

CHACONNE

SWEELINCK

The Orpheus of Amsterdam
Works for Keyboard, Volume 3

ROBERT WOOLLEY *harpsichord / virginal*



CHANDOS early music



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Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, as depicted in a stained glass window,
now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621)

Works for Keyboard, Volume 3

<div>1</div>	Toccata C1, SwWV 282 / L 19	3:37
<div>2</div>	Soll es sein (Poolse almande), SwWV 330 / N 12	7:37
<div>3</div>	Fantasia 'Auf die Manier eines Echo' C1, SwWV 253 / L 13	7:45
<div>4</div>	Toccata 2di Toni g2, SwWV 293 / L 22*	2:26
<div>5</div>	Pavana Hispanica, SwWV 327 / N 9*	2:47
<div>6</div>	Fantasia [à 2] g3, SwWV 272 / L 10*	1:10

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16	Fantasia re re re sol ut mi fa sol [à 2, 3 et 4 vocem] G4, SwWV 269	7:36
17	Balleth del granduca, SwWV 319 / N 1	4:29
		TT 79:28

Robert Woolley harpsichord / virginal*

Copy by Andrew Garlick, Buckland St Mary (Somerset) c. 1998,
of harpsichord by Andreas Ruckers, Antwerp 1644,
now in the collection of the Vleeshuis Museum, Antwerp,
kindly loaned by the Royal Academy of Music

Copy by David Evans, Henley-on-Thames (Oxfordshire) 2007,
of virginal by Johannes Grouwels, Antwerp c. 1580,
now in The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments,
kindly loaned by the maker

Pitch: A = 415 Hz

Temperament: Quarter comma mean tone



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Harpsichord by Andreas Ruckers, 1644

Sweelinck: Works for Keyboard, Volume 3

Introduction to the composer and his works

Who was Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, the so-called 'Orpheus of Amsterdam'? Of his early life, we know that he was born in the Dutch city of Deventer in 1562; that his father, Peter Swybbertssoon (Jan Pieterszoon later took his mother's family name), and other members of his family were organists; that the family moved to Amsterdam when Jan was two years of age so that his father could take up the organist's post at the Oude Kerk (Old Church); and that his early music education was probably gained through his father, his father's successor (Cornelis Boskoop), and Jan Willemszoon Lossy at nearby Haarlem.

Throughout his working life, Sweelinck held the position which his father had held at the Oude Kerk. The town's Protestant magistracy controlled this position (after the Dutch Republic's official adoption of Protestantism in 1578), not the church, and it employed him to play organ 'recitals' every day and to oversee the maintenance of the church's large and small organs, which were owned by the town, not the church. In the

newly Reformed Amsterdam, Sweelinck was prohibited from playing the organ in the services, a situation that was to continue, affecting his successors, until long after his death. Sweelinck was a renowned organ expert (details survive of his travels to various Dutch towns to inspect organs) and a sought-after organ teacher. Many organists came to study with him – in particular from Germany – and he was later termed the 'hamburgischen Organistenmacher', as he taught the organists who went on to occupy the posts at the four principal churches in Hamburg.

There are some 254 vocal works (psalm settings, motets, chansons, madrigals) to Sweelinck's name and around seventy keyboard works in various genres; the vocal works were printed, but, by comparison, the keyboard works were left to circulate in manuscripts, prepared mainly by Sweelinck's pupils. We owe a debt of gratitude to these scribes, therefore, for having preserved the keyboard music (although performance could be argued on a case-by-case basis for either organ or stringed keyboard instrument, the use of either is often apt and rich in

possibilities), and for allowing us to glimpse Sweelinck's multifaceted, late-Renaissance keyboard style, which shows distinct influences from Italian, particularly Venetian, keyboard music (Andrea Gabrieli, Merulo) and English music (Blitheman, Bull, Philips). Alan Curtis covered the English influence in great detail in his ground-breaking book *Sweelinck's Keyboard Music* (Leiden, 1969). The most comprehensive investigation of Sweelinck's keyboard music was undertaken by Pieter Dirksen: *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck* (Utrecht, 1997). The new numbering developed by Dirksen in his works catalogue (SwWV) is employed in this text, alongside the numbering used in the second edition (1974) of the *Opera Omnia* collections of the keyboard music, published under the control of three editors: L[eonhardt], A[nnegarn], and N[oske]. Two editions of Sweelinck's keyboard music have been published in recent years: Dirksen's (in collaboration with Harald Vogel) for Breitkopf & Härtel, and Siegbert Rampe's for Bärenreiter. Each edition takes into account recent Sweelinck research and gives fresh readings of the available sources.

Sweelinck the keyboardist was, of course, an improviser. As an organist playing his daily concerts or as a harpsichordist providing

entertainment at social functions (only occasionally, it seems), he was used to inventing different sorts of music out of his head according to learnt, formulaic patterns and procedures. What does the surviving music in the manuscript sources tell us about the player-improviser? An extant score only captures one particular 'working out' of an idea or group of ideas: it is perhaps best seen, therefore, as an idealised version, recording not a single 'performance' but an optimum treatment (at the time of drafting) of themes, contrapuntal textures, form, and florid passagework.

The works

In his third harpsichord and virginal recital devoted to works by Sweelinck, Robert Woolley selects four of his toccatas, six of his fantasias, and seven sets of variations, all but one based on secular melodies. Collectively, the four toccatas show what this virtuosic genre meant to Sweelinck: the controlled synthesis and dramatic organisation of chordal sonorities, contrapuntal argument, and virtuosic passagework. On closer inspection, these challenging works also prove themselves expert demonstrations of how small rhythmic-melodic motifs can be ordered, expanded through repetition over a specific harmonic scheme, and made to explore the full

compass of the keyboard. For instance, the **Toccata C1, SwWV 282 / L 19**, which opens this recording, begins with compact but embellished chord progressions to be played at the centre of the keyboard. Ascending and descending scales and short, repetitive motifs emerge, the right and left hands taking more or less equal responsibility for the patterns. The first cadence acts as a springboard for faster passagework to commence and flourish, the rest of the piece offering an essay in the methodical deployment of motifs and scales, facets which are ordered through sequences and a strong harmonic scheme. Like other examples in the genre, this work is to be found in more than one version, the comparison of versions revealing how a model can survive transmission and testify to a vibrant keyboard practice. The principal source contains fingerings and ornamentation.

The **Toccata 2di Toni g2, SwWV 293 / L 22** is a less diverse work, which dispenses with the embellished homophonic opening in favour of a more immediate introduction to the passages and routines of the Venetian toccata. The remaining toccatas on this recording, **Toccata d1, SwWV 285 / L 31** and **Toccata g4, SwWV 295 / L 30**, offer yet further iterations of the genre and interpretations of the idiom. They fall into the category of uncertain authenticity

(Rampe's view), though Dirksen, despite multiple attributions in each case, has argued convincingly in favour of Sweelinck as the author of both works, mainly on the grounds of style and compositional technique.

The **Fantasia à 4 d2, SwWV 259 / L 2** demonstrates perfectly what Sweelinck's elder English contemporary Thomas Morley stated in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Music* (1597) when defining 'Fantasie', the principal kind of music made 'without a dittie' (i.e., unsupported by text):

...that is, when a musician taketh a point at his pleasure, and wresteth and turneth it as he list, making either much or little of it according as shall seem best in his own conceit. In this may more art be shewne than in any other musicke, because the composer is tide to nothing but that he may adde, diminish, and alter at his pleasure.

This particular Fantasia is an eloquent and seamless exploration of one central theme or subject. In its structure and ambition one can see in this work characteristics typical of the composer's other weighty fantasias (e.g., the so called *Fantasia Crommatica*, SwWV 258 / L 1, which appears in Volume 2 of this series): it is a work organised rhetorically in stages, like a speech; it has a principal theme, often of

