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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

A close-up photograph of a marble sculpture depicting a pair of hands. The hands are positioned as if resting on a surface, with fingers slightly curled. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture and contours of the marble. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

PACHELBEL
COMPLETE KEYBOARD MUSIC
SIMONE STELLA

Complete Organ and Harpsichord Music

Johann Pachelbel was born in 1653 in Nuremberg, son of the wine dealer Johann (Hans) Pachelbel and his second wife Anna Maria Mair. He was baptized on 1 September 1653. Among his many siblings was an older brother, Johann Matthäus (1644–1710) who served as Kantor in Feuchtwangen, near Nuremberg.

During his early youth, Pachelbel received musical training from Heinrich Schwemmer, a musician who later became the Kantor of St. Sebaldus Church (Sebalduskirche). Schwemmer were trained by Johann Erasmus Kindermann, one of the founders of the Nuremberg musical tradition, who had been at one time a pupil of Johann Staden.

He received his primary education in St. Lorenz Hauptschule and the Auditorio Aegediano in Nuremberg, then on 29 June 1669 he became a student at the University of Altdorf, where he was also appointed organist of St. Lorenz Church the same year. Financial difficulties forced Pachelbel to leave the university after less than a year. In order to complete his studies he became a scholarship student, in 1670, at the Gymnasium Poeticum at Regensburg. The school authorities were so impressed by Pachelbel's academic qualifications that he was admitted above the school's normal quota (Johann Mattheson, whose 'Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte' of 1740 is one of the most important sources of information about Pachelbel's life, mentions that the young Pachelbel demonstrated exceptional musical and academic abilities).

Pachelbel was also permitted to study music outside the Gymnasium. His teacher was Kaspar Prentz, once a student of Johann Caspar Kerll. Since the latter was greatly influenced by Italian composers such as Giacomo Carissimi and Girolamo Frescobaldi, it is likely through Prentz that Pachelbel started developing an interest in contemporary Italian music, and Catholic church music in general.

Prentz left for Eichstätt in 1672. Since 1673 Pachelbel lives in Vienna, where he becomes a deputy organist at the famous Saint Stephen Cathedral (Stephansdom). At the time, Vienna was the center of the vast Habsburg empire and had much cultural importance; its tastes in music were predominantly Italian. Several renowned cosmopolitan composers worked there, many of them contributing to the exchange of musical traditions in Europe. In particular, Johann Jakob Froberger served as court organist in Vienna until 1657 and was succeeded by Alessandro Poglietti. Georg Muffat lived in the city for some time, and, most importantly, Johann Caspar Kerll moved to Vienna in 1673. While there, he may have known or even taught Pachelbel, whose music shows traces of Kerll's style. Pachelbel spent five years in Vienna, absorbing the music of Catholic composers from southern Germany and Italy.

In 1677, Pachelbel moved to Eisenach, where he found employment as court organist under Kapellmeister Daniel Eberlin (also a native of Nuremberg), in the employ of Johann Georg I, Duke of Saxe-Eisenach. He met members of the Bach family in Eisenach (which was the home city of J.S. Bach's father, Johann Ambrosius Bach), and became a close friend of Johann Ambrosius and tutor to his children. However, Pachelbel spent only one year in Eisenach. In 1678, Bernhard II, Duke of Saxe-Jena, Johann Georg's brother, died and during the period of mourning court musicians were greatly curtailed. Pachelbel was left unemployed. He requested a testimonial from Eberlin, who wrote one for him, describing Pachelbel as a 'perfect and rare virtuoso' – einen perfekten und raren Virtuosen. With this document, Pachelbel left Eisenach on 18 May 1678.

