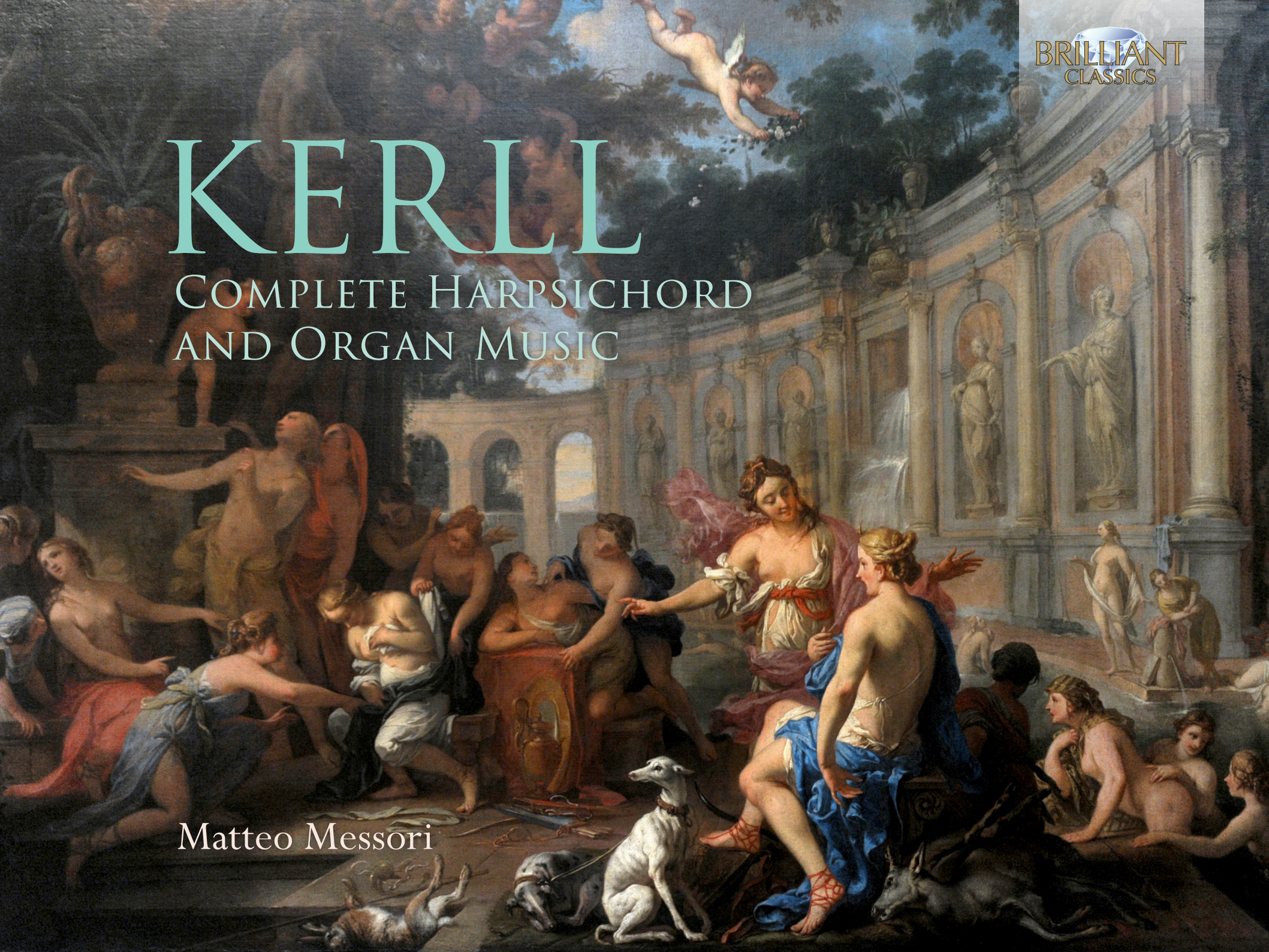


# KERLL

COMPLETE HARPSICHORD  
AND ORGAN MUSIC

Matteo Messori





**Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693)**  
Complete Harpsichord and Organ Music

1. Toccata prima*	4'27	Suite in D**	
2. Toccata seconda*	4'15	19. Allamande	2'34
3. Toccata terza*	5'12	20. Courante	1'14
4. Toccata quarta (cromatica con durezza e ligature)*	4'21	21. Sarabande	1'17
5. Toccata quinta (tutta de salti)**	4'12	22. Gigue	2'07
6. Toccata sesta (per il pedale)***	3'54	Suite in F***	
7. Toccata settima*	3'08	23. Allamande	2'48
8. Toccata ottava**	4'24	24. Courante	1'03
9. Canzone prima****	3'26	25. Sarabande	1'23
10. Canzone seconda**	4'27	26. Gigue	1'29
11. Canzone terza*	4'05	Suite in A minor**	
12. Canzone quarta****	3'45	27. Allamande - Partita	4'40
13. Canzone quinta***	3'11	28. Courante - Partita	2'14
14. Canzone sesta*	5'13	29. Sarabande - Partita	2'17
15. Ciaccona**	2'45		
16. Passacaglia*	6'34	Suite in G**	
17. Capriccio sopra il Cucu**	3'03	30. Allamande - Partita	4'51
18. Battaglia***	9'50	31. Courante - Partita	2'54
		32. Sarabande - Partita	3'02
		33. Rycercata in Cylindrum phonotacticum transferenda*	3'20

**Modulatio organica super Magnificat octo Ecclesiasticis tonis respondens (1686)\*\*\*\***

34. Magnificat Primi Toni	7'16	35. Magnificat Secundi Toni	7'33
( <i>Cantus planus: Magnificat</i> – Organum: Anima mea – <i>Et esultavit</i> – Versus Quia respexit – <i>Quia fecit</i> – Versus Et misericordia – <i>Fecit potentiam</i> – Versus Deposuit – <i>Esurientes</i> – Versus Suscepit Israel – <i>Sicut locutus est</i> – Versus Gloria – <i>Sicut erat</i> – Versus Ultimus loco Antiphonae)		36. Magnificat Tertii Toni	6'34