common currency, set in relief by a number of subsidiary themes (countersubjects) and explored in normal proportion and also in augmentation (theme in long note values) and diminution (theme in short note values); it is a work with a mounting sense of drama as it becomes increasingly enlivened by variation. The work is surely one of the period's most compelling demonstrations of how technique and invention support each other to supreme compositional effect. By contrast, the other works titled 'fantasia' in this recital show how flexible a piece of keyboard invention can be. For example, the **Fantasia C1, SwWV 253 / L 13** survives with the explanation 'Auf die Manier eines Echo' (In the manner of an echo) and much of its span, after a rational and contrapuntal opening, is devoted to an almost obsessive probing of short motifs in strict dialogue. The **Fantasia à 4 C2, SwWV 254 / L 14**, though rich in imitative writing, takes us back into the more impulsive world of the toccata. The **Fantasia [à 2] g3, SwWV 272 / L 10** is a short, pithy exercise in canonic writing and has come down to us in a keyboard book compiled after 1646 in north Germany or The Netherlands, now in St Petersburg.

The **Fantasia d5, SwWV 262 / L 37** is a simple contrapuntal work. It appears in the

Turin tablatures and bears Sweelinck's name; its authenticity, as in other examples from these sources, has been questioned a number of times. In the most recent research, Rampe has agreed with Dirksen that this is plausibly an early work as yet not displaying the hallmarks of the mature style of the composer. The **Fantasia re re sol ut mi fa sol [à 2, 3 et 4 vocem] G4, SwWV 269** survives as a work attributed to John Bull. It is accepted as a part of the Sweelinck canon by Dirksen but does not appear in the work of Rampe or the earlier editors. It is a thoroughgoing exploration of a simple motif / *cantus firmus* (the pitches are identified in the title) presented incessantly in the earlier stages of the work like an ostinato. The texture proceeds methodically from two parts to three, and the final section, in which the motif is in diminution and in looser counterpoint, is in four parts with typical embellishments and a virtuoso conclusion.

The many surviving variation cycles – on sacred melodies (Calvinist psalm melodies and Lutheran chorale melodies) and on secular songs or dances – attest to Sweelinck's prowess and ingenuity in this genre. In fact, the only eyewitness account of Sweelinck performing comes from Guillelmus Baudartius (1625), who recalled hearing Sweelinck improvise around twenty-five variations on a

secular tune: *Den lustelicken Mey is nu in zijnen tijdt* (The merry May has now arrived). **Balleth del granduca**, SwWV 319 / N 1 is probably the best known of the sets recorded here. The melody is an Italian dance ('O che nuovo miraculo', 1589) by Emilio de' Cavalieri, and Sweelinck's interpretation for keyboard is the earliest known setting. After a simple chordal announcement of the theme, the variations in turn exploit figuration in order to 're-spell' the harmony of the original, first concentrating on the right hand and then on the left. The fourth variation features the right hand again and here the gear changes in order to assimilate semiquaver passagework. The final variation relies not on florid semiquaver figuration but on flowing quavers, using the intervals of the third and sixth to embellish the underlying harmonic template. In this setting, as elsewhere in Sweelinck's variations (and in other genres), much of the patterned embellishment is redolent of that adopted by Elizabethan and Jacobean virginalists in their artful and internationally disseminated keyboard works. Throughout his settings, Sweelinck nurtured a wholly individual variation technique in which superbly characterised motifs stemming from the original melodic template are imbued with contrapuntal logic and projected by engaging embellishment.

The sources of the melodies on which Sweelinck chooses to write provide an interesting insight into contemporaneous popular music. **Soll es sein**, SwWV 330 / N 12 is based on a Polish dance tune (such tunes were popular in the Low Countries and were often noted or referred to in collections), and **Ich fuhr mich über Rheine**, SwWV 322 / N 4 was popular in Dutch songbooks, even if Sweelinck's rendition of the tune differs from the other known version. The **Pavana Hispanica**, SwWV 327 / N 9, which in its sources also contains material by Sweelinck's pupil Samuel Scheidt, is essentially a free reading on the *folia* bass pattern; the earliest setting of this material is found in a collection of music (1578) by Antonio Cabezón, in which it is called 'Pavana italiana'. **Malle Sijmen**, SwWV 323 / N 5 sets an English tune ('Mall Sims' or 'Silly Simon') which was popular in the Low Countries, and the theme of **Allemande de chapelle**, SwWV 317 appears in a variety of early-seventeenth-century lute books; the Allemande has been considered a spurious attribution but is now recognised as a work plausibly by Sweelinck. **Puer nobis nascitur**, SwWV 315 / A 8 is the only sacred variation set represented here. The Dutch text is 'Ons is gheboren een kindekijn' and the tune which Sweelinck employs is derived from the melody 'Benedicamus domino'.

The Dutch text fits perfectly with this derived *cantus firmus*, and as in the secular sets, Sweelinck probes the tune's strong contour throughout with idiomatic melodic decoration and compelling counterpoint.

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Harpsichord by Andrew Garlick, c. 1998, after Andreas Ruckers, 1644

In 1604, Sweelinck travelled to Antwerp – his only known journey beyond the Seven Provinces of the Dutch Republic – to order a harpsichord from the Ruckers family. Soon after the instrument was delivered, the city council of Amsterdam asked the artist Pieter Isaacs to paint the lid. For the design, the council approached the writer and painter Karel van Mander, who designed an allegory of Amsterdam as the centre of the world. This lid was sensationally rediscovered in an English collection in 1999 and is now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum.

The harpsichord played on this recording was copied from a harpsichord built by Andreas Ruckers in 1644, his last instrument to have survived, which is now in the collection of the Vleeshuis, Antwerp.

This instrument is a rare unaltered survivor, which has never been subjected to

what French speakers term *ravalement* – the enlargement and alterations which were often made to harpsichords by Ruckers in the following century, to enable them to cope with the compass and demands of eighteenth-century keyboard music.

This harpsichord has the standard single-manual Ruckers disposition of two choirs of strings, one at the unison and one at the octave, with a buff stop applied to the unison register. It has long-scaled iron strings in the treble and brass strings in the bass.

It can be played either at unison pitch or octave pitch, or the two registers can be combined as a chorus, which gives an incisive quality that contrasts with the more rounded timbre of the Flemish virginal.

In the copy played on this recording, Andrew Garlick has extended the original compass of C / E – c3 to GG, AA – d3.

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Virginal by David Evans, 2007, after Johannes Grouwels, c. 1580

The original instrument, in The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments, was made c. 1580 by Johannes Grouwels who is recorded as Master of the Guild of St Luke, Antwerp, in 1579. The construction is typically Flemish.

The forty-one-note compass C / E – a2, g2 is strung in iron with yellow brass basses. The pitch is A = 415 Hertz.

An outstanding feature is the plucking point, which lies about halfway between that of the *spinetta* (plucked close to the nut) and the *muselar* (plucked well away from the nut). This gives the instrument by Grouwels a sound more like that of a small harpsichord than that of the more typical, and later, Flemish virginal.

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Well known as a harpsichord, organ, and fortepiano soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player, **Robert Woolley** has produced a series of acclaimed solo recordings which include discs of works by Tallis, Gibbons, Byrd, Frescobaldi, Purcell, Weckmann, Georg Böhm, Handel, Bach, Scarlatti, and Carlos de Seixas. He has given performances in the UK, USA, South America, Japan, and throughout continental Europe, and was artist-in-residence at Washington University in St Louis, Missouri. He regularly broadcasts for the BBC, his programmes having included many recordings on historic organs, harpsichords, and fortepianos. For his recording of Sweelinck's

complete keyboard works, now in progress, he plays the seventeenth-century organ by van Hagerbeer at the Pieterskerk in Leiden (www.pieterskerk.com), copies by Malcolm Rose and Andrew Garlick of harpsichords by Lodewijk Theewes, a virginal by David Evans after Johannes Grouwels, a muselar by Adlam Burnett after Ioannes Ruckers, and the 1623 organ by Hans Scherer in Tangermünde, a historic town on the river Elbe, in the district of Stendal, in Saxony-Anhalt. He has recently given a recital at Buckingham Palace of music composed for the first Hanoverian monarchs, playing a harpsichord commissioned by Frederick, Prince of Wales, from Burkat Shudi in 1740, which is now part of the Royal Collection of Her Majesty the Queen. His recordings on this instrument may be heard on www.royalcollection.org.uk. He also took part in a short film about the Collection with Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures (www.royalcollection.org.uk/exhibitions). In 2015 he made a solo tour of the USA, which included concerts at St Thomas's Church, New York, as well as in Charlottesville, Virginia and Newark, New Jersey, and gave a recital and master-classes during the 2014 Oundle Organ Week at the Oundle International Festival, and at the St Albans International Organ Festival.