In June 1678, Pachelbel was employed as organist of the Predigerkirche in Erfurt, succeeding Johann Effler (c. 1640–1711), who later preceded Johann Sebastian Bach in Weimar. The Bach family was very well known in Erfurt, so Pachelbel's friendship with them continued here. Pachelbel became godfather to Johann Ambrosius' daughter, Johanna Juditha, taught Johann Christoph Bach (1671–1721), Johann Sebastian's eldest brother, and lived in Johann Christian Bach's (1640–1682) house. Pachelbel remained in Erfurt for 12 years and established his reputation as one of the leading German organ composers of the time during his stay. Pachelbel's contract specifically required him to compose the preludes for church services, so the Choral Prelude was one of his main musical products of the Erfurt period. His duties also included organ maintenance and, more importantly, composing a large-scale work every year to demonstrate his progress as composer and organist, as every work of that kind had to be better than the one composed the year before.

Johann Christian Bach (1640–1682), Pachelbel's landlord in Erfurt, died in 1682. In June 1684, Pachelbel purchased the house (called Zur silbernen Tasche, now Junkersand 1) from Johann Christian's widow. In 1686, he was offered a position as organist of the St. Trinitatis church (Trinitatiskirche) in Sondershausen. Pachelbel initially accepted the invitation but, as a surviving autograph letter indicates, had to reject the offer after a long series of negotiations: it appears that he was required to consult with Erfurt's elders and church authorities before considering any job offers. It seems that the situation had been resolved quietly and without harm to Pachelbel's reputation; he was offered a raise and stayed in the city for four more years.

Pachelbel married twice during his stay in Erfurt. Barbara Gabler, daughter of the Stadt-Major of Erfurt, became his first wife, on 25 October 1681. He had a son from her, but unfortunately both Barbara and their child died in October 1683 during a plague. Pachelbel's first published work, a set of chorale variations called Musicalische Sterbens-Gedancken ('Musical Thoughts on Death', Erfurt, 1683), was most probably influenced by this event.

Ten months later, Pachelbel married Judith Drommer (Trummert), daughter of a coppersmith, on 24 August 1684. They had five sons and two daughters. Two of the sons, Wilhelm Hieronymus Pachelbel and Charles Theodore Pachelbel, also became organ composers; the latter moved to the American colonies in 1734. Another son, Johann Michael, became an instrument maker in Nuremberg and traveled as far as London and Jamaica. One of the daughters, Amalia Pachelbel, achieved recognition as a painter and engraver.

Although Pachelbel was an outstandingly successful organist, composer, and teacher at Erfurt, he asked permission to leave, apparently seeking a better appointment, and was formally released on 15 August 1690, bearing a testimonial praising his diligence and fidelity.

He was employed in less than a fortnight: from 1 September 1690, he was a musician-organist in the Württemberg court at Stuttgart under the patronage of Duchess Magdalena Sibylla. That job was better, but, unfortunately, he lived there only two years before fleeing the French attacks of the War of the Grand Alliance. His next job was in Gotha as the town organist, a post he occupied for two years, starting on 8 November 1692; there he published his first, and only, liturgical music collection: *Acht Chorale zum Praeambulierenin* (1693).

When former pupil Johann Christoph Bach married in 1694, the Bach family celebrated the marriage on 23 October in Ohrdruf, and invited him and other composers to provide the music; he probably attended the event, and that would be the only time J.S. Bach, then nine years old, met Johann Pachelbel.

In his three years in Gotha, he was twice offered positions, in Stuttgart and at Oxford University; he declined both. Meanwhile, in Nuremberg, when the St. Sebaldus Church organist Georg Caspar Wecker died on 20 April 1695, the city authorities officially invited Pachelbel to assume that job. He accepted, was released from Gotha in 1695, and arrived in Nuremberg in summer, paid by the city council.

Pachelbel lived the rest of his life in Nuremberg, during which he published the chamber music collection 'Musicalische Ergötzung', and, most importantly, the *Hexachordum Apollinis* (Nuremberg, 1699), a set of six keyboard arias with variations. Though most influenced by Italian and southern German composers, he also knew the northern German school (he dedicated the *Hexachordum Apollinis* to Dieterich Buxtehude). In the final years he wrote Italian-influenced concertato Vespers and a set of more than ninety Magnificat fugues.

