ITALIAN
Romantics

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

RESPIGHI

ORCHESTRAL WORKS

CHAMBER MUSIC

PIANO WORKS

Ottorino Respighi (1797–1828)

TRACK LISTS

ORCHESTRAL WORKS

CD1 73’12

FESTE ROMANE (1928)

1	I.	Circenses	5’09
2	II.	Il giubileo	8’22
3	III.	L’Ottobrata	7’37
4	IV.	La Befana	5’40

FONTANE DI ROMA (1916)

5	I.	La fontana di Valle Giulia all’alba	5’29
6	II.	La fontana del Tritone al mattino	2’34
7	III.	La fontana di Trevi al meriggio	3’42
8	IV.	La fontana di Villa Medici al tramonto	7’47

PINI DI ROMA (1924)

9	I.	I pini di Villa Borghese	2’58
10	II.	Pini presso una catacomba	7’40
11	III.	I pini del Gianicolo	9’17
12	IV.	I pini della Via Appia	6’34

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 7-8 February 2010, Auditorium Conciliazione, Rome, Italy
Producer: Fondazione Arts Academy
Engineer: Piero Schiavoni
Music assistant: Désirée Scuccuglia
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CD2 76’22

GLI UCCELLI (1927)
Suite for chamber orchestra after Baroque keyboard works

1	I.	Preludio (after Bernardo Pasquini, 1637-1710)	3’05
2	II.	La colomba (after Jacques de Gallot, c.1625-c.1695)	5’26
3	III.	La gallina (after Jean-Philippe Rameau, 1683-1764)	3’13
4	IV.	L’usignuolo (after 16th-century anon., transcribed by Jacob van Eyck)	4’27
5	V.	Il cuccù (after Bernardo Pasquini)	5’16

SUITE FOR STRINGS (1902)

6	I.	Ciaccona	9’15
7	II.	Siciliana	6’02
8	III.	Giga	3’04
9	IV.	Sarabanda	5’56
10	V.	Burlesca	2’52
11	VI.	Rigaudon	3’59

SUITE IN G (1905) for strings and organ

12	I.	Preludio	4’27
13	II.	Aria	5’54
14	III.	Pastorale	6’36
15	IV.	Cantico	6’26

Antonio Palcich *organ* (12–15)

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 1–2 July 2009, OSR Studios, Rome, Italy
Producer: Fondazione Arts Academy
Engineer: Piero Schiavoni
Music assistant: Désirée Scuccuglia
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CD3 **73’37**

IMPRESSIONI BRASILIANE (1928)

1	I.	Notte tropicale	9’41
2	II.	Butantan	5’49
3	III.	Canzone e Danza	5’17

TRITTICO BOTTICELLIANO (1927)

4	I.	La primavera	6’09
5	II.	L’adorazione dei Magi	8’24
6	III.	La nascita di Venere	6’20

VETRATE DI CHIESA (1925–6)

7	I.	La fuga in Egitto	6’35
8	II.	San Michele Arcangelo	7’35
9	III.	Il mattutino di Santa Chiara	5’03
10	IV.	San Gregorio Magno	10’28

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 14–19 January (4–6) & 15–17 July (1–3) 2009, OSR Studios, Rome, Italy;
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CD4 **67’50**

CONCERTO A CINQUE (1933)
for oboe, trumpet, violin, double bass, piano and strings

1	I.	Moderato - Allegro - Grave	7’20
2	II.	Adagio	10’12
3	III.	Allegro vivo - Allegro moderato - Largo	6’13

Andrea Tenaglia *oboe*
Vincenzo Valenti *trumpet*
Chiara Petrucci *violin*
Maurizio Turriziani *double bass*
Désirée Scuccuglia *piano*

POEMA AUTUNNALE (1925) for violin and orchestra

4		Calmo - Molto lento - Largamente - Allegro moderato – Allegro con spirito - Moderato - Tranquillo - Lento – Calmo come al principio	14’40

CONCERTO ALL’ANTICA (1908) for violin and orchestra

5	I.	Allegro	12’22
6	II.	Adagio non troppo	8’11
7	III.	Vivace	8’35

Vadim Brodski *violin*

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 6–10 July 2009, OSR Studios, Rome, Italy (1–3); 14–19 April 2010, Auditorium Conciliazione, Rome, Italy (4–7)
Producer: Fondazione Arts Academy
Engineer: Piero Schiavoni
Music assistant: Désirée Scuccuglia
Editing and mixing: Matteo de Rossi & Michele Sganga, Sonicview Studio
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CD5 **70’12**

CONCERTO GREGORIANO (1921) for violin and orchestra

1 I. Andante tranquillo - Allegro molto moderato - Calmo, tempo I 9’04
2 II. Andante espressivo e sostenuto 9’58
3 III. Finale (Alleluja): Allegro energico 12’44

TOCCATA (1928) for piano and orchestra

4 Grave, Allegro moderato - Andante lento ed espressivo – Allegro vivo 24’54

5 **ADAGIO CON VARIAZIONI** (1921) for cello and orchestra 13’16

Vadim Brodski *violin* (1–3)
Chiara Bertoglio *piano* (4)
Andrea Noferini *cello* (5)

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 30 June-1 July 2009 (4) & 12 February 2010 (5), OSR Studios, Rome, Italy; 10–11 October 2009 (1-3), Auditorium Conciliazione, Rome, Italy
Producer: Fondazione Arts Academy
Engineer: Schiavone Piero
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CD6 **72’19**

SINFONIA DRAMMATICA (1913–14)

1 I. Allegro energico 26’09
2 II. Andante sostenuto 16’37
3 III. Allegro impetuoso 19’15

FANTASIA SLAVA (1903) for piano and orchestra

4 Andante - Presto - Tempo I - Lento - Allegro 10’11

Désirée Scuccuglia *piano* (4)

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 18 June (4) & 23–24 October (1–3) 2011, Auditorium Conciliazione, Rome, Italy
Producer: Fondazione Arts Academy
Engineer: Piero Schiavone
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CD7 **76’52**

ANTICHE DANZE ED ARIE PER LIUTO
SUITE NO.1 (1917)

1 I. Balletto detto ‘Il conte Orlando’ [Simone Molinaro]: Allegretto moderato 4’05
2 II. Gagliarda [Vincenzo Galilei]: Allegro moderato – Andantino mosso 3’24
3 III. Villanella [anon., end of 16th century]: Andante cantabile 4’22
4 IV. Passo mezzo e mascherada (anon., end of 16th century): Allegro vivo - Vivacissimo - Allegretto - Vivace - Allegretto – Vivo - Vivacissimo - Tempo I 3’36

SUITE NO.2 (1923)

5	I.	Laura soave (Balletto con gagliarda, saltarello e canario) [Fabrizio Caroso, c.1531]: Andantino - Allegro marcato – Lo stesso tempo - Andantino	3’32
6	II.	Danza rustica [Jean- Baptiste Besard, c.1617]: Allegretto	3’50
7	III.	Campanae parisienses [anon. 17th-century melody]: Andante mosso - Aria [Mersenne Marin]: Largo espressivo	7’35
8	IV.	Bergamasca [Bernardo Gianoncelli, known as Il Bernardello]: Allegro	4’38

SUITE NO.3 (1931)

9	I.	Italiana [anon., late 16th century]: Andantino	2’59
10	II.	Arie di corte [Jean- Baptiste Besard, 16th century]: Andante cantabile - Allegretto - Vivace - Lento con grande espressione – Allegro vivace - Vivacissimo - Andante cantabile	6’57
11	III.	Siciliana [anon., late 16th century]: Andantino	3’46
12	IV.	Passacaglia [Lodovico Roncalli, 1692]: Maestoso - Vivace	3’17

ROSSINIANA (1925) Suite, after Rossini

13	I.	‘Capri e Taormina’ (Barcarola e siciliana): Allegretto – Andantino - Allegretto	6’01
14	II.	Lamento: Andantino maestoso	7’59
15	III.	Intermezzo: Allegretto - Poco più mosso - Tempo I	2’23
16	IV.	Tarantella ‘puro sangue’ (con passaggio de la processione): Allegro vivacissimo - Andante religioso - Tempo I	7’56

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 5–6 January 2009 (9–16) & 4–5 March 2012 (1–8), Auditorium Conciliazione, Rome, Italy
Producer: Fondazione Arts Academy
Engineer: Piero Schiavoni
Musical assistant: Désirée Scuccuglia
Publisher: Ricordi
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CD8 **76’35**

CONCERTO IN MODO MISOLIDIO (1925) for piano and orchestra

1	I.	Moderato	19’12
2	II.	Lento – Andante con moto	9’17
3	III.	Passacaglia: Allegro energico	12’03

4 **METAMORPHOSEON MODI XII** (1930)

I.	Theme: Andante moderto	
II.	Modus I: Moderato non troppo	
III.	Modus II: Allegretto	
IV.	Modus III: Lento	
V.	Modus IV: Lento espressivo	
VI.	Modus V: Molto vivace	
VII.	Modus VI: Vivo	
VIII.	Modus VII: Cadenza	
IX.	Modus VIII: Andantino mosso	
X.	Modus IX: Lento non troppo	
XI.	Modus X: Molto allegro	
XII.	Modus XI: Molto allegro	
XIII.	Modus XII: Vivo non troppo	35’54

Désirée Scuccuglia *piano* (1–3)

