and Fugue* (after BWV 564), the E-flat-major *Prelude and Fugue* (after BWV 552), the D-minor *Tocatta and Fugue* (after BWV 565), the *Chorale Preludes*; moreover, the E-minor *Fantasy and Fugue* (after BWV 533) was originally published in the Appendix to his edition of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* as a model and example representing Busoni’s theorization of how to transcribe from the organ to the piano. In a polemical stance against some of his (famous) predecessors, Busoni contested some of the transcription choices by Liszt and Tausig, and created a “how-to” referring to organ registration, pedalling etc. and its transposition on the piano. Furthermore, Busoni famously stated that his celebrated transcription of the violin Chaconne was viewed through the lens of organ music, and organ sonorities are easily discernible throughout the piece.

Another possible itinerary of exploration is that built

by Bach's Chorales. There are the famous Ten Chorale Preludes, some of which are among the most frequently played of Busoni's transcriptions (most notably *Wachet auf, Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* and *Ich ruf zu Dir*). Arguably, they are conceived as a cycle (actually, Busoni explicitly demanded that they be published as such, and was rather unhappy when Breitkopf and Härtel issued them as two installments). Besides these, however, there is a second version of *Komm, Gott Schöpfer*, which is, in my opinion, pianistically more satisfactory. There is also a very challenging version of *Aus tiefer Not*, originally written in six parts. Transferring a six-part texture on a piano keyboard, played by one pianist's "mere" ten fingers, is certainly a complex task, and Busoni understood it as such (calling this transcription *Versuch*, "essay"). This CD box also comprises the Chorale Prelude opening the "editio minor" of the *Fantasia contrappuntistica*. In this case, I decided to record the Chorale Prelude only, with the conclusion provided by Busoni precisely for this purpose; the Fugues following it are in fact practically identical with those of the *Fantasia contrappuntistica* (furthermore, for Busoni this version of the Fugues was not suited for public performance). It is meaningful, in my opinion, that in both the "definitive" and the "minor" edition of the *Fantasia contrappuntistica* the Fugues are preceded by Chorale Preludes on *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*, and that the same Chorale is explored in the Third Elegy. The Chorale's lyrics, a paraphrase of the liturgical Gloria, tribute glory "to God alone in the highest". Busoni prefaced his contrapuntal opus magnum with the equivalent of "Soli Deo Gloria", the motto with which Bach concluded all of his works. The other model for the colossal *Fantasia contrappuntistica* is Franck's Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, transparently alluded to by Busoni, as

he explicitly stated in one of his letters.

Other Chorales are interspersed within other pieces found in this collection. The third *Albumblatt* is built on *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, with the brilliant idea of turning one of the internal parts of Bach's harmonization (the tenor part) into a protagonist. Meaningfully chosen Chorales are also found in the F-minor Fantasy, dedicated to Busoni's father; here, Busoni employs – among others – three partitas on *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*. Two of them had been transcribed for voice and piano by Arrigo Boito, about whose death Busoni wrote touchingly and amicably; Boito had conceived his transcription as a homage to two deceased people (first Rosa de Toth Fambri and then Vincenzo Bellini) and this "funereal" connotation was subsumed by Busoni. Finally, there is the miniature piece called *Das Calvarium*, originally planned as a combination of Chorale Preludes, but unfortunately abandoned at the stage of a sketch, and recorded here with a few concluding notes added by the performer. The Chorales Busoni chose to build a musical contemplation of Christ's redemptive Passion are *So gehst du nun, mein Jesu hin* (after BWV 500); *Ich bin's, ich sollte büßen* (from the St. Matthew Passion); the third – inferentially – might be *Rube in Gott*, a version of which was set to music at Busoni's time by Christian Mühlfeld (but the autograph is unclear); the fourth is *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*. Together, they build a touching itinerary leading to the faithful's acceptance of Christ's cross.