		37. Magnificat Quarti Toni	7'06
		38. Magnificat Quinti Toni	6'21
		39. Magnificat Sexti Toni	7'04
		40. Magnificat Septimi Toni	6'48
		41. Magnificat Octavi Toni	6'33

**Matteo Messori *harpsichords and organ***

- \* Italian harpsichord built by Romain Legros after an anonymous instrument preserved in the Ca' Rezzonico museum, Venice
- \*\* Italian harpsichord built by Romain Legros, copy after Giovanni Battista Giusti (Lucca 1681)
- \*\*\* Harpsichord built by Barthélémy Formentelli after a South French anonymous instrument
- \*\*\*\* Organ built by Johann Ignaz Egedacher (1732), Pfarrkirche Mariä Himmelfahrt in Vornbach am Inn (Germany)

Łukasz Dulewicz *plainsong* (tracks 34-41)

*Ore refers hominem,  
dulci modulamine Numen,  
Orpheus aetatis diceris esse tuae.  
Austriacas mulces Aquilas,  
Bavaròsque Leones:  
Suspensons Italos, Teutoniámque tenes.*

*In features you represent a man but in  
sweet modulation a divinity,  
You are called the Orpheus of your age,  
You charm the Austrian eagles and the  
Bavarian lions,  
and cheer Italians and Germany.*

Johann Caspar Kerll's work reveals deep knowledge of the principle compositional forms for keyboard and vocal music established in the first decades of the seventeenth century by exponents of Roman musical institutions such as Girolamo Frescobaldi, harpsichord virtuoso and organist at St. Peter's, and Giacomo Carissimi, chapel master at the church of S. Apollinare, which pertained to the Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum.

