

NAXOS

ROSSINI

Péchés de vieillesse • 3 (Sins of Old Age)

Album pour les enfants adolescents
(Album for Adolescent Children)

Alessandro Marangoni, Piano



Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Péchés de vieillesse: Volume V, Album pour les enfants adolescents

Gioachino Antonio Rossini, one of the most successful and popular operatic composers of his time, was born in Pesaro in 1792, five months after the marriage of his parents. His father, a brass-player and later teacher of the French horn at the Bologna Accademia, had a modest career, disturbed by the political changes of the period as the French replaced the Austrians in Northern Italy. Rossini's mother was a singer and as a boy Rossini made his appearance with his father in the pit orchestra and from time to time as a singer with his mother on stage, going on to work as a keyboard-player in the opera orchestra.

Rossini's early studies in music were with his father and mother, and with other teachers through the generosity of rich patrons. In childhood he had already started to show ability as a composer and his experience in the opera-house bore natural fruit in a remarkable and meteoric career that began in 1810 with the production of *La cambiale di matrimonio* in Venice.

There followed a series of operas, comic and tragic, until the relatively poor reception of *Semiramide* in Venice in 1823 turned Rossini's attention to Paris. Under the Bourbon King Charles X Rossini staged French versions of earlier works and in 1829 *Guillaume Tell*. A contract for further operas came to nothing when the King was replaced in the revolution of 1830 by Louis-Philippe, although eventually, after some six years, Rossini was able to have his agreed annuity restored. With matters settled in France, in 1836 he returned to Italy and in spite of ill health concerned himself with the affairs of the Liceo Musicale in Bologna. The revolutionary disturbances there in 1848, activities with which he had little sympathy, seemed to threaten him and his second wife, Olympe Pélissier, whom he had married in 1846, after the death of his first wife, the singer Isabella Colbran, from whom he had been legally separated since 1837. For his own safety he moved first to Florence, but in 1855, partly in a search for better health, returned to Paris. In that city and a few years later at his new villa at Passy he passed the rest of his life.

Rossini's last ten years brought a return to composition, principally with a series of pieces described as *Péchés de vieillesse* (Sins of Old Age). Some of these are based on earlier works, some designed for performance at the informal Saturday evenings when he entertained guests in Paris, and others simply musical *obiter dicta*, as it were, pieces written as the mood took him. The *Péchés de vieillesse* are included in thirteen volumes, with the fourth to the eighth grouped together by Rossini as *'Un peu de tout. Recueil de 56 morceaux semi-comiques pour le piano ('Je dédie ces Péchés de vieillesse aux pianistes de la 4^{me} classe à la quelle j'ai l'honneur d'appartenir')* (A little of everything. Collection of 56 semi-comic pieces for the piano: "I dedicate these Sins of Old Age to pianists of the fourth class, to which I have the honour to belong"). Rossini was unfairly modest about his abilities as a pianist, which were, it seems, not inconsiderable. Other volumes also contain piano pieces.

The fifth volume of the *Péchés de vieillesse* has the title *Album pour les enfants adolescents* (Album for Adolescent Children). It contains twelve pieces, starting with *Première Communion*, its opening a pious *Andantino religioso*, leading to *Récréation*, marked *Vivace*, a varied waltz sequence, the secular celebration of the event. The second piece has the title *Thème naïf et variations, idem ...* The G major theme, *Andantino mosso*, has an easy lilt and is followed by a first variation with triplet figuration. The second variation starts with a rapid ascending scale in a pattern of shorter notes and is followed by an E minor version of the original theme. The last variation brings rapid octaves in both hands, before the original theme returns, its closing marked by a brief suggestion of a cadenza.

The third piece, *Saltarello à l'italienne*, is characterized by its dotted rhythms, maintained throughout in a dance with two contrasting trio sections and a dramatic ending. The *Prélude moresque* brings conventional touches of the exotic and the *Valse lugubre* has brief suggestions of the lugubrious with hints of minor keys in a predominantly major context.

The *Impromptu anodin* that follows again seems to bear a title derived from the principle *lucus a non lucendo*, in that there is nothing anodyne about it.

L'innocence italienne: la candeur française contrasts the gentler textures of Italian innocence with the brilliant and mercurial French candour, the latter displayed with some virtuosity and a glimpse of Offenbach. The eighth piece, *Prélude convulsif*, is characterized by its dynamic contrasts and syncopated rhythms, twice interrupted by passages of elegant baroque counterpoint. *La Lagune de Venise à l'expiration de l'année 1861!!!!* (The Venice Lagoon at the End of the Year 1861!!!!) has the lilt of a barcarolle. The year 1861 brought Italian unity under King Vittorio Emanuele II, but Venice had been taken again under Austrian rule in 1848 by Marshal Radetsky, who remained governor of Lombardo-Veneto for a number of years. Venice only became part of the united Italy in 1866. Radetsky makes his appearance in this piece with emphatic chords for *L'ombra di Radetski!!!!*, and

the music is again interrupted by chords marking the arrival of *S. M.!!!*, presumably a reference to the Emperor Franz Joseph, whose wife had taken up residence in Venice in October 1861, taking refuge from the pressures of court life in Vienna and visited in Venice by her anxious husband on various occasions. The arrival is followed by *La lagune baissant d'une tierce* (The Lagoon descending a third).

Ouf! Les petits pois (Ah! The peas) has more than a hint of Mendelssohn and of earlier composers, its title a light-hearted hint at Rossini's gastronomic interests. It is followed by *Un sauté*, a lilting Chopinesque waltz with a contrasting trio section. The gastronomic connotations continue with the final *Hachis romantique* (Romantic Hash), which, after a brief introduction, proceeds to something more akin to Clementi in perpetual motion before final arpeggiated chords and a concluding and definitive *tremolo*.

Keith Anderson

Alessandro Marangoni



Photo: Bruna Rausa

Born in Italy in 1979, Alessandro Marangoni studied piano with Marco Vincenzi at the Università di Pavia, where he was awarded the diploma with honours (summa cum laude). He continued his studies at the Scuola di Musica in Fiesole with Maria Tipo and Pietro De Maria. Besides his musical studies he was awarded an honours in philosophy at the Università di Pavia with a thesis on Fernando Liuzzi's philosophy of music. He was also a *merit student* of the Almo Collegio Borromeo, Pavia, one of the oldest and most important European university colleges. The recipient of several national and international awards, Alessandro has appeared in many important musical events in Europe, both as a soloist and as a chamber musician. His most recent performances were in Rome (Accademia di Santa Cecilia), Florence (Accademia della Crusca), Venice (Teatro La Fenice), Ischia (the Walton Foundation), Cittadella in Assisi, Teatro Verdi in Trieste, as well as at the Engadiner Internationale Kammermusik-Festspiele, Sagra Musicale Umbra, the Italian Cultural Institute in London, the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan, Saint

John's College, Cambridge, and the Universidad Católica de Chile. As a chamber musician he has collaborated with some of the most important Italian musical personalities and groups, including Mario Ancillotti, Vittorio Ceccanti, Fanny Clamagirand, Daria Masiero, Stefano Parrino, Quirino Principe, Carlo Zardo and the Nuovo Quartetto Italiano. He has played to great public and critical acclaim in Spain with the Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra and in Bratislava with the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Aldo Ceccato. He has recently started an artistic collaboration with the Italian actress Valentina Cortese. He plays the piano for the Trio Albatros, with which he has won acclaim all over the world. In 2007 Alessandro made a recording for La Bottega Discantica of piano works by the great Italian conductor Victor de Sabata. For the 40th anniversary of the latter's death he played in a recital at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, with Daniel Barenboim. He is recording the complete piano works by Rossini (*Pêchés de vieillesse*) and Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum* for Naxos. In 2007 he won the prestigious Amici di Milano International Prize for Music. He teaches piano and chamber music in several masterclasses in Europe and South America.

www.alessandromarangoni.com

Also Available



8.570590-91



8.570766

Italian pianist Alessandro Marangoni, praised by the media for his 'beautiful legato touch and a keen sense of phrasing', here presents the third in his series of Rossini's *Sins of Old Age* with the *Album for Adolescent Children*. From the pious *First Communion* and the lilting barcarolle of *The Lagoon of Venice* to the exotic *Moorish Prelude* and Rossini's Mendelssohnian tribute to his favourite food, *Ah! The Peas!*, this is indeed delectable piano music. Volumes 1 (8.570590-91) and 2 (8.570766) are also available.

Gioachino
ROSSINI
(1792-1868)

Complete Piano Music • 3

**Péchés de vieillesse, Volume V:
Album pour les enfants adolescents**

1	No. 1. Première communion	5:12
2	No. 2. Thème naïf et variations, idem...	5:22
3	No. 3. Saltarello à l'italienne	4:48
4	No. 4. Prélude moresque	4:52
5	No. 5. Valse lugubre	4:02
6	No. 6. Impromptu anodin	5:16
7	No. 7. L'innocence italienne: La candeur française	7:49
8	No. 8. Prélude convulsif	5:44
9	No. 9. La Lagune de Venise à l'expiration de l'année 1861!!!	6:50
10	No. 10. Ouf! Les petits pois	5:15
11	No. 11. Un sauté	5:08
12	No. 12. Hachis romantique	5:09



Alessandro Marangoni, Piano

Piano: Steinway & Sons (Angelo Fabbrini collection)

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