Johann Pachelbel died at the age of 52, in early March 1706 (probably the 6 or 7 March), and was buried on 9 March in the St. Rochus Cemetery.

One of the last middle Baroque great composers, the last important of the South Germany, Pachelbel influenced Bach indirectly because the young Johann Sebastian was tutored by his older brother Johann Christoph Bach, who studied with Pachelbel; although Johann Sebastian's early chorales and chorale variations borrow from Pachelbel's music, the style of northern German composers, such as Georg Böhm, Dieterich Buxtehude and Johann Adam Reincken, played a more important role in the development of Bach's talent.

His direct influence was mostly limited to his students, most notably Johann Christoph Bach, Johann Heinrich Buttstett, Andreas Nicolaus Vetter, and two of Pachelbel's sons, Wilhelm Hieronymus and Charles Theodore. Composer, musicologist and writer Johann Gottfried Walther is probably the most famous of the composers influenced by Pachelbel – he is, in fact, referred to as the 'second Pachelbel' in Mattheson's *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte*.

As the Baroque style went out of fashion during the 18th century, the majority of Baroque and pre-Baroque composers were forgotten from the vast majority of the public (except from local musicians) for a long period. In the first half of the 19th century, some organ works by Pachelbel were published and several musicologists started considering him an important composer, particularly Philipp Spitta, who was one of the first researchers to trace Pachelbel's role in the development of Baroque keyboard music. Since the middle of the 20th century and the advent of historically-informed performance practice and associated research, Pachelbel's works began to be studied extensively, classified in various catalogues and performed more frequently.

The works

During his lifetime, Pachelbel was best known as an organ composer. He wrote more than two hundred pieces for the instrument, both liturgical and secular, and explored most of the genres that existed at the time. Pachelbel was also a prolific vocal music composer: around a hundred of such works survive. Only a few chamber music pieces by Pachelbel exist, although he might have composed many more, particularly while serving as court musician in Eisenach and Stuttgart.

Several principal sources exist for Pachelbel's music. Among the more significant materials are several manuscripts that were lost before and during World War II but partially available as microfilms of the Winterthur collection, a two-volume manuscript currently in possession of the Oxford Bodleian library which is a major source for Pachelbel's late work, and the first part of the *Tabulaturbuch* (1692, currently at the Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków) compiled by Pachelbel's

pupil Johann Valentin Eckelt, which includes the only known Pachelbel autographs). The Neumeister Collection and the so-called Weimar tablature of 1704 provide valuable information about Pachelbel's school, although they do not contain any pieces that can be confidently ascribed to him.

Currently there is no standard numbering system for Pachelbel's works. Among several catalogues, the one of Jean M. Perreault (P-numbers, currently the most complete catalogue, organized alphabetically) has been used for this recording.

Much of Pachelbel's liturgical organ music, particularly the chorale preludes, is relatively simple and written for manuals only. This is due in part to Lutheran religious practice where congregants sang the chorales. Household keyboard instruments like virginals or clavichords accompanied the singing, so Pachelbel and many of his contemporaries made music playable using these instruments. The quality of the organs Pachelbel used also played a role: south German instruments were not as complex and as versatile as the north German ones, and Pachelbel's organs must have only had around 15 to 25 stops on two manuals (compare to Buxtehude's Marienkirche instrument with 52 stops, 15 of them in the pedal). Finally, neither the Nuremberg nor the southern German organ tradition endorsed extensive use of pedals seen in the works by composers of the northern German school.

Only two volumes of Pachelbel's organ music were published and distributed during his lifetime: *Musikalische Sterbens-Gedancken* (Musical Thoughts on Death; Erfurt, 1683) – a set of chorale variations in memory of his deceased wife and child, and *Acht Choräle* (Nuremberg, 1693). Pachelbel employed mainly the white mensural notation when writing out numerous compositions (several chorales, all *ricercares*, some fantasias); this notational system uses hollow note heads and omits bar lines. The system had been widely used since the 15th century but was gradually being replaced in this period by modern notation.