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Hanya Chhala

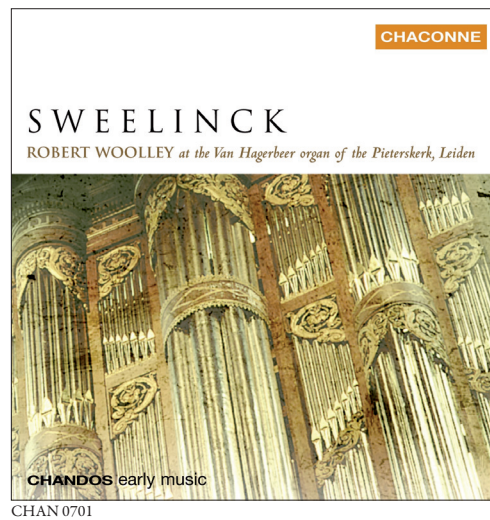
Robert Woolley



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Virginal by Johannes Grouwels, c. 1580

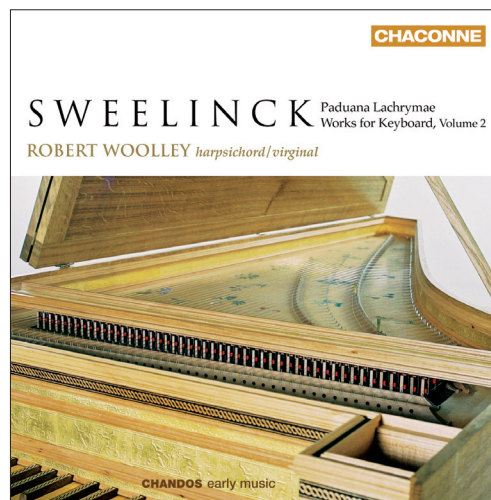
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Works for Keyboard, Volume 1



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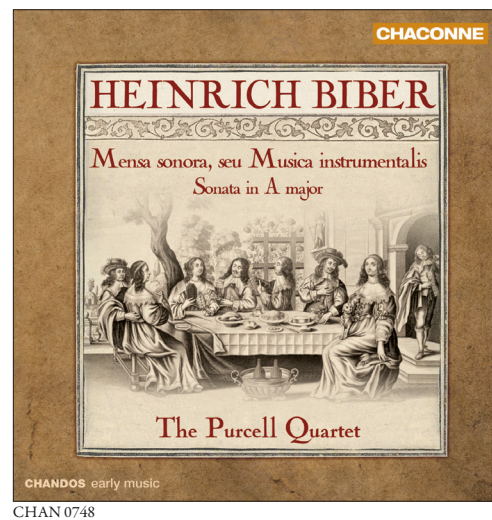


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The generous support of The Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands in London, The Royal College of Music, and The Royal Academy of Music is gratefully acknowledged.



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London

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Sound engineer Gary Cole

Editor Gary Cole

Mastering Rosanna Fish

A & R administrator Sue Shortridge

Recording venue Glynde Church, East Sussex; 3 – 5 January 2008

Front cover Virginal made c. 1580 by Johannes Grouwels, Master of the Guild of St Luke, Antwerp; photograph © Collection of The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments

Design and typesetting Cap & Anchor Design Co. (www.capandanchor.com)

Booklet editor Finn S. Gundersen

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Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England

Country of origin UK



Harpsichord lid showing an allegory of Amsterdam as the Centre of World Trade, 1606, commissioned from Pieter Isaacsz and based on a design by Karel van Mander; instrument ordered by Sweelinck from the Ruckers family in Antwerp, 1604, for the town hall in Amsterdam



CHACONNE DIGITAL

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JAN PIETERSZOOM SWEELINCK (1562 – 1621)

Works for Keyboard, Volume 3

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Robert Woolley *harpsichord/virginal**

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