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma
Francesco La Vecchia

Recording: 8 July 2011 (1–3) & 8–9 June 2012 (4), Auditorium Conciliazione, Rome, Italy
Producer: Fondazione Arts Academy
Engineer: Piero Schiavoni
Musical assistant: Désirée Scuccuglia
Publishers: Boosey & Hawkes (1–3); Ricordi (4)
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CHAMBER MUSIC

CD9 **59’44**

1 **QUARTETTO DORICO** 23’04

PIANO QUINTET IN F MINOR P.35

2. I. Allegro 9’52
3. II. Andante 1’48
4. III. Vivacissimo 4’07

DOPPIO QUARTET IN D MINOR P.27

5. I. Allegro 6’38
6. II. Adagio non troopo - Quasi Andante 5’46
7. III. Intermezzo. Allegro vivace ma non troppo 2’56
8. IV. Intermezzo. Presto all’ ungherese 5’28

Da Vinci Ensemble

Recording: 12-14 September 2024, BartokStudio, Bernareggio (MB), Italy
Sound engineer: Raffaele Cacciola
Technical assistant: Francesco Valastro
Editing and Mastering: BartokStudio
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CD10 **69’16**

VIOLIN SONATA IN D MINOR P.15 (1897)

1 I. Lento - Allegro - Lento - Assai animato 8’34
2 II. Adagio 6’42
3 III. Scherzo: Allegretto 4’52

SIX PIECES FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO P.31 (1902–5)

4 I. Berceuse 3’37
5 II. Melodia 2’57
6 III. Leggenda 5’02
7 IV. Valse caressante 4’13
8 V. Serenata 2’30
9 VI. Aria 5’33

VIOLIN SONATA IN B MINOR P.110 (1917)

10 I. Moderato 9’10
11 II. Andante espressivo 8’09
12 III. Allegro moderato ma energico 7’51

Fabio Paggioro *violin*
Massimiliano Ferrati *piano*

Recording: 2-4 February 2013, Sala Convegni, Parco della Palude di Onara, Padua, Italy
Recording producer: Désirée Fusi
Sound engineer, editing, mastering: Alessandro Simonetto
Violin: Vincentus postiglione, Naples 1899
Piano: Steinway Concert Grand, model D, prepared by Silvano Zanta of Zanta Pianoforti
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SOLO PIANO MUSIC

CD11 **70’59**

SONATA IN F MINOR P.016 (1897)
1 I. Allegro 6’41
2 II. Lento 6’06
3 III. Allegretto 3’07

SEI PEZZI P.044 (1903-05)
4 I. Valse Caressante 3’46
5 II. Canone 2’51
6 III. Notturno 5’02
7 IV. Minuetto 3’44
8 V. Studio 1’40
9 VI. Intermezzo - Serenata (from the opera *Re Enzo*) 2’25

ANTICHE DANZE ED ARIE PER LIUTO P.114 (1917-18)
10 I. Balletto detto ‘Il Conte Orlando’ (Simone Molinaro, 1599) 2’38
11 II. Villanella (anon., late 16th century) 3’57
12 III. Gagliarda (Vincenzo Galilei, c.1550) 3’25
13 IV. Italiana (anon., late 16th century) 2’54
14 V. Siciliana (anon., late 16th century) 3’00
15 VI. Passacaglia (Lodovico Roncalli, 1692) 3’10

TRE PRELUDI SU MELODIE GREGORIANE P.131 (1919)
16 I. Molto lento 5’09
17 II. Tempestoso 5’59
18 III. Lento 5’17

CD12 **62’10**

SONATA IN A MINOR P.004 (1895-96)
1 I. Allegro moderato 10’11
2 II. Andantino 4’28
3 III. Finale: Allegro vivace 5’34

4 **ANDANTE IN F P.006** (1895-96) 4’50
5 **ANDANTE IN D P.007** (1895-96) 3’44
6 **ALLEGRO IN B MINOR P.010** (1895-96) 3’46

SUITE P.022 (1898)
7 I. Vivace 1’08
8 II. Tema: Andante poco mosso 2’54
9 III. Sarabanda: Lento 3’42
10 IV. Allegro con brio 1’32
11 V. Presto 1’20

12 **PRELUDIO IN B FLAT MINOR P.023** (1898) 1’28
13 **PRELUDIO** from *Suite per pianoforte* P.043 (unfinished) (1903) 3’54
14 **PRELUDIO IN D MINOR P.043a** (1903) 2’47
15 **VARIAZIONI SINFONICHE P.028** (original version for piano solo) 10’43

Michele D’Ambrosio *piano*

Recording: 2–4 July 2014 & 3–4 July 2015, Salone Assunta, Radio Vaticana, Rome, Italy
Recording producer and post-production: Rosella Clementi
Musical director: Stefano Corato
Sound engineer, editing & mastering: Massimiliano D’Angelo
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NOTES

ORCHESTRAL WORKS (CD1-8)

Master of the game: Respighi, orchestral colourist supreme (CD 1 & 2)

By the time Respighi was appointed Professor of Composition at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome in 1913, he had achieved the highest level of technical proficiency as a musician: having studied orchestration in St Petersburg with the master of technique, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, he understood better than anyone else how to write for orchestra, and his studies in Berlin had also made him aware of what was happening on the European music scene. In terms of composition, however, Respighi had not yet demonstrated that he knew how to make the most of his astounding technique as a creative artist, and it was Rome that gave him the stimulus that he had perhaps hitherto lacked: his imagination fired by images, this city seemed to him the most beautiful; teeming with life, and with a history that was both serious and colourful, Classical and Baroque, where water and green spaces were harmoniously integrated into the urban landscape. This stimulus led to the works that shot him to fame, making him a leading figure on the international scene: three symphonic poems written between 1916 and 1928, each dedicated to one aspect of Rome – the water, the city observed through the pines, and its people seen through its popular celebrations.

With *Fontane di Roma*, composed in 1916, Respighi's career as a composer took off. After a disastrous first performance in 1917 under the conductor Antonio Guarnieri, it was almost an act of bravery on Toscanini's part to programme it at La Scala in 1918, and Respighi was so discouraged that he did not even travel to Milan to attend the performance. It was, however, a triumph: Ricordi wanted to publish the score, and the Bologna-born composer became famous overnight.

In his preface to the score Respighi writes: 'In this symphonic poem the composer has attempted to express sensations and sights suggested to him by four fountains of Rome, viewed at the time of day when they are most in harmony with their surroundings or when their beauty appears most atmospheric to the observer.' Each of the four sections, which follow without a break, is prefaced with a few words that define the atmosphere the composer wished to evoke: the sheep in the misty Roman dawn; a wild dance of naiads and tritons in the morning; the triumph of Neptune in the afternoon; the nostalgia of sunset, while the air is filled with the ringing of bells; the chirping of birds, and the barely perceptible sound of rustling branches before nightfall wraps the Eternal City in silence. It is an ideal journey through the day, moving from one part of the city to another and capturing its ever-changing colours – all of which is evoked in the music, with a wealth of invention.

Indeed, while music cannot paint pictures, it can evoke them, and in this respect Respighi works wonders: everything finds a place in this musical fresco, from the water gently gushing from the fountain of Valle Giulia, while the oboe evokes the countryside, to the birdsong at sunset by the fountain of the Villa Medici, cheerfully conveyed by the woodwind. Horns, too, are used symbolically to allude to the shells in the Triton fountain, like the noisy outburst of brass and strings that refers to the passing of Neptune's carriage in the Trevi fountain, while the bells that ring nostalgically in the final part and the liquid sounds of the celesta are directly descriptive. This move between directness and allusion, as one section leads into another, forms part of the seamless flow that Respighi creates to conjure up the ceaseless movement of the water. All in all there is a splendid use of allusions and quotations: listen to how, at the opening of the piece, the string figurations recall the placid flow of *Vltava* from Smetana's *Má vlast*.

The second fresco of this ideal Roman trilogy appeared in 1924, and despite the slender link that gives the symphonic poem its title, was dedicated to specific locations in the capital: the pines are only a pretext for strolling from the Villa Borghese to the catacombs, the Gianicolo and the Appian Way. The first performance was given in the Augusteo in Rome on 14 December, under the baton of Bernardino Molinari.

In her biography of the composer, Elsa Respighi recalls that in 1920 her husband asked her to sing him some songs from her childhood, when she used to play at the Villa Borghese. We can imagine her surprise when she found these little songs emerging distinctly in the first part of *Pini di Roma*, 'Pines of the Villa Borghese': 'Children are playing in the pine grove of the Villa Borghese: they dance Ring-a-Ring o' Roses, pretend to march like soldiers into battle, go wild with

shrieking like swallows in the evening, and disappear in a swarm'. A riotous flurry of sounds indeed evokes children's games, jumbling fanfares, little marches and songs all together, and every Italian will surely recognise the main theme that comes after the opening clash of sounds, *Oh quante belle figlie Madama Dorè*: it recalls the cheerful exuberance of Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, and the music reaches a whirling climax through the obsessive repetition of scraps of melody. Possibly no other composer has ever succeeded in expressing the idea of music as a game as in this first part of the *Pini*.