Keyboard music

About 20 *toccatas* by Pachelbel survive, including several brief pieces referred to as 'toccatinas' in the Perreault catalogue. They are characterized by consistent use of pedal point: for the most part, Pachelbel's *toccatas* consist of relatively fast passagework in both hands with many consecutive thirds, sixths and tenths over sustained pedal notes. Although a similar technique is employed in *toccatas* by Froberger and in Frescobaldi's pedal *toccatas*, Pachelbel distinguishes himself from these composers by having no sections with imitative counterpoint. Furthermore, no other Baroque composer used pedal point with such consistency in *toccatas*.



Almost all pieces designated as **preludes** resemble Pachelbel's toccatas closely, since they too feature virtuosic passagework in one or both hands over sustained notes. However, most of the preludes are much shorter than the toccatas: the A minor prelude has only 9 bars, the one in G major has 10. The only exception is one of the two D minor pieces, which is very similar to Pachelbel's late simplistic toccatas, and considerably longer than any other prelude.

The six **fantasias** are a different case. Three of them (the A minor, C major and one of the two D Dorian pieces) are sectional compositions in 3/2 time; the sections are never connected thematically; the other D Dorian piece's structure is reminiscent of Pachelbel's magnificat fugues, with the main theme accompanied by two simple countersubjects. The G minor and E-flat major fantasias are in the Italian 'toccata di durezze et ligature' style. Both are gentle free-flowing pieces featuring intricate passages in both hands with many accidentals, close to similar pieces by Girolamo Frescobaldi or from the neapolitan school (Giovanni de Macque, Giovanni Maria Trabaci).

About the **fugues**, Pachelbel wrote more than one hundred of them that can be classified in two categories: some 30 free fugues and around 90 of the so-called Magnificat Fugues. His fugues are usually based on non-thematic material, and are shorter than the later model. The contrapuntal devices of stretto, diminution and inversion are rarely employed in any of them. Nevertheless, Pachelbel's fugues display a tendency towards a more unified, subject-dependent structure which was to become the key element of late Baroque fugues. Given the number of fugues he composed and the extraordinary variety of subjects he used, Pachelbel is regarded as one of the key composers in the evolution of the form. He was also the first major composer to pair a fugue with a preludial movement (a toccata or a prelude) – this technique was adopted by later composers and was used extensively by J.S. Bach.

The **Magnificat Fugues** were all composed during Pachelbel's final years in Nuremberg. The singing of the Magnificat at Vespers was usually accompanied by the organist, and earlier composers provided examples of Magnificat settings for organ, based on themes from the chant. Pachelbel's fugues, however, are almost all based on free themes and it is not yet understood exactly where they fit during the service. It is possible that they served to help singers establish pitch, or simply act as introductory pieces played before the beginning of the service. There are 95 pieces extant, covering all eight gregorian modes. Although a few two/ four-voice works are present, Pachelbel most uses three voices (sometimes expanding to four-voice polyphony just for few bars). With the exception of the three double fugues (primi toni No. 12, sexti toni No. 1 and octavi toni

No. 8), all are straightforward pieces, frequently in common time and comparatively short – at an average tempo, most take around a minute and a half to play.

Although most of them are brief, the subjects are extremely varied. Frequently some form of note repetition is used to emphasize a rhythmic (rather than melodic) contour. Many feature a dramatic leap (up to an octave), which may or may not be mirrored in one of the voices sometime during an episode. Minor alterations to the subject between the entries are observed in some of the fugues, and simple countersubjects occur several times. An interesting technique employed in many of the pieces is an occasional resort to *style brisé* for a few bars, both during episodes and in codas. The double fugues exhibit a typical three-section structure: fugue on subject 1, fugue on subject 2, and the counterpoint with simultaneous use of both subjects.