Kerll was born in 1627 in Adorf, in the hilly region in the southern part of the Saxon Vogtland, bordering on Thuringia, Bohemia and Bavaria. His family were Lutherans, and his father, an organist, saw to his son's early musical education. The boy's outstanding musical abilities soon came to the fore: by 1641 he was already skilled in composition, which brought him to the attention of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, Emperor Ferdinand III's brother, who paid for him to go to Vienna to study under Giovanni Valentini, the court Kapellmeister. In 1647 Kerll, who in the meantime converted to Catholicism, moved to Brussels at the behest of the Archduke, who in his role as governor of the Spanish Netherlands had appointed the twenty-year-old musician court organist. Approximately two years later Leopold Wilhelm, a great enthusiast of art and music, sent his favourite organist to Rome to study under Giacomo Carissimi, who had previously refused to work directly for the Archduke. So if the court in Brussels wished to absorb the novelty inherent in Rome's

contribution to the development of liturgical and secular music, the only way to proceed was to send its most gifted scion directly to the source.

In Rome Kerll probably got to know Johann Jakob Froberger, who had studied under Frescobaldi and who was in contact with Carissimi and the Jesuit father Athanasius Kircher, who was later to publish for the first time a piece by both German musicians in his *Musurgia universalis* (1650).

In due course Kerll returned to his post in Brussels, which he held until his benefactor was forced to withdraw on account of ill health. There were other positions to be filled, however, and in 1656 Ferdinand Maria, Elector of Bavaria, appointed Kerll deputy *Kapellmeister* and then *Kapellmeister* in Munich. During this latter period, as well as teaching Agostino Steffani, Kerll wrote a number of operas. Although unfortunately only the librettos have come down to us, it is nevertheless possible to form an idea of the style of the music by a comparative study of the sacred play *Pia et fortis mulier*. During the same period he also composed some splendid church music, such as the collection of sacred concertos *Delectus sacrarum cantionum* (1669) and numerous masses that combined innovative handling of the concertante style and a distinctly experimental approach to counterpoint. As with his collection of liturgical works for the organ, these compositions established him as one of the great masters of the learned style of the second half of the 1600s.

The performance of one of his masses during the coronation of Emperor Leopold I in Frankfurt in 1658 gave Kerll an opportunity to show off his incredible talents as a keyboard performer. Having received a subject from the sovereign himself, he duly proceeded to improvise on this at the organ, thereby creating an event that became so famous as to be recalled yet again in 1740 by Johann Mattheson. Kerll's great gifts probably accounted for his elevation to the ranks of the nobility in 1664 at the behest of the Emperor. When he left his post in Munich in 1673, it was on account of a major controversy with the Italian court singers, who simply could not and would not accept the unusual intervals and audacious passages that disregarded the

conventionally accepted rules of composition.

That same year Kerll turned up in Vienna, although no documents exist that might confirm an appointment as organist at St. Stephen's Cathedral. Documentary evidence is also lacking to support the hypothesis that Johann Pachelbel, Georg Reutter the Elder and Johann Joseph Fux studied under him in this period. However, we do have proof of his friendship with Alessandro Poglietti, whose daughter, Anna Catharina Paulina, was christened in 1675 with Kerll acting as godfather. That same year Leopold I granted him a pension, and in 1677 employed him directly as one of his court organists. Sadly the Vienna period also coincided with two tragic events. In 1679 an outbreak of the Plague claimed almost 100,000 victims, who probably included Kerll's first wife. It was in those very weeks that he composed his organ masterpiece, the verses for the eight notes of the *Magnificat*, published in Munich in 1686 with the title *Modulatio organica*. In 1683 the imperial city was besieged by the Turks: the death of his friend and colleague Alessandro Poglietti must have been a source of great grief to him, to judge by the *Missa in fletu solatium* that he wrote to commemorate the atmosphere of those days.

From 1683 Kerll was back in Munich, where in 1689 he published his most imposing work, the *Missae sex*, each one briefly described in the preface. The whole collection was dedicated to Leopold I, who was also a composer of sacred music.

According to Wolfgang Caspar Printz's contemporary account, Kerll may also have spent some time in Augsburg, but there is no documentary evidence to support this. During these latter years Kerll also taught Franz Xaver Murschhauser, who was enormously influenced by him, especially as regards the organ versets contained in his *Octi-tonium novum organicum* (1696).