Suddenly the scene changes radically, and there appears the shadow of the pines above the entrance to a catacomb: a soulful psalm emerges from the depths. Preceded by the tolling of bells, a majestic hymn gradually emerges from the whispering strings, and here Respighi's interest in early psalmody comes to the fore: listen to the musical wizardry with which he transforms the medieval technique of doubling the principal line in fifths and octaves. The scene changes again, and we find ourselves on the Janiculum where water makes a reappearance, gushing from the fountain evoked by the piano and celesta – possibly even more vividly than in *Fontane di Roma*. The full moon is symbolised by the full sound of the clarinet, and among the pines we hear the song of the nightingale – recorded, since Respighi found that no combination of instruments could evoke it properly. Just as *Fontane* opened with a dawn, Respighi now closes his second Roman fresco with a scene of a misty dawn, on the Appian Way: 'Vague yet incessant, the rhythm of countless footsteps. A vision of ancient glories appears in the poet's imagination: the conches blare, and a consular army bursts forth in the blaze of the new dawn, toward the Via Sacra, to mount the Capitoline Hill in triumph'. To close the circle, therefore, there is another march, but not like the small-scale ones of the Villa Borghese: it is the Roman army approaching from the distance, and as the army comes closer, more and more instruments join in – including six flugelhorns, traditionally band instruments. It is an impressive crescendo, and we immediately grasp what Respighi is leading up to, but remain dazzled by his power all the same.

After presenting places and fountains in Rome at different times of the day, Respighi tackled the city's festivals in the third of his Roman symphonic poems. *Feste romane* was completed in 1928 and premiered on 21 February of the following year by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Toscanini. It is a longer and more difficult piece than the other two symphonic poems, and, by the composer's own reckoning, his greatest undertaking in the genre. Taken from antiquity as well as the present day, the festivals provide the pretext for an incomparable display of orchestral timbre – *Circenses* ('Circuses'), for instance, evokes the pagan antiquity of the games: 'The sky looms threateningly over the Circus Maximus, but the plebeians are in festive mood […] The crowd sways and shivers: impassively, the martyrs' song rises up victoriously, only to be drowned in the tumult'. And so in the arena we hear the early Christians' song, faintly at first, on the strings and woodwind. In contrast, blaring trumpets symbolise the entrance of the Emperor into the arena: the pagan world disappears, and the splendour of Catholicism triumphant is celebrated in *Il giubileo*.

Here pilgrims march toward the Holy City, and an inspiring moment comes when they reach Monte Mario and 'the Holy City appears before their ardent eyes and yearning souls': Rome greets the pilgrims dressed in its Sunday best, with the bells of its thousand churches ringing.

From Monte Mario in the north we have crossed the whole city, and, in *Ottobrata* (October Festival), find ourselves at the Castelli Romani, in the south, where the harvest is being celebrated. 'Echoes of hunting, tinkling bell-harnesses and love-songs' are heard. Then, in the soft evening, there is a shy romantic serenade. Re-entering Rome in the fourth section, *La Befana*, we are taken to Piazza Navona, amid the squealing of toy trumpets for the festival of the magical night of Epiphany. Every kind of sound is heard, from folk songs and saltarellos to a mechanical organ waltz, as well as the raucous song of a drunk, played by the trombone: a feast for the ears.

Rome was not Respighi's sole source of creative inspiration. The search for an individually inflected musical language – an issue that confronted the other members of the 'Generation of the 1880s' – resulted in a new (or renewed) sense of standing for the great Italian tradition of instrumental music that preceded opera's hegemony. Casella summed up the goal of the new movement as 'bringing Italian music out of its backwater, while looking to the classical tradition', and Respighi matched this historic moment perfectly – a model of the musician and intellectual turning to the great composers of the past and shining a light on their music.

It was undoubtedly Martucci's influence that sparked Respighi's marked interest in the orchestral and chamber forms developed by the German Romantics, which at the time had little following in Italy. Turning away from opera, with which he had started his compositional career, he devoted himself to creating the symphonic poems that made him famous: *Fontane di Roma* (1916), *Pini di Roma* (1924), *Vetrate di chiesa* (1925–6), *Trittico botticelliano* (1927) and *Feste romane* (1928). Together with these works, which are considered among the most important products of modern Italian orchestral music, there are others in which Respighi demonstrates his vast experience as a transcriber and scholar of early music. *Gli uccelli* ('The Birds'), for instance, is a characteristic example of the interest in 'old style' typical of much of the composer's output.

Composed in 1927, this suite for small orchestra is an attractive, neo-Classical score that returns to the method previously used in the first two series of *Antiche danze ed arie per liuto* (1917, 1923). The five short sections that make up the suite are straightforward arrangements of 17th- and 18th-century harpsichord and lute music, which give a stylised version of the song or characteristic motions of birds. Respighi is inspired to mimic four birds here: the dove, hen, nightingale and cuckoo, all of which appear together in the lively Preludio (Allegro – Vivo – Allegretto), a realisation of a harpsichord piece by Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710). This is followed by *La colomba* ('The Dove'), marked Andante espressivo and taken from a piece by the lutenist Jacques Gallot (c.1625–c.1695). Here the Baroque form seems primed to take on the full palette of late-Romantic musical colour, and the image of the dove is evoked by the dreamy song of the woodwind (oboe and flute) supported by the strings.

A contrast to the intimate atmosphere of this second movement is provided by the Allegro vivace 'divertimento' based on *La Poule* by Rameau (1683–1764), where penetrating sounds are combined with a marked rhythm that conveys the petulant clucking of the hen – suggested first by the violins with the bow bouncing on the strings and then taken up by the other instruments in succession.

The movement abounds in ironic pizzicato from the strings and imitations of guttural and squawking sounds provided by the clarinet and oboe, ending with a choked cry from the trumpets. Now it is the turn of the nightingale in *L'usignuolo* (Andante mosso), adapted from a piece by an anonymous 17th-century English composer; hushed in tone, the movement has a dynamic range that goes from piano to pianissimo. From the very opening bars, the brass and double basses establish a softly lit atmosphere – 'a Wagnerian *Forest Murmurs*' – over which the flute and piccolo melodies develop, evoking the nightingale's song. This gradually evolves into various different lines of melody and timbre, which slowly merge into a more elaborate texture. In the repeat, the melodic line turns darker, passing from the woodwind to the brass, before an abundance of trills, in different dynamics, lead the music back to the rapt atmosphere of the opening.

The final 'cuckoo' (Allegro) – taken from Bernardo Pasquini's *Toccata sul verso del cucco* – is characterised from the start by the insistence on the interval of a falling minor third, mimicking the cuckoo's song, which is echoed in the various sections of the orchestra. This repeated melodic outline is accompanied by a second, background motif which gradually comes to the fore, before developing at the Più largo and leading back into the melody of the suite's opening movement.

Like *Gli uccelli*, the *Suite for Strings in G minor*, written in 1902, is thoroughly neo-Classical in style. Cast in six movements, the piece opens with an energetic ciaccona in the form of a theme and variations, with a central section in the major. The theme – in the classic shape of eight bars, with a rising first period and a second falling one – is announced by the violins above the cello and double bass' ostinato, and is varied 17 times in total. The second movement, Siciliana, is a graceful pastoral which contrasts with the first movement through its dancing rhythm and (G) major tonality. With the movement's mood unchanged throughout, the composer uses a single theme introduced by the first violins, which he then repeats, intensifying it, before allowing it to fade away. The calm mood that pervades the second movement is broken by the pressing Giga in the form of a fugue, which presents a wealth of contrapuntal writing: here the theme is again stated by the first violins before being passed on to the other strings. Although in three parts with a short coda, the movement's thematic unity tends to obscure its structure, and the central section takes its mood from the darker counter-subject which develops in violin trills and tremolos. It is the fourth movement, the Sarabanda, that has the most resonant and airy melody of the entire

suite; here the expressive theme, in two four-bar half phrases, is given first to the violins, supported by the violas, before being handed on to the cellos. Just as the Sarabanda seems to revive the mood of the Siciliana, so the Burlesca is linked with the preceding Giga: a kind of merry capriccio, in which the opening of the theme seems to recall the song of the cuckoo heard in Gli uccelli. This richly ornamented number is followed by the concluding Rigaudon, a 'noisy scherzo' in G major, in three-part ABA form. This time the central section is in G minor, exactly the opposite of the pattern in the suite's first movement. In this way, Respighi creates an elegantly symmetrical shape that is found again in the third set of Antiche danze ed arie, for strings alone, of 1931.

The genesis of the *Suite in G major* for strings and organ is still obscure; according to his wife Elsa, it seems that Respighi worked on it between 1904 and 1906, at the same time as the *Suite pour instruments d'archet et flûte*, Nebbie, Nevicata and the Cinque canti all'antica for voice and piano. This was a period when he concentrated on writing for voice, possibly because 'he found a way of expressing himself in song, and through this was able to find and establish his musical personality'. The idea of composing a four-movement suite probably only took shape in his mind later, since Respighi had already composed an aria for strings and organ in 1901, which he went on to include as the second movement of the suite. The work opens with a Preludio (Moderato), reminiscent of the style of Frescobaldi which the composer had assimilated through transcribing various pieces; correspondence with the engraver for Ricordi provides evidence of this: 'Today I am sending you the three Frescobaldi transcriptions, as we agreed with Commendator Ricordi'. The Aria (Lento – Più mosso – A tempo) is a deeply felt piece, with extremely expressive and fluid melodic lines; it gives the impression of having been invented for a solo voice, and indeed the composer made a version for violin which he later included in the collection of Sei pezzi for violin and piano. The third piece, Pastorale (Andante molto sostenuto) is in the form of a passacaglia, in which the strings and organ take turns in continually repeating and elaborating the theme.

The Cantico (Grave) is a genuine hymn – a strophic piece for five parts, opening with a chorale prelude for organ, with chordal writing in long notes. When it cadences, the string lines enter, following the old alternatim procedure, used in intoning 16th- and 17th-century polyphonic psalms and canticles. In the course of the hymn, the entries of the various lines become closer together, before reaching the final section where the string declamation joins with the organ line in a final tutti.

