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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

FLORENTINE ROMANTIC ORGAN MUSIC

Casini · Casamorata · Maglioni

Matteo Venturini

*at the Vincenzo Colonna - Filippo Tronci organ in Corsanico,
and the Serassi organ in Sestri Levante*

Florentine Romantic Organ Music

Padre Antonio Casini (sec. XIX)

1. Offertorio	5'22	15. No.11 Sostenuto	1'51
2. Elevazione	5'34	16. No.12 A Cappella	2'45
3. Post communio	2'53		
4. Toccata	2'52	Messa Completa for organ	

Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata

(1807-1881)

12 brevi esercizi in forma di versetti per organo

12 short exercises in the form of verses for organ

5. No.1 Allegro	1'05		
6. No.2 Andante	2'07		
7. No.3 Andante	1'56		
8. No.4 Allegretto	1'05		
9. No.5 Presto	0'56		
10. No.6 Andante	1'48		
11. No.7 Allegro	1'07		
12. No.8 Adagio	1'31		
13. No.9 Allegro	1'26		
14. No.10 Allegro	1'27		

17. Preludio	1'46
18. Offertorio	3'03
19. Elevazione	5'07
20. Comunione	4'50
21. Toccata	1'20

Giovacchino Maglioni (1814-1888) from the "Istituzioni Teorico-Pratiche per Organo - Parte Terza"

22. Post communio - <i>In voce exultationis resonant epulantes in mensa Domini</i>	3'08
23. Elevazione - <i>Pregbiera per organo</i>	8'10
24. Corale XXXII - <i>In festo S. Laurentii</i>	3'45

Matteo Venturini organ

Tracks 1-4: at the Vincenzo Colonna – Filippo Tronci organ in Corsanico

Tracks 5-24: at the Serassi organ in Sestri Levante

This recording illustrates the development of the Tuscan organ school of the 19th century. The collection ranges from Father Antonio Casini's brilliant compositions, with their echoes of contemporary opera, to the classical refinement of Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata, whose work occasionally reveals a recourse to counterpoint, and to the heartfelt romanticism of Maglioni, where melodic élan and imposing sound are accompanied by extraordinary virtuoso skill with the instrument, including the far-reaching use of the Pedal as an independent voice of the compositions.

Padre Antonio Casini (19th century) is practically unknown today as a composer. In an article publicising his compositions, he was described as follows by *La Civiltà Cattolica* (XXVI, series IX, Vol. V, n. 589): "Gifted and felicitous maestro. His style is on the one hand clear and lively, and on the other grave and dignified, such that it is particularly well suited to the Church. His modulations are lovely and harmonious, and if on occasion they seem to echo commonplace concepts, these are so skilfully adapted to his style that they appear to be original."

Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata (Würzburg 15 May 1807 – Florence 24 September 1881) was an outstanding figure in Florentine musical life. Composer, music critic and administrator, he became a considerable authority in Italy and abroad, especially in the field of musicology.

In 1828 he took a degree in law (his lifelong signature was «Avv. Casamorata» - in Italian Avv. is the abbreviation of 'Avvocato', or lawyer), and shortly afterwards was elected honorary member of the Academy of Fine Arts. Following a somewhat halting early career in the theatre, his interest in music led him to focus on criticism and historical research. He was one of the founders and President of the Regio Istituto Musicale Fiorentino, the institution now known as the Luigi Cherubini Music Conservatoire.

Throughout his life, Casamorata nurtured a deep-rooted interest in sacred music and the organ. He was an outspoken critic of certain bad habits that had become

increasingly widespread in church music, often turning the churches themselves into something akin to opera house foyers. He favoured a return to earlier values and reform, albeit expressed in a contemporary musical idiom, and in this he had much in common with the new Cecilian Movement, which promoted throughout Europe reform of church music based on Gregorian chant and Renaissance polyphony.

His great passion and expertise regarding the organ, its technical development and the relative literature, comes clearly to the fore in a long article published in 1844 in three instalments in the *Gazzetta Musicale* of Milan.

Casamorata believed that it was a great pity there were no special sections devoted to the organ in Italian Conservatoires, and indeed that treatises on the subject were few and far between. By way of partial remedy, the Regio Istituto Musicale was soon enriched with a school of organ studies directed by the already famous maestro Giovacchino Maglioni.

Written as a teaching tool for use at the newly founded organ school in Florence, the *Twelve short exercises* also speak for Casamorata's unfailing creative vein. Limpid and almost classical in style, they focus in particular on developing independence in pedal use with respect to the phrasing entrusted to the manual keyboards. The rhythms and sonority of the pieces vary, but despite their brevity they manage to explore the many resources of what at the time was considered the modern organ.

From canons to accompanied melodies and strict fugues, they are examples of how to compose and improvise for the organ that reveal Casamorata's great technical mastery. Stylistically they deliberately steer clear of opera and have more in common with instrumental and chamber music, which the composer particularly enjoyed. In 1877 Casamorata divulged his own personal contribution to the reform of church music: the *Messa completa* for organ published in volume 6 of *Musica Sacra*.

Giovacchino Maglioni (Pontassieve 1808 or 1809 – Florence 1888) was highly active as a musician in 19th century Florence. Although his output comprised practically all the fashionable genres of the period, from opera to instrumental music,

he was considered an absolute authority when it came to sacred music, especially works for the organ.

He also organized musical events that were very popular: the chamber music concerts held in the Sala Ciampolini in Borgo de' Greci in Florence (now Sala Maglioni), and above all those that took place in the Church of San Barnaba, where the new Serassi organ was usually accompanied by singers and instrumentalists. Maglioni was the organist at San Lorenzo, and was already famous when Casamorata invited him to teach the organ classes at the Regio Istituto Musicale Fiorentino.

Maglioni shared Casamorata's desire to reform the style of compositions for the organ, and indeed sacred music in general, rejecting what he saw as the hackneyed practices of the time and pursuing a stylistic ideal that reconciled classicism with a contemporary harmonic idiom. To achieve this he was able to make good use of the phonic and technical innovations of the modern organ. The terms he used to describe his compositions clearly reveal his preferred stylistic universe: Chorale, Sonata, Concerto...

His job at the Regio Istituto Musicale urged Maglioni to address all aspects of teaching the organ, in keeping with his farsighted aspirations. At the time playing the organ was largely considered a task for pianists prepared to adapt their touch to the specific features of the new instrument. They thus tended to cope with the various combinations of stops and the pedal board (usually short) as best as they could, largely relying on improvisation.

As regards technique and repertoire, evidently the general level of performance was not entirely satisfactory: complaints flowed in from all sides. Professional musicians, amateur players and music lovers became increasingly aware of the real need for a serious and thorough course of studies specifically devoted to the organ.

It was this that persuaded Maglioni to prepare a printed edition of his *Istituzioni teorico-pratiche per Organo*, a truly extensive work that won national recognition and an award at the Universal Exhibition held in Paris in 1878.

Maglioni had been engaged as professor of Organ studies at the Regio Istituto for over ten years when he gathered together his *Istituzioni*. Made up of three parts, their breadth and content make them the most important organ method published in Italy during the 19th century. All the compositions included, which envisaged performance and interpretation levels that were considerably superior to those common at the time, make use of all the potential sound range of the modern organ. Clearly what the composer had in mind was a new style of organ works, one that freed the church instrument of all trite echoes of opera. The outcome was highly varied and exuberant, and to this day requires considerable technical and interpretative gifts on the part of the organist.

The works included in this recording come from the *Terza Parte* (Third Part) of the *Istituzioni*, which speaks clearly for Maglioni's desire to achieve a compositional style in keeping with new expressive requirements. An outstanding figure in the world of 19th century Florentine organ music, Maglioni created a veritable school of great interest. His works, now proposed to the Musicphiles, are the missing link between the prevailing breezy, operatic orchestral style and the revolution introduced by the imminent Cecilian Movement.