Kerll died in 1693 and was buried in the crypt of the Augustinian Monastery in Munich.

In the edition of the *Magnificat* mentioned above, there is a lengthy introduction in Latin in which the composer arms himself with sarcasm and learned references

to mythology and classicism to deplore the way his keyboard works and sacred compositions often circulated with attributions to other musicians. For the first time in the history of music he provided a catalogue that he himself had compiled featuring the musical *incipits* of his harpsichord and organ compositions. The present recording focuses on these very works, which speak eloquently for the 17th century keyboard tradition of Italianate inspiration: eight Toccatas, six Canzonas, one *Capriccio sopra il Cucu*, one *Battaglia*, one *Passacaglia*, one *Ciaccona* and four Suites.

Kerll's keyboard music circulated extensively between the 17th and 18th centuries, considerably influencing a number of important composers. These included Johann Pachelbel, Johann Krieger, Johann Speth, his pupil Franz Xaver Murschhausen, Georg Friedrich Händel, who adapted the entire fourth Canzona for the chorus "Egypt was glad when they departed" in the Oratorio *Israel in Egypt* and used part of the *Capriccio Sopra il Cucu* in the second movement of the Organ Concerto HWV 295, and Johann Sebastian Bach, who, according to Carl Philipp Emanuel, studied Kerll's keyboard works as a youngster and based the *Sanctus* BWV 241 on Kerll's *Missa superba*.

This recording is based on critical collation of over thirty sources. Some of these manuscripts are dated around the middle of the 1670s, which suggests that most of Kerll's keyboard works, with the exception of the organ *versetti* and probably also the Suites, date back to the first part of his career.

Apart from the Suites, all the pieces clearly reveal the influence of Girolamo Frescobaldi, especially as conveyed by the printed editions of 1637. These innovations blend with other elements of novelty introduced by Frescobaldi's pupil, Johann Jakob Froberger, such as the predilection for concluding certain toccatas with gigue-like sections and the more modern handling of thematic material in the imitative sections. In his toccatas Kerll takes to their extreme virtuoso consequences the technical innovations and figurations to be found in Frescobaldi, especially in his ninth Toccata of the second book. The predilection of the German composer for the long trill

passages, often in both hands at the same time (for instance at the end of the *Toccata prima*), the double passages in the same hand where there is not only a trill but also a melodic development in another voice (in the finale of the *Toccata seconda*), the rapid successions of descending octaves (at the beginning of the *Toccata quinta*) all seem to derive from the *exemplum* that Frescobaldi provided in the piece mentioned above. Little wonder, then, that the Italian composer himself concluded his composition with the note “*non senza fatica si giunge al fine*”...

Kerll's toccatas are arranged according to the eight modes in the versions that underwent change during the seventeenth century in order to ensure that the singing was comfortably within the range of each voice, thanks to the progressive adoption of tuning systems that permitted on fixed-pitch instruments more flexibility than meantone temperament. While the second mode was traditionally transposed to the upper fourth on G, the first, sixth and eighth modes maintained regular positions, the third mode of the *Toccata terza* is used with *finalis* A, and in the *Toccata quarta* the fourth mode effectively corresponds to an E minor (even supplied with the F sharp in the key signature). The fifth mode acts like a modern C major. Although at the time the seventh mode frequently acted like a pseudo D major, in the *Toccata settima* it ends on G and therefore is hard to distinguish from the eighth mode of the following and last toccata.

Kerll had a predilection for rapid scales and progressions that call for great manual agility. Often the free passages reminiscent of Frescobaldi's adagios unexpectedly turn into very lively sections. The fourth Toccata presents a magnificent and highly individual handling of the traditional “*Durezza e Ligature*” that brings to mind Frescobaldi's two Toccatas and Capriccio of the same genre, and the two grand Toccatas for the Elevation. Here Kerll gives free rein to his skill in counterpoint, with a surprising use of double counterpoint applied to the *genus chromaticum* – further developed in an extreme way in the Kyrie and in the Amen of the *Missa in fletu solatium*, where he instructs the basso continuo player to avoid accurately any

consonance. It was probably this taste for unusual chromatism that upset the Italian singers at the Munich court, a controversy that ultimately caused the move to Vienna mentioned above.