Most of Pachelbel's **free fugues** are in three or four voices, with the notable exception of two *bicinia* pieces. Pachelbel frequently used repercussion subjects of different kinds, with note repetition sometimes extended to span a whole measure. Some of the fugues employ textures more suited for the harpsichord, particularly those with broken chord figuration. The three **Ricercars** Pachelbel composed, that are more akin to his fugues than to ricercars by Frescobaldi or Froberger, are perhaps more technically interesting. In the original sources, all three use white notation and are marked 'alla breve'. The polythematic C minor ricercare is probably the most popular, frequently performed and recorded. It is built on two contrasting themes (a slow chromatic pattern and a lively simplistic motif) which appear in their normal and inverted forms and concludes with both themes appearing simultaneously. The F-sharp minor ricercare uses the same concept and would be considered slightly more interesting musically: the key of F-sharp minor requires a more flexible tuning than the standard meantone temperament of the early Baroque era and was therefore rarely used by contemporary composers. This means that Pachelbel may have used his own tuning system, of which little is known. Ricercare in C major is in three voices and employs the same kind of writing with consecutive thirds as seen in Pachelbel's toccatas.

Chorale preludes

Chorale preludes constitute almost half of Pachelbel's surviving organ works, in part because of his Erfurt job duties which required him to compose chorale preludes on a regular basis. The models Pachelbel used most frequently are the three-part cantus firmus setting, the chorale fugue and, most

importantly, a model he invented which combined the two types. This latter type begins with a brief chorale fugue that is followed by a three- or four-part cantus firmus setting. Chorale phrases are treated one at a time, in the order in which they occur; frequently, the accompanying voices anticipate the next phrase by using bits of the melody in imitative counterpoint. An example is ‘*Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist*’: the piece begins with a chorale fugue that turns into a four-part chorale setting which starts at bar 35. The slow-moving chorale (the *cantus firmus*, the original hymn tune) is in the soprano. The lower voices anticipate the shape of the second phrase of the chorale in an imitative fashion. Pachelbel wrote numerous chorales using this model (‘*Auf meinen lieben Gott*’, ‘*Ach wie elend ist unsre Zeit*’, ‘*Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist*’, etc.), which soon became a standard form.

A distinctive feature of almost all of Pachelbel’s chorale preludes is his treatment of the melody: the *cantus firmus* features virtually no figuration or ornamentation of any kind, always presented in the plainest possible way in one of the outer voices. Pachelbel’s knowledge of both ancient and contemporary chorale techniques is reflected in *Acht Choräle zum Praeambulieren*, a collection of eight chorales he published in 1693. It included, among other types, several chorales written using outdated models. Of these, ‘*Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren*’ is based on the hymn by Johann Gramann, a paraphrase of Psalm 103; it is one of the very few Pachelbel chorales with cantus firmus in the tenor. ‘*Wir glauben all an einen Gott*’ is a three-part setting with melodic ornamentation of the chorale melody, which Pachelbel employed very rarely. Finally, ‘*Jesus Christus, unser Heiland der von uns*’ is a typical bicinium chorale with one of the hands playing the unadorned chorale while the other provides constant fast-paced accompaniment written mostly in sixteenth notes.

Chaconnes and variations

Pachelbel’s apparent affinity for variation form is evident from his organ works that explore the genre: chaconnes, chorale variations and several sets of arias with variations. The six **chaconnes**, together with Buxtehude’s ostinato organ works, represent a shift from the older chaconne style: they abandon the dance idiom, introduce contrapuntal density, employ miscellaneous chorale improvisation techniques, and give the bass line much thematic significance for the development of the piece. Pachelbel’s chaconnes are distinctly south German in style; the C major chaconne (possibly an early work) is in duple meter and is reminiscent of Kerll’s D minor passacaglia. The remaining five