To capture the original soundscape and spirit envisaged by the composers, for this recording organist Matteo Venturini has selected two period instruments. With its brilliant, direct voice, the monumental organ at Corsanico (Vincenzo Colonna 1606 / Agati-Tronci 1899) lends itself perfectly to the humorous compositions of Father Antonio Casini. The organ in the Basilica di Santa Maria di Nazareth in Sestri Levante (Fratelli Serassi 1832, op. 465), with its intriguing solo register sound and magnificent *tutti* voices, was chosen for the works by Casamorata and Maglioni.

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Translated by Kate Singleton



Vincenzo Colonna (1602-1606), Filippo Tronci (1899), Parish church of San Michele Arcangelo at Corsanico, Lucca. Restored by Riccardo Lorenzini (2005).

Bombarde ai pedali [16']	Principale di 16'
Trombe basse [8']	Principale Basso [8']
Trombe soprane [8']	Principale Soprano [8']
Clarone nei bassi [4']	Ottava Bassa
Oboe nei soprani [8']	Ottava Soprana
Fagotto nei bassi [8']	Decimaquinta
Cornetto [4', 2' 2/3 and 1' 3/5] nei soprani	Ripieno di 4 file
Ottavino [2'] nei soprani	Flauto in ottava
Voce angelica nei soprani [8']	Voce umana nei soprani [8']
Viola nei bassi [4']	Salicionale [8', from C2]
Terza mano nei soprani	Contrabbassi e bassi [16'+8']
Campanelli (nei soprani)	

Manual of 56 keys (C-g^m)
 Pedalboard of 17 keys (C-e^o), with only 12 real notes.
 The *bassi* (bass) and *soprani* (treble) divided between e' and f'.
 Accessories: Timpano, Polisire, Terza mano

Fratelli Serassi (1832), Op.465, Fratelli Lingiardi (1918), Basilica of Saint Mary of Nazareth, Sestri Levante, Genoa.
 Restored by Dell'Orto e Lanzini (2012).

Terza mano	Principale 16' bassi
Cornetto I soprani	Principale 16' soprani
Cornetto II soprani	Principale 8' bassi
Fagotto bassi [8']	Principale 8' soprani
Tromba soprani [8']	Ottava bassi
Clarone bassi [4']	Ottava soprani
Corno inglese soprani [16']	Duodecima
Viola Bassi [4']	Decimaquinta
Flauto Traverso [8']	Decimanona
Flauto in VIII	Vigesimaseconda
Violone bassi [8']	Vigesimasesta e nona
Violino soprani [8']	Trigesima terza e sesta
Bombarda in 16' [al pedale]	Quadragesima prima e terza
Voce Umana	Controbassi e rinforzi [16'+8']
Tremolo	unione del tasto al pedale

Manual of 56 keys (C-g^m)
 Pedalboard of 24 keys (C-b^o)
 The *bassi* (bass) and *soprani* (treble) divided between b^o and c'.
 Accessories: Tremolo, I-Ped., Polisire, Terza mano





Matteo Venturini was born in Florence in 1981 and graduated “cum laude” at the Luigi Cherubini Conservatoire in Florence, with diplomas in organ and composition. He continued his studies at the Musikhochschule in Freiburg (Germany), under the guidance of Klemens Schnorr, receiving a diploma as Organ Concert Master “with honours” (2008). Later he studied at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome, where he obtained a Post-Grad Diploma “cum laude” in organ improvisation (2011) with Theo Flury. Finally he obtained a master's degree “with honours” (2013) at the

Music Conservatoire in Perugia, under the guidance of Luca Scandali. His thesis was on the organ works of Daniel Magnus Gronau.

Winner of eight organ competitions, he has recorded twenty CDs for various labels, including Fugatto and Brilliant Classics. He has also published his own compositions, edited choral and organ music for Carrara, and recorded for Radio 3, Vatican Radio and the German Südwestrundfunk.

He performs regularly in some of the most important cathedrals of the world (London, New York, Mexico City, Fulda, Freiburg im Breisgau, Florence, etc.), is professor of Organ at the Cosenza Conservatoire (Italy), visiting professor at the Organistas de México Association (Mexico City) and organist at the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta in San Miniato (Pisa). He is artistic director of the association Amici dell’Organo della Pace di Sant’Anna di Stazzema (Lucca).

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