Respighi and the influence of early music (CD3)

Ottorino Respighi was born in Bologna in 1879. His was a family of musicians, and he studied at the music high school in his city with Giuseppe Martucci, who fired his passion for instrumental music. At the age of 21, while still a student, he left home for a year to play the viola in the orchestra of the Opera House in St Petersburg. On his return he obtained his diploma, undertook further studies in Berlin, and was back in Bologna in 1903. As a musicologist he was particularly interested in early music, devoting considerable effort to the transcription of works by Baroque, Renaissance and even medieval composers. In 1913 he was invited to teach composition at the Santa Cecilia Conservatoire in Rome, which he was later to direct, and with the symphonic poems he devoted to Rome came international fame. He continued to cultivate his interest in early music, however, using it as a source of inspiration for his own modern symphonic style. Respighi's life came to a premature end in 1936 when, worn out by the strain of giving concerts across Europe and the US, he died, aged 56, of a heart attack.

Respighi's interest in early music was further nurtured by Elsa Olivieri Sangiacomo, who studied composition with him and who became his wife in 1919. It was Elsa who introduced him to what is commonly (if inaccurately) known as Gregorian chant. The first work that bears witness to this influence is *Tre preludi sopra melodie gregoriane*, which was finished the year the couple got married. It reveals a state of 'joyous wonder at a revelation, and at the same time a mystical exaltation of a deeply religious feeling', as Elsa herself was to describe it in her autobiography. These early works then gave rise to the 'four impressions for orchestra' that bore the title *Vetrate di chiesa*, completed in 1926 and first performed in Boston on 25 February 1927, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky.

A glance at the catalogue of Respighi's works suggests that his ideas often derived from external stimuli that had little to do with music.

That said, the title for *Vetrate di chiesa* came about in a different fashion, as described by Respighi's friend, the librettist Claudio Guastalla, in his *Quaderni*. 'What title should we give to these *four impressions for orchestra*? Respighi was thinking of [...] four entrances to the temple. I didn't like its lack of colour. Perhaps *Vetrate di chiesa* would do better, I suggested [...] My 'church window' proposal was accepted, and all we had to do at that point was decide which saints' protection we should invoke [...] What are we supposed to claim that his music means? What are we painting on the four windows?' In the end it was decided that the first should represent the flight into Egypt, the second St Michael the Archangel, and the fourth St Gregory Magnus, while the third piece proved more difficult on account of its mystical character.

A few days later Respighi and Guastalla picked out St Clare from the 'Olympus of virgins and saints', and devoted the third piece to *Il mattutino di Santa Chiara*, as described in Chapter 34 of the *Fioretti* of St Francis. Further proof of the independence of inspiration from real images is offered by Guastalla's conclusion: 'Ah, how we laughed when we read the solemn reviews praising the music that so prodigiously interpreted the Franciscan story! All you need is faith, indeed...'

It should be said, however, that the titles do reflect the character of the individual movements. The first is 'slow and peaceful', to quote Guastalla again, with undulating, modal music in 5/4 time. The second is 'full of the roar of arms', with the orchestra engaged in a thunderous battle between two themes. The third is 'mystical, candid and cloistral', distinctly modal, with a return to the 5/4 time of the first movement and an added note of otherworldliness that is accentuated by the delicate timbre of the harp, the celesta and bells. The fourth is 'solemn and grandiose', borrowing the Gloria from the *Missa VII 'de angelis'* as a starting point for a magnificent fantasy. This finale reveals how Respighi was able to transform elements of early chant into an extravagant play of sound and contrast, rather as a piece of stone can be used to create a complex building.

Respighi's interest in ancient music and Gregorian chant is also evident in his *Trittico botticelliano*, composed in 1927 on his return from a first tour in the United States. It was the three paintings by Botticelli at the Uffizi Gallery that inspired the works. Once again he focused on plainchant: in the first movement he used a theme from the Orthodox Greek tradition which he had heard in the Abbey of San Nilo at Grottaferrata. Modal music was not his only source, however: the opening and the conclusion of the movement borrow from *Spring* in Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, with the revisited Vivaldian trills that imitate birdsong in subtly allusive ways. The role of the strings in this movement revolves almost exclusively around a background of trills that underscore the notes of the horns, trumpets and oboes, accompanied by the syncopated rhythm of the bassoon.
The second 'panel' of the triptych is *L'adorazione dei Magi*, in which Respighi turned to the *Veni, veni, Emmanuel* melody from the antiphon used for Vespers leading up to Christmas. Here again there is a slightly Eastern-style influence, starting with the initial solo played by the bassoon, and continuing when the oboe takes over with a modal melody and intervals. Next comes the flute, which spirals upwards before echoing the theme two octaves above the bassoon. Respighi's mastery of orchestration is enchanting: about halfway through the movement, for example, when piano, celesta, triangle and harp create an impalpable aura; and in the treatment of the traditional Christmas melody *Tu scendi dalle stelle*, which is sweet at the outset, and later curiously scented with Eastern perfume.

Respighi's quotations and allusions are overt, directed at the creation of atmosphere, of a sound edifice, and extraneous stimuli are part of the plot. The same approach is evident in the last picture, *La nascita di Venere* ('The Birth of Venus'), where the strings provide an undulating accompaniment while celesta and the harp focus on the theme: a sound-painting of Venus rising from the waves – which she does about halfway through.

During his tours, Respighi had plenty of opportunity to soak up American culture. Indeed, as a composer he was uniquely aware of what was going on outside Europe. On his return from a 1927 tour, he started work on a triptych that was to conjure up the atmosphere of Brazil. Not, however, the frenzy of rhythms one might expect, but a suite that opens with a dream-like nocturne, *Notte tropicale*, in which the composer evokes the stillness of the evening air by means of flowing melodies entrusted to the wind instruments and echoed by varied combinations of sounds against a background of fluttering strings. In *Butantan*, the central section, the rhythm gains pace, only

to retreat again into the quiet of night, carried forward by the soft voice of the clarinet. This movement was inspired by Respighi's visit to the Butantan Reptile Institute, where he was struck by the sight of snakes slithering along the ground. There's a distinct touch of humour in the sinuous melodic line of the piece and in the high-pitched background noise like the hiss of a reptile; even more so in the quotation of the Dies Irae, which also reveals the composer's state of mind on seeing the snakes. The third section, *Canzone e danza*, is based on folk music heard during Carnival. Although it features a *habanera*, the dance rhythm is never frenetic. Instead it provides an opportunity for a kaleidoscopic fragmentation of sound and timbre that makes for a fitting conclusion to the work.

Respighi and the concerto (CD4)

It was probably following a journey through Europe in 1921 with his wife and Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the American pianist and patron of the arts, that Respighi developed the idea for his *Concerto a cinque*. It was finished in 1933, and dedicated to Mrs Coolidge, who was particularly interested in chamber music.

Modelled on the Baroque concerto grosso, especially those of Telemann and Vivaldi, the concerto consists of just one movement that embraces a tripartite form. The Baroque 'concertino' is recalled with a majestic introduction for five instruments – oboe, trumpet, violin, double bass and piano.

The first, rising theme has a percussive rhythm on a tonic chord, reminiscent of a basso ostinato. After a series of solo cadenzas, an Allegro harks back to the form of a passacaglia, where the main themes draw on the melody of the introduction. Next comes a slow transition to an intensely lyrical Adagio. The theme is entrusted to the oboe, which is then joined by the violin and followed by the trumpet, against a bass accompaniment. A central dialogue between the piano and the double bass echoes the exposition of the three instruments. The finale is a gigue with snatches of fugue, only to finish – somewhat unexpectedly – in the ample chords of a Largo, which is essentially 'choral' in character. The rhythmic motif and percussive nature of the first movement reappear, but transformed and extended so as to create a cyclical impression.

The *Poema autunnale*, completed in 1925 and dedicated to the violinist Mario Corti, is another single-movement work. The composer's own programme note runs thus: 'A sweet melancholy pervades the poet's feelings, but the song of a joyful harvester and the rhythm of Dionysian dance disturb his dream. Fauns and Bacchanalian revellers make the image of Pan fade, as he walks alone through the fields beneath a shower of golden leaves.' The result is a pastorally tinged work of great beauty, in which the music is true to the text. A melancholy violin solo joins in with the orchestra in a slow, archaic melody (Calmo, Molto lento, Largamente), which in turn develops into the joyful theme of the Allegro con spirito. After this 'Dionysian' dance, the melancholy strains of Pan return with an extended G minor solo, occasionally accompanied and gradually returning to the slow introduction (Calmo come al principio), conjuring up the image of golden leaves.

The *Violin Concerto in A minor*, also known as the *Concerto all'antica*, is one of Respighi's earliest works. In 1908 he was busy with various Baroque arrangements, and the *Concerto all'antica* clearly reveals a familiarity with Vivaldi's music. The opening introduces an A minor theme which is then taken up by the solo instrument. This is followed by a second theme, in the major key. The violin stands out in certain passages of the development and in the final cadenza, which leads to the second movement, an Adagio which brings out the expressive potential of the instrument. The third movement opens with a Vivace followed by a contrasting minuet, before the return to the thematic material developed in the first movement. Before the end comes a virtuosic cadenza, but the overall impression is one of balance and good order appropriate to a homage to early music. Yet when the elements of melody and rhythm heard in the first two movements return in the third, they disclose a series of variations and inventions that bear witness to the composer's mastery of orchestral writing.