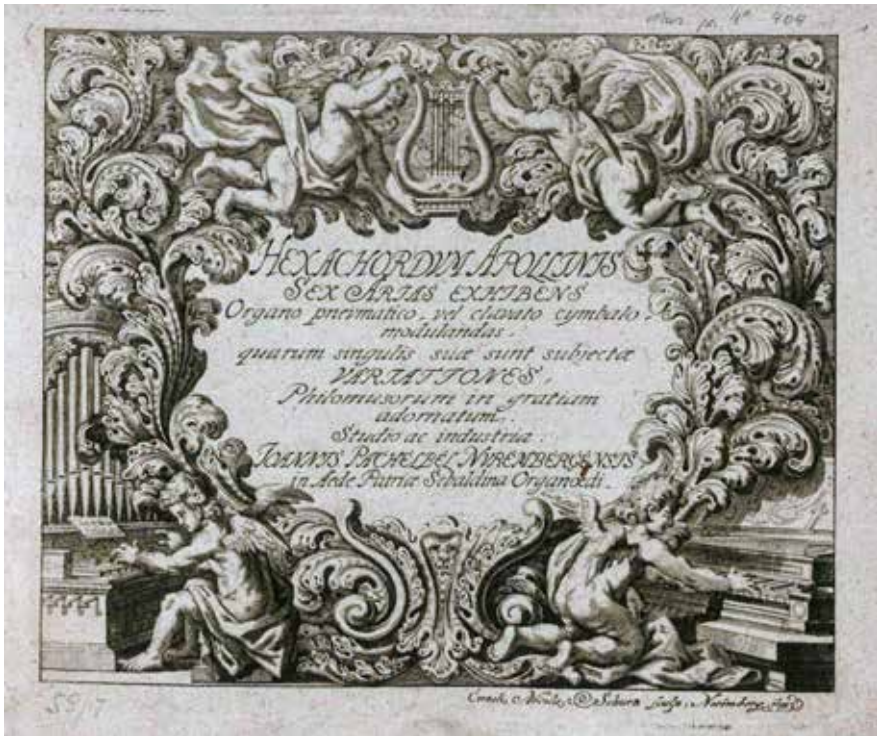
works are all in triple meter and display a wide variety of moods and techniques, concentrating on melodic content (as opposed to the emphasis on harmonic complexity and virtuosity in Buxtehude’s chaconnes). The ostinato bass is not necessarily repeated unaltered throughout the piece and is sometimes subjected to minor alterations and ornamentation. The D major, D minor and F minor chaconnes are among Pachelbel’s most well-known organ pieces.

In 1699 Pachelbel published the *Hexachordum Apollinis* (the title is a reference to Apollo’s lyre with six strings), a collection of six Arias with variations in different keys. It is dedicated to composers Ferdinand Tobias Richter (a friend from the Vienna years) and Dieterich Buxtehude. Each set follows the ‘aria and variations’ model. The final piece, which is also the most well-known today, is subtitled *Aria Sebaldina*, a reference to St. Sebaldus Church where Pachelbel worked at the time. Most of the variations are in common time, with *Aria Sebaldina* and its variations being the only notable exceptions—they are in 3/4 time. The pieces explore a wide range of variation techniques.

Pachelbel’s other variation sets include a few arias and an arietta with variations and a few pieces designated as chorale variations. Four works of the latter type were published in Erfurt in 1683 under the title **Musicalische Sterbens-Gedancken** (‘Musical Thoughts on Death’), which might refer to Pachelbel’s first wife and son’s death in the same year. This was Pachelbel’s first published work and it is now partially lost. These pieces, along with Georg Böhm’s works, have probably influenced Johann Sebastian Bach’s early organ partitas.

