

DIALOGUE FOR TWO ORGANS

Cherubini • Galuppi • Clementi

Bonazzi • Busi • Canneti

Luigi Celeghin • Bianka Pezić



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Dialogue: “a verbal interchange, conversation between two or more persons ... a composition for two or more voices or instruments”. Intelligence, logic and reason all have a part to play, not only in human conversation, but also in musical dialogues, through simplicity of expression, hexachordal mutation of Gregorian chant, well-considered responses to musical cues, and so on.

These dialogues for two organs originate in part from the practice of *alternatim*, in which the instrument would both add to and draw inspiration from a complex polyphonic texture. Organ improvisation is moreover centuries-old, as shown by this reference made to it by Girolamo Diruta (c.1550- after 1612) in his organ treatise *Il Transilvano*: “... listening in St Mark’s (Venice), that most famous of churches, to a duel between two organs responding to one another with such skill and grace that I was almost beside myself, and longing to meet these two great champions, I waited by the door until I saw appear Claudio Merulo and Andrea Gabrieli...”. The cities of Venice, Milan, Padua, Bologna, Rome and Naples — whose churches boasted instruments constructed by the greatest organ-builders — all, thanks to the musical genius and imagination of their organist-composers, played a part in establishing compositional criteria and various different musical forms, of which this CD contains a number of examples, the latest work dating from the mid-nineteenth century.

The *Sonata for two organs* by the Florentine composer Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) is dated 1780, Milan. The lighthearted opening theme is followed by a masterful display of counterpoint in two fugues, for the first and second organ respectively. The initial theme returns at the end in a duel of rhythm and movement before the two join in unison at the final cadence. In his light and elegant *Sonata for two harpsichords*, or organ and spinet, Baldassare Galuppi, “Il Buranello” (1707-85), favours the *style galant*, the simplified and stylised descendant of the Baroque. The score of the nineteenth-century *Sonata for two organs* by an “anonymous

Italian”, like those of the Clementi and Bonazzi pieces, is held in the Milan Cathedral archive. All these works have been newly published by Armelin (Padua). In the anonymous piece, the thematic elements (variously transposed) are passed back and forth, echo-like, between the two instruments, thereby creating a transparent, flowing musical texture, with richer harmonies generally occurring at the cadences.

Also included on this CD is the *Sonata for two organs* by Muzio Clementi (1752-1832), prodigy, composer, pianist and publisher. His skill in the pianistic idiom is evident in this piece, which is divided into three principal sections: Allegro molto-Allegretto-Allegro molto. Ferdinando Bonazzi (1764-1845) was first organist at Milan Cathedral and his *Suonata and Pastoral* for two organs both come from its archive. We know that there were two organists at Milan, who would take turns to play the two exquisite instruments built by Gian Giacomo Antegnati (1559) and Cristoforo Valvasori (1607). The presence of these instruments (subsequently modified) probably explains the quantity of works written for two organs. The *style galant* of the first piece by Bonazzi contrasts with the pastoral gracefulness of the second, which unfolds in three sections: Andante-Minuetto Allegro-Allegro.

The *Four Sonatas for two organs* by the Bolognese composer Giuseppe Busi (1808-71) show how the idiom was developing under the influence of opera, which was by then the dominant musical form in Italy. The *Four Sonatas* are written in different tempi (Sonata I Allegro giusto; Sonata II Adagio; Sonata III Allegro; Sonata IV Largo) but the first three employ the by then standard rhythmic and harmonic (and, often, melodic) stimuli. The *Fourth Sonata* progresses in a more subdued manner, its dialogue linear and transparent, while denser harmonies emphasise moments of expressive tension.

Even more obviously influenced by the musical world of his time was the organist-composer Francesco

Canneti (1807-84). Organ transcriptions of symphonies, arias, marches and other such pieces by famous composers were commonplace by this time, and Canneti's *Finale for two organs* from Verdi's *Aida* is an entertaining example, bringing our programme to an end with the well-known *Triumphal March*.

Nestling in the medieval town of Sant'Elpidio a Mare, the magnificent Basilica of the Madonna della Misericordia contains not only works of art by Boscoli,

Pomarancio and Lilli among others, but also two internationally renowned organs. The quality of these instruments along with the church's impeccable acoustics and beautiful sound synthesis make this a unique setting for music-making.

Luigi Celeghin

English translation: Susannah Howe

Note on the Instruments

The two instruments heard are in the Basilica della Misericordia of Sant'Elpidio a Mare, Ascoli Piceno, built by two of the greatest organ-builders of the Veneto, Pietro Nacchini (Bulić, Dalmatia, 1694 - Conegliano, Treviso, after 1769) and his pupil Gaetano Callido (Este, Padua, 1727 - Venice, 1813). Pietro Nacchini (Petar Nakić) was born in the Dalmatian town of Bulić, then part of the Republic of Venice. During the course of his career he built some five hundred instruments, a number of which survive in Venice and elsewhere. Gaetano Callido, a native of Este in the Padua region, was similarly prolific as an organ-builder, constructing four hundred instruments, some in Venice and others over a wider geographical area. He was

appointed organ-maker to St Mark's in Venice in 1770, developing further the Italian organ and succeeded by his two sons. From a note of 1741 found in the parish archive of the local Collegiata, where, among other things, there is another organ by Callido, it is recorded that there was already another instrument by Nacchini in the Basilica della Misericordia. The two opposite sides of the choir are from the same period and equal in every way, except that on the right is the organ by Nacchini, while that on the left was a balancing but non-speaking instrument. In 1981 the Callido instrument was retrieved from the Church of San Francesco in the same city, and installed here, providing a valuable cultural resource.

Organ on the Gospel side

Location: in the choir overlooking the presbytery

Organ-maker: Gaetano Callido, 1785, Op. 217

One manual, 45 keys (C - c''') with a first short octave

Pull-down pedals (pedaliera a leggio), 18 keys (C - a)

actual extent 12 notes, with first short octave

Pedal-Manual coupled

18th pedal activates tamburo

B/S division: c# - d'

Unequal temperament

Ripieno ranks from

f# of the Decimanona

Stops (right of keyboard)

Principale 8' (divided)

Ottava

Quintadecima

Decimanona

Vigesimaseconda

Vigesimasesta

Vigesimanona

Addition to bass (pedal 8')

Voce Umana

Flauto in VIII

Flauto in XII

Cornetta

Tromboncini (divided)

Tamburo - Manual tiratutti (coupler).

Manual action bellows.

Electric ventil.

Restoration: Gustavo Zanin, Codroipo, Udine, 1981.

Organ on the Epistle side

Location: in the choir overlooking the presbytery

Organ-maker: Pietro Nacchini, 1757

One manual, 45 keys (C - c''') with a first short octave

Pull-down pedals (pedaliera a leggio), 17 keys (C - g#)

actual extent 12 notes, with first short octave

Pedal-Manual coupled

B/S division: c# - d'

Unequal temperament

Ripieno ranks from

f# of the Decimanona

Stops (single rank on right of keyboard)

Principale 8' (divided)

Ottava

Quintadecima

Decimanona

Vigesimaseconda

Vigesimasesta

Vigesimanona

Voce Umana

Flauto in XII

Cornetta

Tromboncini (divided)

Contrabassi

Tamburo (drum stop)

Tamburo - Manual tiratutti (coupler)

and to pedal. Manual action bellows.

Electric ventil.

Restoration: Alfredo Piccinelli, Padua, 1974.



Luigi Celeghin

The concert organist Luigi Celeghin is Emeritus Professor of Organ at the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia in Rome and honorary inspector with the Ministry of Cultural Activities with respect to early instruments throughout Italy. He is President of the Lazio Organ Association and director of the Città di Viterbo National Organ Competition. He is artistic director of the Elpidiense Accademia Organistica and is closely involved in a number of international organ competitions, including competitions in Erfurt and Vilnius. He has appeared as a performer in concerts from the United States to Japan.

Bianka Pezić

Bianka Pezić was born in Zagreb and studied in Croatia, before further study at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome in organ and organ composition. She has participated in national and international festivals, testimony to her technical and musical expertise.



The organs ‘in cornu Evangelii’ by Gaetano Callido (1785) (left) and ‘in cornu Epistolae’ by Pietro Nacchini (1757) (right), Basilica Pontificia Maria SS. della Misericordia, S. Elpidio a Mare, Ascoli Piceno, Italy

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Playing Time

67:35



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This unusual collection of music for two organs or two keyboard instruments is a fascinating demonstration of how the idiom developed under the influence of opera which, by the early 19th century, had become the dominant musical form in Italy. The graceful *style galant* practised by Galuppi and Bonazzi can be heard alongside *Sonatas* by Clementi and Cherubini, perhaps better known for their achievements in other repertoire, and the Bolognese composer, Giuseppe Busi. Organ transcriptions of symphonies, arias, marches and other such pieces by famous composers were commonplace by this time, and Canneti's *Finale for two organs from Verdi's Aida* is an entertaining example, ending with the well-known *Triumphal March*.

Dialogue for Two Organs

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|---|--|
| 1 Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842): | Giuseppe Busi (1808-1871): |
| Sonata per due organi 8:04 | Quattro sonate per due organi |
| 2 Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785): | 7 Sonata I: Allegro giusto 7:39 |
| Sonata a due organi 5:42 | 8 Sonata II: Adagio 6:44 |
| 3 Anonimo Italiano (19th century): | 9 Sonata III: Allegro 7:05 |
| Sonata a due organi 4:20 | 10 Sonata IV: Largo 3:24 |
| 4 Muzio Clementi (1752-1832): | Francesco Canneti (1807-1884): |
| Sonata per due organi 10:41 | 11 Finale a due organi nell'opera |
| Ferdinando Bonazzi (1754-1845): | Aida di Giuseppe Verdi 3:51 |
| 5 Suonata per due organi 5:35 | |
| 6 Pastorale a due organi 4:30 | |

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Luigi Celeghin • Bianka Pezić, Organs

Recorded on the organs 'in cornu Evangelii' by Gaetano Callido (1785) and 'in cornu Epistolae' by Pietro Nacchini (1757) at the Basilica Pontificia Maria SS. della Misericordia, S. Elpidio a Mare, Ascoli Piceno, Italy, from 10th to 12th June, 2002

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Organ photographs by Foto Zeppilli

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