Sources of inspiration (CDs 5 & 6)

Before acquiring fame with the symphonic poems dedicated to Rome, Respighi turned for inspiration to the European symphonic tradition, with which he was more than familiar, having studied abroad for many years. However, his efforts to establish a style of his own as a composer reveal a significant degree of duality: on the one hand he looked towards the great symphonic tradition of central Europe; and

on the other, he was particularly interested in the roots of Italian instrumental music. A notable example of the European focus is the *Fantasia slava* for piano and orchestra, written in 1903 in the style of Rachmaninov. It is a youthful virtuoso piece, at the same time elegant and melancholic, with echoes of Russian melodies that probably derive from the years spent studying with Rimsky-Korsakov in Russia. The most ambitious composition prior to the *Fontane di Roma* is certainly the imposing *Sinfonia drammatica*, written between 1913 and 1914.

It was premiered on 24 January 1915 at the Augusteo in Rome, and met with enthusiastic acclaim on the part of the critics; yet it never really became part of the symphonic repertoire. Of truly Mahlerian proportions, the work is huge and gloomy, and at the same time lyrical and dramatic; clearly it reflects the atmosphere of tension that pervaded Europe on the eve of the First World War, with echoes of Mahler that are almost excessively evident, especially in the funeral march that ends the work. There are also elements of the symphonic poems of Richard Strauss, and certain dramatic uses of timbre, fruit of the Rimsky-Korsakov school, that were to become something of a hallmark in his compositions. Another feature of the European tradition that he adopted was the succession of movements: theoretically three, but, with the tempo marking Lento di marcia triste acting as a third movement caesura, in actual fact four.

Right from the outset, the *Allegro energico* reveals an alternation of tense, dramatic moments with more peaceful episodes. Following the first climax, the oboe enters in with a languid melody that returns several times during the course of the movement, ultimately becoming the main theme.

Here and there it takes on a certain degree of pathos, extended and amplified by the quiet lament of the brass and the lyricism of the strings and the woodwind. The *Andante* sostenuto is also highly dramatic, progressing from a delicate beginning to a song-like ending that is dark and tormented.

The *Allegro impetuoso* finale is like a series of thunderous explosions in a desolate landscape, culminating in the unexpected funeral march already mentioned – a passage that is reminiscent of various works, including the finale of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.6 'Pathétique'.

As we have already pointed out, however, Respighi also sought inspiration elsewhere, going back to a much earlier period in musical history. In particular there is a group of works, most of them composed between 1920 and 1930, which share the use of Gregorian modalities and *melopaeia*.

Fundamental to the endeavour was the influence of his wife Elsa (who shared the interest of many Italian composers of the time for ancient music, as Casella pointed out in 1930 with characteristic acumen: 'Gregorian chant plays a role with all our foremost creative spirits as an agent of renewal of the major–minor system'). This recovery of the modes and forms of early music was seen as an approach to renewal that embraced the historical roots of Italian music, and, for Respighi, using Gregorian chant meant grafting onto his own creative idiom elements invested with a certain archaic, spiritual content.

The *Concerto gregoriano* for violin and orchestra, written in 1921, is one of the first scores in the 'modal series'. It comprises sections of great beauty that reveal considerable mastery of form and some skilful writing for the violin – but then Respighi was an excellent violinist, so this is hardly surprising. The musical discourse is largely based on the variation of the melodies, both in the Andante tranquillo of the first movement with its alternation of two eminently memorable cantabile themes, and in the Andante espressivo e sostenuto of the second movement. In keeping with the concerto as a form, the lively Finale is a paraphrase of the Alleluja. The solo part is brilliant, and on occasions also highly demanding, especially the cadenza for violin and timpani. Right from the outset, critics deemed the use of the Gregorian mode in the concerto to be somewhat mannered and affected. Over the next few years, however, the use of elements borrowed from early music allowed Respighi to achieve an entirely convincing stylistic idiom of his own.

The *Adagio con variazioni* for cello and orchestra was composed in 1921 and dedicated to the cellist Antonio Certani, a friend and fellow countryman of the composer. Based on a reworking of the second movement of a cello concerto that Respighi had written 20 years earlier, it seems to hark back less to modal music than to folk song. The role of the soloist is fundamental throughout: the simple, somewhat melancholy initial theme is followed by eight variations that follow each other without interruption, each flowing into the next

like a continuous stream of solo melody, further underlined by the skilful orchestration.

One of the last works to draw inspiration from early music is the *Toccata* for piano and orchestra, composed in Capri in 1928 and performed for the first time in November of that same year at Carnegie Hall in New York. It is one of Respighi's absolute masterpieces, revealing how his assimilation of elements from past ages had achieved complete maturity. Neo-Classical in structure, the *Toccata* was composed at a time when all works written for piano and orchestra showed a soft spot for classicism: the title refers to a short composition of the pre-Romantic period that allowed keyboard players to demonstrate their skill. In actual fact, however, the work is in all respects a fullscale concerto for piano and orchestra, and consists of three major segments comprising a dramatic first movement, a central Andante and a rapid, gigue-like finale – each played one after the other without interruption.

With its motifs and embellishments typical of the 17th- and 18th-century toccatas, the piano score of the *Toccata* is both brilliant and highly refined. Despite certain staccato figurations and passages that are slightly reminiscent of Schumann's Piano Concerto, the first part is extremely fragmentary, with an alternation of passages inspired by the organ repertoire and bursts of virtuoso romantic elan, and although it is not until the Andante that the slow, implacable beat of the ternary rhythm comes to the fore, it seems to be a continuation of the ongoing musical discourse – the piano is never used as though it were part of the orchestra, but rather as an instrument that competes with the ensemble.

The finale is a sort of gigue, with moments that tend towards the cantabile. There is also a great deal of Bach in the work, not only in certain harmonic passages but also in the form of direct citations: the cadenza just before the end, for instance, which appears to have been lifted directly from the *Fantasia cromatica* BWV903. Another evident influence is Vivaldi, in the alternation of sound and silence, and Frescobaldi, in the rhapsodic beginning. Finally, it is clear that the 1800s also helped shape the composition, which embodies the chants of earlier ages but also expresses contemporary anxieties with a poignancy that shows Respighi to be an artist of his own time: the 1900s.

Modernising the past (CD7)

Ottorino Respighi's approach to early music was entirely free and original, based more on nostalgia and irony than deliberate erudition; in his opinion, the word 'early' was a description as appropriate for Rossini as it was for an anonymous 16th-century composer of a dance for the lute. The three orchestral suites entitled *Antiche danze ed arie per liuto* are therefore emblematic of how distant Respighi was from the zeal for all things historical and philological of musicians and musicologists such as Luigi Torchi, who had been one of the composer's professors at conservatoire, or Oscar Chilesotti, whose inspiration led to the composition of the three suites. Torchi and Chilesotti were the first Italian musicologists to follow in the wake of the German *Musikwissenschaft*, devoting particular attention to the study of musical sources. Although Respighi was not personally acquainted with Chilesotti, he was familiar with his editions of entablature for the lute, drawing from them freely, as was his wont, in his work as a composer. This is evident in the three suites, which contain orchestrations of numerous airs and dances included in the editions published by Chilesotti.

The three suites were composed over a period of 15 years: the first dates back to 1917, the second to 1923 and the third to 1931. As reinventions of an early repertoire in a modern idiom, their imaginative use of timbre, transparency of sound and formal balance was relied on in order to encourage early 20th-century audiences to devote due attention to the past. Indeed, in view of his intent to address the desire to examine carefully what the past had to offer as well the need for modernity, it is possible to view Respighi as a forerunner of neo-Classicism.

In *Suite No.1* Respighi added an early instrument, the harpsichord, to the string and wind ensemble, as well as a relatively modern one, the harp. The suite consists of four movements: the first, which involves flute, oboe, harp and strings, is the *Ballo detto 'Il conte Orlando'*, inspired by a lute entablature of 1599 by Simone Molinaro; next comes the *Gagliarda* by Vincenzo Galilei, father of Galileo the scientist; the third is the *Villanella* for flute, oboe, harp and strings; and the fourth a *Passo mezzo e mascherada* (both by anonymous composers).

For *Suite No.2*, the ensemble grows to comprise, among other instruments, a celesta, also extending the range of sources to include non-Italian composers. The reworking of the *Balletto 'Laura soave'* by Fabrizio Caroso is made up of three dances (gagliarda, saltarello and canario). It is followed by *Danza rustica* by Jean-Baptiste Besard and *Campanae parisienses*, the latter of which is a three-part pastiche based on an anonymous melody and aria by Marin Mersenne, dated 1636. The suite ends with a *Bergamasca* by Bernardo Gianoncelli.

For *Suite No.3*, which is generally considered to be the finest, the ensemble consists solely of strings. An *Italiana* by an unknown composer is followed by a series of *Arie di corte* (court airs) by Jean-Baptiste Besard, an anonymous *Siciliana* and the *Passacaglia* of 1692 by Lodovico Roncalli – a composer who, like Respighi himself, was born in Bologna.

The freedom characteristic of Respighi's use of the past also comes to the fore in the charming orchestral suite *Rossiniana*, composed in 1925, and Respighi looked to the same source for his ballet *La Boutique fantasque*, commissioned by Diaghilev in 1918. Indeed, it was the Russian impresario who suggested the use of Rossini's *Péchés de vieillesse*, a collection of piano pieces written in old age that were practically unknown to contemporary audiences. With choreography by Massine and sets and costumes by Derain, the ballet premiered in London in 1919, where it met with huge acclaim, and then toured throughout the world.

Rossiniana derives from the ballet, and Rossini's piano piece *Les Riens*, which itself derives from *Quelques riens pour album*, was the first of a series of compositions in which themes and features typical of Rossini were reworked in an original fashion. The suite comprises five movements, of which the first two, *Capri e Taormina* (respectively a barcarola and a siciliana), actually appear as a remarkably effective single movement featuring a cradling ternary rhythm that starts with a sense of mystery, conjured up by the sombre fanfare introducing the heady barcarola, and leads to the luminous siciliana. The most beautiful movement is arguably the second, *Lamento*, which is born out of a void to which it returns, following some brilliant, perfectly measured orchestration: first the percussion, accompanied by the deep notes of the strings that introduce the main theme, then the combination of harp and celesta favoured by the composer, and later the xylophone and timpani.

Next comes a brief *Intermezzo*, where the wind instruments play an important role, and, to conclude, a wild *Tarantella* 'puro sangue', where the percussion instruments (castanets, cymbals, drum, triangle, xylophone, bell, tam-tam, tambourine, timpani, bass drum) come into their own. Following a deep, bass-dominated outset, this final movement's development is interrupted midstream by sudden bell tolls that introduce an Andante religioso described as 'part of the procession' – perhaps to remind us that the tarantella was originally a ritual dance.

Creative maturity (CD8)

Much of Respighi's oeuvre centres around the piano, an instrument that features in both in his earliest pieces and in later compositions that include major symphonies, chamber and solo works. Many of these pieces date back to the period of his creative maturity – the *Concerto in modo misolidio*, for instance, was composed during the summer of 1925. Despite the somewhat lukewarm reception at its Italian premiere in 1927, with Bernardino Molinari on the podium of the Augusteo and Carlo Zecchi at the piano, this work remained close to Respighi's heart.

At the time of composing the *Concerto*, Respighi was probably working on thematic material derived from the *Graduale romano*, which explains why the work is a development of the introduction to the Ascension Mass, *Viri Galilaei*. The Gregorian chant is used as the main theme of the entire work: in the first movement it is quoted in a 'neutral' fashion, without any major harmonic support but with emphasis obtained through the sequence of chords on the piano, that echoed by the brass and ultimately broken down into different layers of sound and timbre. Next comes a substantial introductory cadenza that acts as a declamatory statement in which the right hand repeats the melody in octave form above a rich arpeggio in the left hand. The movement proceeds in a rhapsodic fashion, alternating a certain abruptness with moments of great lyricism that together accentuate the ascetic, hieratic nature of Gregorian chant. The same effect is evident in the full cadenza that concludes the movement, where sound becomes rarefied in a manner almost reminiscent of Debussy:

a simple, high-pitched melody superimposed over an ostinato accompaniment consisting of fifths alternated with sixths that ultimately lead to a timid return of the orchestra, with consistent use of the pedal on the part of the pianist and recovery of the main theme by the woodwind.

The second movement (Lento) begins with a pastoral theme entrusted to the strings and sustained by the soloist's chordal accompaniment. The piano then launches into a dialogue with the orchestra that leads to a chorale passage with the brass, where the role of the piano becomes more reserved. What follows amounts to a 'pastoral' duet between the oboe and the bassoon that prepares for a variation of the initial melody. The orchestra then draws back, and the piano intones some brilliant new thematic material.

The finale is a vigorous *Passacaglia* of great virtuoso impact, with the main theme played by the piano in a lengthy, octave-based passage. The composition is intrinsically complex, with hints of a toccata and rhythms that are 'not far removed from certain types of jazz'. At the end of the intermediate cadenza, a fantasia, the piano embroiders the melodies of the wind instruments (Allegretto), culminating in the most virtuoso section of the piece (Allegro ritmato, martellato), where the composition harks back to forms typical of Baroque music, echoing the last movement of the *Toccata per pianoforte e orchestra*. The unabashed rhythmical effect only subsides in the Andante tranquillo, where the tone grows more romantic and a certain Lisztian touch comes to the fore; this episode heralds the return of the passacaglia theme in the final section, preceded by an orchestral fugue coherent with the overall rhapsodic nature of the piece. At this point the listener is transported into a labyrinth of sounds, with many different thematic ideas that return in different guises, often overlapping to create some surprising effects. For all its complexity, however, the composition never indulges in exhibitionism, focusing instead on the creation of colour and tone.

Commissioned by the conductor Serge Koussevitzky, *Metamorphoseon modi XII* was composed in 1930 to celebrate the 50th birthday of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It consists of a cycle of 12 variations on an original theme in the modal style, and represents the last and most important of Respighi's works for orchestra. The title actually alludes to 'changes' – in other words the variations that make up the 12 Modi, where 'modus' is used as a synonym of 'variant' – and the theme alternates in the basso ostinato, where counterpoint and timbre combine in a creative manner that to some extent recalls Ravel's *Boléro*, another symphonic masterpiece of the early 1900s founded on variation. The theme is first introduced by the strings, then echoed by the bassoons and contrabassoon, which are subsequently joined by the clarinet. A more lively section introduces a new melody and rhythms in the lower registers, before returning to the original motif.

Modus I is built around the first motif, played by the strings at the end of the presentation of the theme. This gives rise to the murmur of flutes and clarinets in unison that leads to the entrance of the whole orchestra on the hammering rhythm of the drum – after which there is a return to the murmuring that underlies the motif of the violins and solo cello, which are then joined by the piccolo. Somewhat different in character, Modus II is entirely based on timbral interplay and an ongoing exchange between the various instruments: the violas with the horn, then the woodwind with the orchestra; after which the violins introduce the opening motif of the violas in a triplet-based section. The salient feature of Modus III is the lament-like tone, largely expressed by the oboe and clarinet, joined towards the end by the violins. Built around the presentation of the first thematic idea with the counter-melody, Modus IV is also intensely lyrical, later entailing an animated passage that culminates in the lively Modus V. This latter section is inspired by the clarinet melody and underpinned by the glockenspiel, with motifs that permeate the whole orchestra. Modus VI, on the other hand, is like an orchestral version of the second thematic idea, while Modus VII, the longest of them all, is more intense, with plenty of solo cadenzas and sustained use of pedal notes in the brass. The orchestra plays a more conventional role in Modus VIII, while in Modus IX the strings are muted to present the first theme and successive imitations, and notes played by the harp recall the opening of the second theme. Modi X, XI and XII run into each other, creating a full-bodied finale whose climax is the last Modus, where the theme is presented for the last time by the entire orchestra, accompanied by the organ.

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Translations: Kate Singleton, Kenneth Chalmers

CHAMBER MUSIC

Quartetto Dorico (CD9)
It was composed in the summer of 1924 and performed for the first time in London in October of the same year by the Léner Quartet, to whom it is dedicated.
The initial and main theme belongs to the Dorian mode of Gregorian chant, from which the quartet takes its name. Although it is written in a single movement lasting about 20 minutes, it is easy to identify four sections that recall the four traditional movements of the quartet: first movement, Scherzo, Adagio and Finale.

The quartet begins with the exposition of the main theme in unison, which is contrasted by a second idea derived from the first, which leads back to the initial theme, again stated in unison by all the strings.
This is followed by a second recitative-like theme, first hinted at by the cello, then taken up by the viola and developed by all the strings. But then the main theme reappears, taking on the appearance of a figurative chorale, gradually becoming animated and dying away in the bass.
The second section of the quartet begins with a sort of prelude consisting of an insistent figuration, which resolves in a very animated manner into a new transformation of the main theme, and constitutes a true scherzo, without a trio but with a central episodic passage and a final fugato.
Once the lively scherzo movement has ended, the main theme reappears in the viola with an elegiac character, followed by the second theme with a recitative character. But a new theme with a religious character, introduced by the viola, unfolds over rich and iridescent harmonies, forming the adagio of the quartet, in which a progressive movement leads to the reprise of the theme.

In this last section, the main theme develops in unison in the violins as a passacaglia over an ostinato bass, then in a densely contrapuntal form. Finally, it reappears pianissimo in the second violin, on the tremolo of the viola, with a Gregorian melisma character, and expanding more and more into a peroration made of rich sonorities, it reaffirms itself energetically in unison, like the beginning of the composition.

Piano Quintet in F minor P.35
In 1902, Respighi returned from Russia, where he had studied with Rimsky-Korsakov, and wrote his Quintet in F minor. The work was dedicated to Bruno Mugellini, also a pupil of Martucci, concert pianist and piano teacher at the Bologna high school.

In the Allegro, the first thematic group is divided between the strings and the piano, growing in intensity until it becomes a collective cry. In the second group, a undulating and caressing figure is interpreted first by the cello, then repeatedly by the group, which also makes it heard in pointed enunciations, while in the development themes and motifs are variously elaborated. In the complex structure devised by Respighi, the reprise is very free. A sort of second development then begins, which is in fact already the epilogue; the introductory idea and the outlines of the first and second themes return, but are soon overtaken by the insertion of the Più Allegro, which in a few steps concludes the movement impetuously.

The second movement is an Andantino, with a calm and reflective theme that at a certain point takes on the appearance of a seductive dance.

The Finale is Vivacissimo. At the beginning, we are enveloped by the piano's triplets, which are answered by a brilliant theme from the strings. After a varied reprise of the main theme, there is the unexpected return of the Andantino theme (Tempo 1°), repeated more slowly by the piano (Lentamente), and finally by the cello in the lower register. In the epilogue (Presto), there is the last performance of the Andantino theme.