A number of elements of the *stylus phantasticus* characteristic of Frescobaldi's toccatas “*sopra i Pedali per l'Organo*” are included and further developed in the *Toccata sesta*, the only one that is specifically for the organ. In this work, improvisation formulas are carried out on long pedal notes, thereby making full and effective use of the sonority of the *organo pieno*.

As with the toccatas, the six highly variegated canzonas are also arranged according to the sequence described above, with the exception of the third toccata, in the first mode, and the sixth, in the eighth. Kerll echoes and develops the canzonas tradition established in Frescobaldi's second book, and indeed the style derived from it by Froberger. The rhythmic mutation of the subjects in the various sections is skilfully handled, with recourse to inversion and diminution. Like his predecessors, in the *Canzone seconda* Kerll dissolves the conclusion of the ternary imitative section in a toccata-like development in “*tempo imperfetto*”. In the demanding *Canzone terza* there is a bizarre passage in the middle of the composition with a suggestive double progression alternately played by the two hands that calls for great agility. Like the sixth, this canzona ends with a ternary dance, a solution that Froberger also favoured, as we have already said in relation to the toccatas. The *incipit* of the first subject of the *Canzone prima*, the *Canzone terza* and the *Canzone quarta* features the typical fast repetition of the same note frequently found in southern German keyboard compositions. Borrowed from the language of wind and bowed string instruments of the period, it turns up again in some verses of the *Modulatio organica*.

The *Capriccio sopra il Cucu* is Kerll's contribution to a genre established by Frescobaldi, who had written a piece using this very title. It is performed here in the version found in the Göttweig, Bologna, Munich and Regensburg manuscripts, without the insertions and alterations that were probably added later and that feature

in the other sources. Following the regular, four-voice exposition, the myriad instances of the call of the cuckoo seem to create a dialogue of growing, almost erotic intensity between two birds, culminating in the climax of the end. (Kerll's friend Poglietti, who wrote the wonderful *Rossignolo* cycle, also had a passion for pieces inspired by various birdcalls, addressing the subject of rendering them in music in his *Compendium*).

Frescobaldi also provided the model for the two series of variations on ground bass (*Ciaccona* and *Passacaglia*). Just as Kerll had borrowed from the great Italian composer, so later composers such as Pachelbel, Krieger, Muffat and Fischer found inspiration in his compositions for their own efforts using the same *bassi ostinati*. The *Passacaglia*, along with the *Battaglia*, turned out to be Kerll's longest keyboard work.

Erroneously attributed to Cabanilles by two Spanish sources, this latter capriccio appears in Kerll's thematic catalogue. This album presents the first ever recording of the complete version of the work found in the manuscript kept at the Benedictine Abbey in Göttweig. It thus includes the *Presto* that Adolf Sandberger believed to be spurious. In actual fact it is a perfect example of a "Scaramuz[z]a", as it is described in the Munich manuscript. The Austrian source is also the only version in which the order of the sections is, in all likelihood, correct, which means that the music is deliberately shaped as a more extensive suite than the genre addressed by Frescobaldi in his piece of the same name. In the Spanish sources mentioned above, the last section bears the title "La Victoria", which rightly conjures up the idea of a triumphant happy ending.

Quintessential chamber works, the four suites largely follow in Froberger's footsteps, two of them consisting of four dances, and the other two of three. With the former, the sequences both conclude with a gigue, while with the latter the lack of a fourth dance is counterbalanced by the addition of embellished variations for each dance (called *Partitas*). Skilful use of the *style brisé* prevails throughout, occasionally becoming highly expressive.

There are unresolved issues regarding the learned and austere *Ricercata* published

in Kircher's *Musurgia universalis* in Rome in 1650 as a four-stave open score attributed to Kerll. The piece was included in the tome as an illustration of how a composition could be transferred onto a cylinder devised for an automatic instrument. The work does not feature in the catalogue Kerll himself compiled, yet it does appear as the fourth piece in the numerous manuscripts containing the profound twelve Ricercars by Kerll's friend, Alessandro Poglietti. Kircher may have been mistaken in the attribution, which would account for the fact that the piece was not included in the catalogue. Alternatively, Kerll himself may have felt that the printed attribution in the *Musurgia* was sufficient to avoid future plagiarism. At all events, the friendship between Kerll and Poglietti considerably complicates the whole question.

The *Modulatio organica* was written as a gift for the Austrian Duchess Maria Antonia on the occasion of her marriage to the Elector of Bavaria and is the most important organ work written for the Catholic liturgy since the times of Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali*. Kerll's musical inventions were rooted in the style of the "*prima prattica*". Furthermore, he needed all his skill to address the challenge of keeping the contrapuntal development within the constraints imposed by the liturgy as regards duration, as the organist played short versets in alternation with the *cantus planus*, in this case of the *Magnificat*.

In the first verses of each tone (*Anima mea Dominum*) he counterpointed the entire *cantus firmus* entrusted to the soprano. Like the final verses in the customary toccata style, they are most likely intended for the *plenum*. The five central verses, which are strictly imitative, gave the player the chance to use the registers available in the different organs built within the Catholic lands of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (for instance the instrument built by Egedacher for the *Pfarrkirche* in Vornbach am Inn, used in this recording), in compliance with the *affetto* of the respective text, as Kerll specifically instructed in the preface. The ideas and potential implicit in the material must have spurred the composer's imagination for quite some time. In the end he even chose to develop in detail the subject of the *Versus Quia*

*respexit* of the *Magnificat Primi toni*, which acted as the base for the *Missa non sine quare*. The actual structure of the ecclesiastical tones and the cadenzas in this work sometimes differs to that of the toccatas. For example, in the seventh tone Kerll uses the *differentiae* of the psalm tones. Moreover, the collection also often features subjects with the composer's beloved rapid repetitions of the same note in the head, displays of virtuoso brilliance in passages of double trills, and accentuation of the *pathos* by means of chromatism.

The performance on this album is also based on systematic study of the notation of embellishments in the keyboard music influenced by Frescobaldi. Thanks to Cesare Atticciati's research, it is no longer acceptable to play literally the three formulas used by Frescobaldi to indicate in full the trills within the value of the crotchet: that starting with the main note, that beginning on the upper note and ending on the lower note, and that starting on the main note with lower final note. Moreover, the Ferrarese composer demanded that the successions of trills should not be rhythmically "synchronised note to note". In his pieces of Frescobaldian influence, especially in the toccata-like passages, Kerll (and indeed Froberger) adopts the same principle of Italian origin whereby the embellishments are written *per extensum* without recourse to graphic symbols, yet without expecting the rhythm thus approximately portrayed to be respected during performance. The same thing can be extended to the trills developed within values longer than a crotchet. In the Suites, on the other hand, the trills are almost always indicated by means of a graphic sign (here again, in keeping with Froberger), and are played starting on the main note in keeping with Italian practice, as documented by Kerll's pupil Murschhauser. Indeed, until French influence gradually spread through Germany at the beginning of the following century, the French manner of the trill beginning on the upper note is not found in German sources. When Kerll wishes to include it in his music, he spells it out explicitly.

As we have already pointed out, Kerll's keyboard compositions not only brought further development to an earlier tradition, but also became models of consummate

importance for keyboard music in south and central Germany. Along with his sumptuous masses, the sacred concertos and what has come down to us of his dramatic works, these compositions greatly helped shape the legacy of the composer described by Hans T. David as "the outstanding musical figure in the Catholic region of the Holy Roman Empire".

In conclusion, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who have made this album possible: Francesca Tosolini for her constant support in every stage of production and editing; Tanja Kemper and the parish community of Vornbach for allowing us to record on the Egedacher organ, on the banks of the river Inn; Barthélemy Formentelli, Romain Legros and Marco Vincenzi for lending me their harpsichords; Fabio Roversi Monaco and the staff of *Genus Bononiae* who let me use the Sala Vasari in the ex Convento di San Michele in Bosco in my own city of Bologna; and lastly Anna Katarzyna Zaręba, who supported me yet again in the organization, and quite often also tuned the harpsichords.