The liberty I took in adding a few notes to Busoni's *Calvarium* constitutes, in fact, another important thread of this recording, otherwise expressed by the concept of the "open work". Even in the most played of the "Bach-Busoni" works, there are virtually no two

performances with the “same notes”: Busoni frequently offers more than one option, specified in the form of “ossia” or footnotes, and the performer is free to choose among the paths starting from numerous crossroads. In my case, for this recording I systematically chose the paths which lead *farthest* from Bach’s original, with the purpose in mind of demonstrating Busoni’s most extreme solutions. Related with this is the need, on some occasions, to intervene more heavily on the score, and this is the case, particularly, with some Etudes after *Well Tempered Clavier* Preludes (some of which are recorded here for the first time). Some of them, in fact, are only sketchily described by Busoni, who provides the performer with a modification pattern to be applied over Bach’s modular writing. While normally this suffices, there are fragments where more than one solution is possible. There, I was faced by a crucial choice, which can be described as the “art conservator’s dilemma”: had I to integrate the missing elements in (what I thought could be) Busoni’s style, in order to create a stylistically consistent listening experience, or had I to leave the gaps as such, limiting myself to play the notes of Bach’s original when no specific instruction by Busoni could be found? In those cases, I (somewhat arbitrarily) decided to opt for consistency, and to add some notes and octave doublings in “Busoni’s style”, while acknowledging that the other option was equally valid.

Speaking of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, it constitutes, in turn, one of the threads of this recording, with the difficult etudes built on Bach’s preludes and found in Busoni’s edition of Book One of the *Well Tempered Clavier*. There, he also suggested the possibility of combining Prelude V with the subject of its Fugue, and he then developed

that artistic intuition to create the *Preludio, Fuga e Fuga Figurata*. He also combined the little Prelude and Fughetta in C minor building something akin to a preparation for the *Well Tempered Clavier*, and created *Widmung* as the intertwining of excerpts from Fugue 1 (WTC I) and of the BACH motif, almost as a consecration of his whole work of study and analysis of Bach’s music. (The BACH motif also constitutes a red thread of its own, with particularly prominent appearances in the *Fantasia contrappuntistica* and in the Chorale Prelude prefacing its fugues in the *editio minor*).

Such new combinations of Bach’s works are rather frequently found: Busoni moves among Bach’s works feeling “at home” with them, and thus freely playing with them. He famously switched couples as concerns the two G-major Preludes and Fugues of *Well Tempered Clavier* I and II (not recorded here), but he also created a small suite in D-minor (*Fantasia, Fuga, Andante e Scherzo*), added the C-major Adagio from Violin Sonata BWV 1005 to the C-minor *Fantasia* and Fugue, etc.

The D-minor “suite” leads us to another red thread, i.e. that of the “evolutions” in Busoni’s thought and creative reception of Bach. In this CD collection one can in fact find some works which can be considered as preparations for others. Indeed, the third *Elegy* is almost a preparatory sketch for the *Fantasia contrappuntistica*, whose Fugues are introduced by a different Chorale Prelude in the *editio minor*, and the idea behind the *Fantasia, Fuga, Andante e Scherzo* evolved into the *Sonatina brevis in signo J. S. magni*.

A further thread I would like to point out is that relating to the “spectacular” element in Bach’s oeuvre. At a time when live performances of Bach’s music were comparatively

infrequent, Busoni was moved by a deeply apostolic zeal, and wished Bach's music to be loved and understood by many. Thus, being highly aware of the dynamics of live performance and concerts, he aimed at increasing the spectacular dimension of some works by Bach. This should give us pause when hastily labelling Busoni's Bach as elephantiac or colossal. Frequently, in fact, some of Busoni's most heavy-handed interventions are found at the *end* of the pieces, knowing – as he did – that this is what the audience remembers most easily. Some of the *Goldberg Variations* are published virtually unaltered by Busoni, but the conclusion is almost unrecognizable (here too he turns the ending into the transcription from an imaginary organ work, with powerful organ sounds and octave doublings). The same applies to the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*, whose ending is profoundly modified, or to the *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro* after BWV 998, where he recombines some elements of Bach's work to create a more memorable ending. This also explains the difference between what he defines as “Concert version” and “Chamber version”: it does not primarily involve technical difficulty, but rather the difference between a version conceived for public performance or one for private enjoyment. Thus, undeniably the technical challenges found in the “chamber version” of the Chorale Preludes far exceed those found in the “concert version” of the Four Duets. However, Busoni modified the order of the Duets and intervened more heavily on the F-major Duet (recorded here) precisely in order to create something more suited, in his opinion, for public performance. This is also proved by the Fugues of the *editio minor* of the *Fantasia contrappuntistica*: Busoni deemed this version unsuited for public performance precisely because the Fugues (almost identical with those of the “definitive version”) are less spectacular in the *editio*