Doppio Quartet in D minor P.27
This composition, written in 1900 by Respighi when he was just twenty years old, is for an ensemble of eight string instruments: four violins, two violas and two cellos. Already in this work, the distinctive signs of his orchestral mastery and his interest in timbral richness emerge. The influence of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom Respighi had studied in St Petersburg, is evident both in his skillful orchestration and in his use of compositional techniques. The Double Quartet is divided into four movements, each with a distinctive personality, which together create a balanced and dynamic work.

The first movement, in sonata form, opens with an energetic and rhythmically incisive main theme, which is introduced by the entire ensemble. This theme, rich in vitality and dramatic force, immediately sets the tone for the entire composition. In contrast, the second theme is lyrical and cantabile, with a melody that develops gently, almost balancing the initial tension. The instruments exchange ideas in a game of counterpoint and imitation, demonstrating the complexity of the writing, and conclude with a brilliant coda in which the dramatic tension finds resolution.

The second movement is distinguished by its melancholic and introspective character, which contrasts with the energy of the first. It opens with a cantabile theme, initially presented by the violins and cello, supported by a delicate accompaniment from the other instruments. In the central section, the theme is developed with subtle variations, and the violas and cellos take on a more prominent role, creating a dialogue with the violins. The movement ends with a quiet and delicate coda, which leaves a sense of peace and closure.

The third movement is a light and playful intermezzo, which acts as a bridge between the lyricism of the second movement and the energy of the finale. The lively but controlled tempo gives rise to a carefree character, typical of the intermezzos of the period. The themes alternate brilliantly, with simple melodies and agile rhythms involving the entire ensemble, highlighting Respighi's ability to create expressive contrasts, fully exploiting the timbral potential of the strings.

The Finale, in rondo form, is inspired by Hungarian folk music in its rhythms and melodies. It opens with an energetic and rhythmically incisive main theme, which is repeated several times while maintaining its liveliness. A virtuosic movement, with rapid and brilliant passages for all the instruments, to which the syncopated rhythm and harmonies typical of Hungarian folk dances add an exotic flavour. The reprise of the main theme leads to a sparkling coda, which concludes the work with great momentum and vitality, leaving the listener with an impression of triumph and brilliance.
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Music for violin and piano (CD10)
There is no doubt today that the works for violin and piano composed by Ottorino Respighi constitute an important part of his overall oeuvre, to the extent that they now feature increasingly in concert repertoires, whereas once they were something of a rarity. Born in Bologna in 1876, Respighi was the son of a well-known pianist and teacher, Giuseppe Respighi, and of Ersilia Putti, who belonged to a prominent family of sculptors. Despite this stimulating family context, however, Ottorino did not attend the music high school (Liceo Musicale) in Bologna until relatively late. His initial focus was the violin and viola, which he studied with Federico Sarti, an outstanding teacher who played first violin in the Quartetto Bolognese. In 1896 he turned to composition, first with Luigi Torchi and from 1900 with Giuseppe Martucci. Another important contribution to his musical education came through an encounter with Rimsky-Korsakov, during a trip to Russia in 1899.

Respighi's skill as a violinist gave him an introduction to a number of theatres when he was still a young man, from the Teatro Comunale in Bologna to the Imperial Theatre at St Petersburg. Yet it was his compositions that contributed most to his growing acclaim with audiences and critics alike, both in Italy and abroad. From the biography of Respighi published in 1954 by his wife, Elsa (née Olivieri-Sangiacomo), we get an idea of just how widespread his fame had become: concerts in the most important theatres in the world, honours and awards; association with great composers, conductors and soloists, as well as eminent exponents of the worlds of art, culture and politics. Yet Elsa Respighi's account also bears witness to a life devoted to music with whole-hearted passion, entirely aimed at personal expression and totally devoid of intellectual agendas. Although Respighi's output is rich and varied, comprising compositions for piano and chamber ensembles as well as symphonies and operas, he only wrote for the violin and piano during the first 20 years of his life as a composer, starting in 1897 and ending in 1917, the year of his last sonata for the two instruments.

The works include the two cycles of compositions (the Six Pieces, composed between 1901 and 1905, and the Five Pieces written in 1907), which were conceived for private performance. Though spurned as a genre by most of his contemporaries, salon music was evidently congenial to Respighi, for these are essentially chamber compositions that tell us a great deal about his education and disposition, his interest in early music, his delight in a clearly 19th

century, impressionist use of colour, and his own distinctive, coherent character as an artist.

The *Sonata in D minor* belongs to this early period and was finished, as the manuscript itself reveals, in November 1897, when Respighi was still studying with Torchi. It is a wide-ranging piece, written in an idiom typical of the period. The slow tempo of the brief introduction to the first movement harks back to the dotted rhythm of baroque music before leading into an Allegro, somewhat along the lines of Clementi and Beethoven. There is a flowing, lively first theme, which is then followed by another in which the ardour of the melody is distinctly Brahmsian in mood, sustained by a syncopated movement in the accompaniment that invests the musical phrase with dynamism and tension. Despite the sonata form, the movement is not lacking in elements of improvisation, evident in the development, the fugue and in the coda, where the dotted rhythms of the initial theme come to the fore following a brief return to the theme of the introduction. In its lyrical eloquence and the alternation of dream-like gentleness with vivid passion, the Adagio of the second movement is to some extent reminiscent of Schumann and Franck. The final Allegretto, in the form of a Scherzo and trio, features a contrasting development that conjures up an initial restlessness, followed by a flowing, delicate central part emphasised by the syncopated rhythm of the piano score. The finale opens with an energetic descending arpeggio in the piano, which then dissolves into two pizzicato chords, played *pianissimo* as if they were about to dissolve without leaving a trace.

During the following years, Respighi wrote a number of important chamber works, including the *Piano Quintet in F minor P.35*, composed in 1902. However, his output for violin and piano largely consisted of short pieces that also belong to the salon music category, which he clearly viewed with favour. Between 1901 and 1905 he composed the *Six Pieces* for violin and piano, based on fragments from others of his compositions – the only exception is the *Melodia*, which was conceived from the outset as a work for violin and piano and which is a charmingly positive, short song without words of distinctly Italian inspiration.
Berceuse is a gentle lullaby with a simple, pure theme that conjures up a dreamlike atmosphere and moments of hope. The lively and communicative *Leggenda* introduces different moods and contexts that underline the narrative quality of the composition. *Valse caressante*, which was originally conceived as a piece for solo piano, is clearly Viennese in character, but with a touch of Bohemian nostalgia. The outcome is remarkable for its lightness and elegance. *Serenata* is based on material used by Respighi for his first opera, *Re Enzo*, composed in 1905. The melody is totally charming, accompanied by a piano part that recalls the harp. The last piece in the collection is the *Aria*, which is almost religious in its solemnity, to the extent that Respighi actually specified that the accompaniment could be played on the piano or on the organ.

Composed in 1917, the *Sonata in B minor* is Respighi's first major chamber work of a certain structural grandeur following the 1909 String Quartet in D minor P91, which had still not been published. During the same period, the composer also wrote major orchestral pieces such as *La boutique fantasque*, a ballet written for Diaghilev that was based on music by Rossini, and the *Fontane di Roma*, the first part of the great Roman trilogy. He also wrote a number of completely different works, such as the *Antiche danze ed arie* for lute. His skill in handling works of such varied inspiration and scope bear witness to his remarkable versatility. The piano part for the Sonata was first performed in 1918 by Respighi himself, with his teacher Federico Sarti playing the violin. Published by Ricordi, it immediately won widespread international acclaim. Right from the first movement, which features an early theme introduced by the violin, with a vibrant, whispering accompaniment on the piano, the Sonata comes across as an intensely serious work. Though the second theme is simpler and more gentle, its harmonies reveal an almost Brahmsian richness. The entire movement is sustained by a distinctive sense of direction, especially in the development, in part due to the succession of elements that enhance the musical tension. In the coda, which adopts the major key, the second theme returns with emotive sweetness, bringing with it a sense of calm that persists through to the last four bars in the piano, where the first theme resurfaces so transformed that it plunges the listener into a sensation of abandonment. The Andante espressivo in E major conjures up a wide range of moods. The introduction is impressionist in colour, along the lines of certain of the composer's orchestral works. First introduced by the piano and then by the violin, the theme is nevertheless

romantic in character, with a lyrical sweetness leading through to a section that reveals more passion. This is then followed by another that is even more lively, culminating in a dramatic duel and recitative between the two instruments, with a sudden return to the initial theme of the first movement. The dramatic content of the piece then quietens down to some extent with the return of the first theme of the Andante, this time entrusted to the violin. The third movement is a Passacaglia, with an unusual succession of 20 variations, in which Respighi touches on all the humours of the human soul, from dramatic introspection to contemplation of the divine, which in its turn gives way to a fearful descent into desperation. In the last two bars destiny pronounces its final verdict.
(c) Désirée Fusi
Translation: Kate Singleton

Solo Piano Music (CDs 11 & 12)
It's astonishing that an expert like Piero Rattalino would be surprised by the fact that Ottorino Respighi, 'a violinist and violist, composed the Concerto in A minor (1901) and the *Fantasia Slava* (1903) for piano and orchestra, rather than two works for violin and orchestra.' It's quite simple: Respighi studied as a violinist but became a musician and a composer above all, writes Fedele D'Amico. You only need to look at his catalogue of works, which opens with two compositions for orchestra (1893 and 1894), to form an hypothesis about earlier, lost works.

Perhaps Rattalino's astonishment would not have been such had he consulted the aforementioned catalogue, where we find that in 1903 – two years after the Concerto in A minor and near to the time of the *Fantasia Slava* – Respighi composed a Concerto in A major for violin and orchestra. The fact that he composed this concerto, rediscovered 30 years ago and recently published, means he gave 'equal opportunity' to both piano and violin from the beginning of his compositional career to the end. So it wouldn't be true to say that Respighi the violinist, who amazed those at his diploma exam with his rendition of Paganini's *Le streghe*, gave preferential treatment to his own instrument. Respighi was a highly-acclaimed violinist, and his repertoire ranged from classical composers to contemporaries like Marco Bossi. After completing his post-diploma tour in Russia – during which he spent two seasons as first violist with the Italian Opera in St Petersburg – and five years in Bologna playing both violin and piano as a soloist and with the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale, he came to prefer the keyboard as an accomplice to his creative bent.

It's no accident that news items and photographs of the time often show him at a harpsichord or piano rather than holding a stringed instrument, both as an accompanist for singers (among them Chiarina Fino-Savio and his wife Elsa whom he accompanied in more than 300 concerts) and famous soloists. At the performance of his Violin Sonata in B minor, he preferred to sit at the piano rather than hold a violin. Respighi the pianist did not, however, restrict his activities to accompaniment. He performed as a soloist at the Carnegie Hall playing for a number of seasons both the *Concerto in modo misolidio* (1925) and the Toccata for piano and orchestra (1928) conducted by Willem Mengelberg.

It seems Respighi used to say he never wrote scales into a piano work he was going to have to play. Even though this anecdote is not completely true, there is a grain of truth in it, as he had never studied piano formally. The Registro Vellani at the Liceo musicale of Bologna reveals that, as well as studying the violin, Respighi studied the organ under Cesare Dall'Olio. This explains both his particular way of writing for piano and his preference for the keyboard itself.

Respighi, of course, was no stranger to the piano, as his father Giuseppe (a pupil of Golinelli) ran a piano school. However, judging by his reaction upon returning home earlier than usual and listening to his son playing the Symphonic Studies Op.13 by Schumann, he must have given his son only a few lessons. So it is perhaps no accident that some of Respighi's earlier pages of composition refer directly to Schumann, especially his Sonata in A minor, together with traces of Chopin present in his Sonata in F minor. It's with this last work that we begin our careful scrutiny of this programme, equally distributed between early and mature works.

The *Sonata in F minor P016* in three movements (Allegro – Lento – Allegretto) was performed for the first time at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice on 13 October 1986, with Gino Gorini at the piano, to conclude the Convegno di studi at the Giorgio Cini Foundation for the 50th anniversary of Respighi's death. This Sonata is a student work, the manuscript in the author's hand was found among pupils' assignments at the Liceo Musicale of Bologna from the school year 1897–98, according to the stamp on the first page. The coexistence of European models that vaguely echo the work of Giuseppe Martucci

can be picked out from the Allegro. The Sonata in F minor exemplifies a marked artistic personality in Respighi, at the time enrolled in the third year course of harmony. Martinotti writes that the influence of Martucci is immediately apparent in 'that kind of initial "motto" full of poignant determination, almost a peremptory gesture capable of starting and supporting the framework of this first movement with an interesting and incisive theme', and that he is by no means immune to the rhythmic gestures of Chopin. For an analysis of the Sonata and of the *Sei pezzi* that follow, we refer to the book *The Piano Works of Young Respighi* by Potito Pedarra (Rugginenti, Milan 1995).

The *Sei pezzi* P044, edited by Bongiovanni, complete the early piano works of Respighi and were the first works to be published; the first being the Canone, the Notturno, the Minuetto and the Studio, followed shortly thereafter by the Valse caressante and the Intermezzo – Serenata. These are all occasional pieces, composed separately and then brought together in a single collection. 'Charming but insignificant compositions', was Giuseppe Piccioli's critique, whereas for Sergio Martinotti they revealed 'the emergence of a definitive style'. The most famous of the *Sei pezzi* is the Notturno, differentiated by its compositional style and modern piano writing. The piece counts Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli among its interpreters, who performed it during his most successful period (28 February 1938, Conservatory of Milano).

Even though they have been little performed in their piano version, the *Antiche danze ed arie per liuto* P114 and the *Tre preludi su melodie gregoriane* P131 certainly require less introduction, as their orchestral versions are well-known. The free transcription for the piano of the 'Ancient dances and airs' is Respighi's homage to his friend Luisa Bàccara, a woman of 'uncommon beauty' writes Elsa Respighi, 'in whom we pupils saw all the qualities necessary to be an excellent companion for Respighi', but 'only an affectionate friendship linked these two artists.' Respighi met Bàccara during his Christmas holidays in 1917 in Bologna where he heard her play Martucci's Piano Concerto and was so impressed that, on her return to Rome he did all he could to support her. This collection of six pieces (three written in 1917 and three in 1918) is taken partly from the first three movements of his Suite No.1 for Orchestra P109 (the *Balletto detto 'Il Conte Orlando'*, the Villanella and the Gagliarda) and the rest from a draft of the first third and fourth pieces of Suite No.3 for Orchestra P172 (1931). Respighi wrote to Bàccara on 13 August 1918: 'I have written or rather transcribed three new pieces from the lute: Siciliana, Italiana and Passacaglia, which will be brought to Rome in a few days (...) You will also receive your 1917 manuscript of Gagliarda, etc.' The collection, a result of the brief association between the two artists, bears no dedication. However, Alessandro Bàccara (Luisa's nephew) holds some of his aunt's manuscripts, seemingly dedicated to her. 'Bàccara was the first to perform the Frescobaldi transcriptions completed by Respighi', writes his wife Elsa, 'and also some Arias for lute transcribed for piano.'

Regarding the *Tre preludi*, a composition that requires particular analysis, it suffices to say that the original version for piano was composed during the summer of 1919 in Capri and finished in 1921. A newlywed for six months, Elsa Respighi wrote: 'You could say that this composition brilliantly reflects Respighi's state of mind in that period: the joyous wonder of the revelation and the mystical exaltation of a profound religious sense that accompanied well the harmony of our life together.' The composition is dedicated to Alfredo Casella who considered the *Tre preludi* 'most beautiful' and 'particularly noteworthy'. In the jubilee year 1925, the *Tre preludi* for piano, orchestrated and with the addition of a fourth movement dedicated to St Gregorio Magno, became the *Vetrate di chiesa* for orchestra P.150.

The second disc concerns the piano works of the young Respighi. To distinguish these pieces from the printed music, they have been classified as 'manuscripts'. They are, to be more precise, a series of compositions dating back to his so-called 'apprenticeship'; his phase of studies at the Liceo Musicale of Bologna.

The first work is the three-movement *Sonata P.004* (Allegro moderato – Andantino – Finale: Allegro vivace), where the influence of Schumann is evident both in the fervently passionate melody, and in the key itself (the A minor of Schumann's Piano Concerto Op.54). Respighi's opening cadenza is recalled and paraphrased from that which opens Schumann's first movement.

The two Andantes P.006–7, in F and in D major respectively, are pages of drawing-room inspiration, sketches prone to an intimate mood

which was so dear to the piano literature of the late 19th century, and songs whose absence of title allow for a variety of hypotheses about their future intended use. The Allegro in B minor P.010 – like the two Andantes, also lacking a title – belongs to his period of academic study. Once more in the style of Schumann, the Allegro is based on two thematic elements, the first of which excitedly recalls the flurry of sixteenth notes which opens the Sonata Op.22 by the German composer.

Originally comprised of six pieces, just five have survived to form the Suite P022: I. Vivace; II. Tema: Andante poco mosso; III. Sarabanda: Lento; IV. Allegro con brio; and VI. Presto (movement V. is missing). Throughout the Suite there meanders a thin vein of caricature reminding us of the ballet *Le astuzie di Colombina*, composed by Respighi more than 20 years later. The Suite is so dense with references to the ballet that it would later be considered the source of inspiration for the danse work. As with the Suite, the hand-written drafts of the Prelude in B flat minor P023, penned that same year, show numerous revisions and corrections. This brief late-romantic piece is reminiscent mostly of Rachmaninov but also of some virtuoso sections of the Piano Concerto No.1 by Tchaikovsky.

The *Suite* P043 on the other hand is a final version but incomplete. The original version contained a Preludio, Canone, Intermezzo, Piano studio and Fuga, but all that remains are the Preludio and the Canone which falls silent twelve measures before the repeat. Later removed from the Suite, the Canone was inserted into the *Sei pezzi* P044 collection, but we do not know if the same fate was reserved for the Intermezzo and the Studio.

The real innovation, in this context, is represented by the *Variazioni sinfoniche* P028, here in its version for solo piano. Always considered an alternative to the orchestral version, only recent analysis of the piece has made it possible to establish that the solo piano score is substantially different. Its divergence is evident both in its opening bars and in the absence of one of the later variations. Therefore the chamber composition predates the orchestral, though we cannot rule out the existence of an even earlier score: these were the years of Respighi's youthful exuberance, when his scores were written and rewritten, as can be seen in other works of that period. The piano version of the Variations does not resemble Respighi's drafts for orchestral works (which were often written on multiple separate staves). This, supported by the existence of an unfinished version for piano four-hands, has prompted the present piano performance, which is essentially a world premiere.

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Translation: Helen Rollins

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