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Translation by Kate Singleton and Anna Katarzyna Zaręba



Hailed in November 2011 by the German magazine *FonoForum* as “entering into the top league of the international Bach interpreters” **Matteo Messori** – born in 1976 in Bologna (Italy) – is active as harpsichordist, organist, clavichordist, conductor and composer, and has recorded 35 albums.

Since 2014 he is Organ and Organ Composition professor at the Genoa Conservatory and teaches also Harpsichord and Historical keyboards at the Bergamo Conservatory (where he taught Organ from 2002 till 2014).

After showing an early interest in music, he began his piano studies at the age of four, continuing in the Bologna Conservatory under Franca Fogli, first student in Bologna of the young Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. He later studied Organ and Composition with Umberto Pineschi at the Bologna Conservatory, graduating *cum laude*. He also studied Harpsichord with Sergio Vartolo, graduating *cum laude* at the Venice Conservatory, and Musicology at the University of his native city.

In 1998 he won the first prize at the International harpsichord competition “G. Gambi” in Pesaro (Italy). He performs regularly as a soloist throughout Europe and America. Among his important recitals, he performed in the glorious Thomaskirche in Leipzig (Germany, 2004) and, two times, at the Great Hall of the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic (Russia, 2011 and 2012).

As the conductor and music director of the *Cappella Augustana* ensemble he debuted in 2000, recording the first album dedicated entirely to the sacred music of the *Kapellmeister* in Dresden and organist at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, Vincenzo Albrici (1631-1687), for the Swedish label *Musica Rediviva*. Between 2003 and 2008, he conducted *Cappella Augustana* in the *Heinrich Schütz Edition* for *Brilliant Classics* (19 albums), a great success with the public and critics.

He recorded the third part of the *Clavierübung*, *The Art of Fugue*, the *Musical Offering*, the Schübler Chorales, the great organ Preludes and Fugues and the Canonical Variations, Inventions & Sinfonias by Johann Sebastian Bach, the complete keyboard works by the Ferrarese composer Luzzasco Luzzaschi and by Johann Caspar Kerll. He took part, as clavichordist, in the movie *Sul nome B.A.C.H.*.

He conducted the State Chamber Orchestra of the Republic of Belarus at the Minsk Philharmonic (performing his compositions, among other works), as well as the first Italian stage performance of the Händel's oratorio *La Bellezza ravveduta*. He also conducted *Capella Cracoviensis* in the Cracow Philharmonic (Poland), with the *Christmas Oratory* by Bach; cantatas and concerts by Bach at the Great Hall of the Saint Petersburg (Russia); motets by Bach in Bologna, Roma and L'Aquila (Italy); *Alta Capella* in sacred music by Mozart and Haydn (in Poland).

As harpsichordist he performed with the *Wiener Philharmoniker* and Daniel Harding at the Vienna Konzerthaus (2011).

He published numerous musicological articles, essays and biographical notes for the German music dictionary *MGG online*, the Italian *Enciclopedia Treccani*, for the *Bach-Jahrbuch*, *Schütz-Jahrbuch*, *Fonti Musicali Italiane* and *La Gazzetta (Deutsche Rossini Gesellschaft)*.

He arranged and composed several string parts for the famous German soprano Simone Kermes and the early music ensemble *La Magnifica Comunità*, published in the *Sony Classics* album *Love*.



GENUS BONONIAE

MUSEI NELLA CITTÀ

Recording: August 2012, Sala Vasari (former Convento di San Michele in Bosco, now Istituto Ortopedico Rizzoli), Bologna, Italy; Pfarrkirche Mariä Himmelfahrt, Vornbach am Inn, Germany  
Recording, mixing and mastering: Michael Seberich (Bozen/Bolzano)

Recording, postproduction assistant, editing: Francesca Tosolini

Cover: Diana and Callisto (1676) by Johann Spillenberger (1628-1679)

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