*minor*, even though the treatment of counterpoint has no significant differences.

This applies also to those works by Bach which are normally defined as “speculative”, and including the *Goldberg Variations*, the *Art of Fugue* and the *Musical Offering*, all of which were the object of Busoni's interest. His version of the *Goldberg Variations* made them more “palatable” for his contemporaries; fragments from the *Art of Fugue* are interwoven within the pages of the *Fantasia contrappuntistica*, and canons from the *Musical Offering* are staged for piano performance in the *Canonic Variations and Fugue*. No work by Bach, be it the hardest or seemingly more abstract, was inherently unsuited for public performance, in Busoni's view; and his efforts were all addressed to this end.

In sum, Busoni was genuinely passionate about Bach and his music, and dedicated time, energy and skill to the dissemination of these masterpieces. He experienced them as something deeply ingrained in his own life and musical experience, and this provided him with a rather free attitude, where his admiration for Bach never becomes sacred terror. He felt a kind of “confidence”, resulting from his decades-long familiarity with Bach, and which allowed him to interact very creatively with Bach's original works. It is in this same spirit that we offer this recording project to the public, in the hope that it demonstrates, in its (virtual) completeness, the multifaceted, artistic and stimulating relationship between “Bach” and “Busoni”.

Chiara Bertoglio © 2023

## CHIARA BERTOGLIO

Born in Turin in 1983, Chiara Bertoglio began her piano studies at the age of three, obtaining her Diploma in Piano with top marks and with honours at the Conservatory of Turin when only sixteen. She obtained Master's Degrees in piano at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome as well as the Swiss Diploma of Virtuosity, always with top marks and honours. After a Master's in Musicology from the University of Venice (top marks and honours), she obtained a PhD in Music Performance Practice from the University of Birmingham, with the supervision of Kenneth Hamilton. She also holds Master's Degrees in Systematic Theology. She also studied with M. Rezzo, I. Deckers, E. Henz, P. Badura Skoda, S. Perticaroli and K. Bogino.

She made her debut as a soloist with orchestras at the age of nine, under the baton of Ferdinand Leitner; later she performed with orchestras such as Rome Symphony Orchestra, the European Union Chamber Orchestra, the Curtis Chamber Orchestra, the Italian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Aargauer Symphonieorchester and many others. In 2005 she made her debut at Carnegie Hall under the baton of Leon Fleisher. She performed in such venues as the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, the Royal Academy in London (during the Messiaen Festival 2008), the Mozarteum in Salzburg, the Chopin Institute of Warsaw, the Academy of Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and other festivals such as "Imago Sloveniae", "Woerthersee Classics", "MITO Settembre Musica", "Armonie della sera" and many others. She performed both recitals and concertos with orchestra in Italy, USA, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Israel, Denmark,

Norway, the Netherlands, Mexico and Slovenia, and was often broadcast by national radio and TV programs (RAI, Swiss Radio RSI, ORF, AVRO Klassiek, Polish and Slovenian Radio and TV etc.).

Her most important recordings include Respighi's *Toccata* for piano and orchestra (Brilliant Classics), two albums for "Velut Luna" (Schubert's complete Impromptus, and "Mors&Vita", with works by Mussorgskij and Messiaen, both issued in 2012) and a selection of Mozart's Piano Concertos for "Panorama". Since 2018 she records for DaVinci Classics, issuing a series of CDs about Bach and Italy, including several world premieres.

Her first book dates 2005, and is a study on Mozart's piano and opera music, prefaced by Paul Badura Skoda. Later she wrote other musicological books, mostly published by Effatà, and her PhD thesis has been published by Lambert Academic Publishing. Her monumental monograph *Reforming Music* (De Gruyter 2017) has won the prestigious RefoRC Book Award in 2018; her most recent monograph, *Musical Scores and the Eternal Present*, is published by Pickwick (2021). She authors musicological articles for important Italian and international journals, and is often invited as a speaker at musicological conferences in Europe and the USA; she also gives seminars for Italian and British universities. She is the recipient of the Prize of the Pontifical Academies 2017, and the co-founder of JSBach.it. She is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Centro Studi Musicali Ferruccio Busoni. She teaches musicology at the Theological Universities of Northern Italy and piano at the Conservatoire of Cuneo. Since 2007 she gives annual cycles of lectures and concerts for the private university "Studio Filosofico Domenico" in Bologna. Her website is [www.chiarabertoglio.com](http://www.chiarabertoglio.com).



## CREDITS

(A) RECORDED JAN. 29-30, 2015, SALA ASSUNTA, RADIO VATICANA, VATICAN CITY  
 PIANO: BÖSENDORFER IMPERIAL  
 SOUND ENGINEERS, MIXING AND MASTERING: LUIGI PICARDI, STEFANO CORATO

(B) RECORDED AUG. 6-8, 2018, VILLA S. FERMO, LONIGO (VI), ITALY  
 PIANO: LUIGI BORGATO  
 SOUND ENGINEER, MIXING AND MASTERING: MASSIMO MARCHESE

(C) RECORDED DEC. 14-16, 2020, IMAGINA STUDIO, TURIN (TO), ITALY (C1)  
 RECORDED AUG. 21-23, 2022, IMAGINA STUDIO, TURIN (TO), ITALY (C2)  
 RECORDED MAY 15-17, 2023, IMAGINA STUDIO, TURIN (TO), ITALY (C3)  
 PIANO: STEINGRÄBER  
 RECORDING: ALESSANDRO CARDINALE  
 EDITING: GABRIELE ZANETTI  
 MIXING AND MASTERING: ALESSANDRO CARDINALE

(D) RECORDED NOV. 4, 2022 (D1) AND JUNE 25, 2023 (D2), DV STUDIO, CIGOLE (BS), ITALY  
 PIANO: YAMAHA (D1), STEINWAY GRAND (D2)  
 RECORDING: GABRIELE ZANETTI  
 EDITING: GABRIELE ZANETTI  
 MIXING AND MASTERING: ALESSANDRO CARDINALE (D1), GABRIELE ZANETTI (D2)

THIS RECORDING IS IN MEMORY OF MARIA REZZO,  
 WHO FIRST INTRODUCED ME TO BACH, AND AS A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP TO “I CREATIVI”  
 I WISH TO EXPRESS MY HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALESSANDRA M. AMMARA, LORENZO ANCILLOTTI, LUCA BALDERI,  
 VALENTINA BENSI, ALDO BERGAMINI, ELENA CAMOLETTO, ALESSANDRO CARDINALE, SOLVEJ DONADEL,  
 VINCENZO FERRIGNO, EDMONDO FILIPPINI, ELISABETTA FLORENCE, KENNETH HAMILTON,  
 ERINN KNYT, ANTONIA WEBER, GABRIELE ZANETTI.

WITH THANKS TO THE INSTITUTIONS WHO KINDLY GAVE THEIR PATRONAGE:  
 AMBASCIATA DI GERMANIA; CENTRO STUDI MUSICALI FERRUCCIO BUSONI;  
 JSBACH.IT - SOCIETÀ BACHIANA ITALIANA  
 SOLI DEO GLORIA.



UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF



Ambasciata  
della Repubblica Federale di Germania  
Roma



*Bach*.it  
Società Bachiana Italiana