Other keyboard music

More than 20 dance suites transmitted in a 1683 manuscript (now destroyed) were previously attributed to Pachelbel, but today his authorship is questioned for all but three suites, numbers 29, 32 and 33B in the Max Seiffert edition. The pieces are influenced by French music and are comparable in terms of style and technique to Froberger’s suites. Seventeen keys are used, including F-sharp minor. Number 29 has all four traditional movements, the other two authentic pieces only have three (no gigue), and the rest follow the classical model (Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue), sometimes with an extra movement (usually less developed), a more modern dance such as a gavotte or a ballet. All movements are in binary form, except for two arias.



Simone Stella

Born in Florence in 1981, Simone Stella studied piano with Marco Vavolo and Rosanita Racugno, organ with Mariella Mochi and Alessandro Albenga and harpsichord with Francesco Cera, and attended masterclasses held by Ton Koopman, Matteo Imbruno and Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini. After winning the 1st International Organ Competition 'Agati-Tronci' in Pistoia, Stella began a brilliant career as a soloist, which saw him perform in numerous important festivals in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, USA and Brazil, where he has also held masterclasses.

His prolific discography, acclaimed by international critics (*Musica*, *Diapason*, *Fanfare*, *BBC Music Magazine*), includes the complete organ and harpsichord works of Dieterich Buxtehude, Georg Böhm, Johann Adam Reincken, Johann Gottfried Walther and Johann Jakob Froberger recorded for Brilliant Classics, and works of Bach, Handel, Rameau and Cherubini for the labels OnClassical and Amadeus Rainbow. He also collaborates with the baroque orchestra Modo Antiquo and La Filharmonie symphonic orchestra.

Active as a composer, Simone Stella has published works for the Italian publisher Armelin of Padua. Stella has served since 2011 as the titular organist at the historical organs of the Basilica della Santissima Annunziata, Florence.

Recording: 11–15 June 2016 & 5–9 June 2017, Basilica of San Giorgio fuori le mura, Ferrara, Italy (organ); 19–22 September 2017, Saletta Acustica 'Eric James', Pove del Grappa, Vicenza, Italy (harpsichord)
Recording, mixing & mastering engineering: Alessandro Simonetto · Editing: Simone Stella
Instrument preparation & tuning: Claudio Pinchi (organ); Alessandro Simonetto (harpsichord)
Cover photo: *The Martyrdom of Saint Cecilia* [detail], sculpture by Stefano Maderno (1576–1636), Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome
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The Pinchi-Škrabl organ (2013), Basilica of San Giorgio fuori le mura, Ferrara

I Hauptwerk	II Oberpositiv	III Oberwerk	Pedalwerk
1) Prinzipal 16'	10) Quintaden 8'	19) Hollfloit 8'	27) Prinzipal 16'
2) Prinzipal 8'	11) Gedact 8'	20) Spitzfloit 4'	- Prinzipal 8'
3) Octav 4'	12) Prinzipal 4'	21) Gemshorn 2'	- Oktav 4'
4) Superoctav 2'	13) Scharff III-V 1'	22) Siffloit 1½'	28) Subbass 16'
5) Mixtur III-VII 2'	14) Blockfloit 4'	23) Blockwerk V 8'	- Gedackt 8'
6) Rohrfloit 8'	15) Waldfloit 2'	24) Bahrpfeiff 8'	29) Rohrquinte 10½'
7) Nassat 3'	16) Sesquialter II	25) Schalmey 4'	- Quinte 5½'
8) Trommet 8'	17) Dulzian 16'	26) Cornet V 8'	30) Posaunen 16'
9) Vox Humana 8'	18) Krummhorn 8'	Tremolo	- Trommet 8'
Tremolo	Tremolo		

Three manuals with 54 keys C–f^{'''}

Pedalboard with 30 keys C–f'

Accessories: Cimbels, Vogelgesang

Couplers: I-P · II-P · III-P · II-I · III-I · III-I

Unequal temperament elaborated by Claudio Brizi

A = 465Hz

Thanks to the Basilica of San Giorgio fuori le mura in Ferrara for the hospitality.

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Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam

