

GRAND  
PIANO

**BERIO**  
**COMPLETE PIANO WORKS**

---

**MATTEO BEVILACQUA**  
**LUCA TRABUCCO**

# LUCIANO BERIO (1925–2003)

## COMPLETE PIANO WORKS

**MATTEO BEVILACQUA**, *piano; piano primo* (13, 14)

**LUCA TRABUCCO**, *piano secondo* (13, 14)

---

Catalogue Number: GP903

Recording Dates: 29 March 2022 (6–12), 10 September 2022 (15),  
23 December 2022 (1–5, 16), 22 March 2023 (13, 14, 17)

Recording Venue: Luke Recording Studio, Cividale, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy

Producer: Associazione RiMe MuTe

Engineer and Editor: Luca Zanon

Piano: Fazioli F278

Booklet Notes: Ivan Moody

Publishers: Universal Edition (1–14, 16, 17), Edizioni Suvini Zerboni (15)

Cover Art: *Imaginary Piano* by Elisabetta and Paolo Zeccara

A co-production with the Ministero della Cultura, Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia

	<b>PETITE SUITE (1947)</b>	<b>09:05</b>
1	I. Prélude	01:48
2	II. Petit Air I	01:20
3	III. Gavotte	02:52
4	IV. Petit Air II	01:23
5	V. Gigue	01:36
	<b>SIX ENCORES (1965–90)</b>	<b>14:30</b>
6	Brin (1990)	01:58
7	Leaf (1990)	01:27
8	Wasserklavier (1965)	02:56
9	Erdenklavier (1969)	01:25
10	Luftklavier (1985)	03:29
11	Feuerklavier (1989)	03:11
12	<b>SEQUENZA IV (1966)</b>	<b>12:00</b>
13	<b>CANZONETTA for piano four hands (1991)</b>	<b>00:37</b>
14	<b>TOUCH for piano four hands (1991)</b>	<b>01:37</b>
15	<b>CINQUE VARIAZIONI (1952–53, rev. 1966)</b>	<b>08:34</b>
16	<b>ROUNDS (1964–65) (version for piano, 1967)</b>	<b>03:55</b>
17	<b>PIANO SONATA (2001)</b>	<b>23:58</b>

**TOTAL TIME: 74:25**

## LUCIANO BERIO (1925–2003) COMPLETE PIANO WORKS

The piano was a constant throughout Berio's life. Not only is there a considerable quantity of early chamber music which makes use of it, but it assumes a truly important role in such works as *Tempi Concertanti* (1959), the remarkable *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* (1973), *Linea* (1973), 'points on the curve to find...' (1974, reworked as *Echoing Curves*, 1988) and *Compass* for piano and orchestra (1994). Music for solo piano, however, is present in all periods of his creative trajectory, and the *Piano Sonata* (2001) was one of his last completed works.

The earliest work on this recording is the *Petite Suite*, written when Berio was 22 years of age. As its title suggests, it takes a sequence of Baroque dances as its structural basis, but the musical vocabulary is not that of straightforward neo-Classicism, or, rather, the music suggests a double reworking – the *Prélude*, for example, might be Berio reimagining Prokofiev reimagining Bach. There is also a French quality to some of the writing – both *Petit Air I* and *Petit Air II* sound wistfully impressionistic. It may seem difficult to detect the later Berio in this charming set of pieces, but there is a solid technical basis, notably in terms of figuration, that is very much part of his later armoury of techniques.

*Cinque variazioni* dating from 1952–53, are very different. Bearing a dedication to Luigi Dallapiccola, they show Berio's approach to the use of post-serial techniques to piano writing. What is evident already in these pieces, of an almost Webern-like concision, is the lyrical quality that would characterise the composer's work throughout his life, though there is also certainly no lack of gestural, timbral or dynamic contrast. Indeed, the meditative, static quality of the opening variation stands in dramatic contrast with the toccata-like figuration that characterises much of the rest of the work.

The *Six Encores*, written over the course of three-and-a-half decades, are brief, personal pieces. The first, *Brian* dating from 1990 and dedicated to the pianist Michel Oudor, who died prematurely, is of an extreme delicacy. Its abundant grace notes and fragments of melody like bells appearing through the mist make a touching farewell. *Leaf*, also from 1990, is dedicated to the memory of another Michael, Michael Vyner, the former Music Director

of the London Sinfonietta. It is also a delicate work, but with occasional flashes of anger, though it ends in sublime tranquillity. The earliest piece in the set, *Wasserklavier* (1965), is dedicated to Antonio Ballista. It is a kind of ethereal dance, or perhaps one might better say an ethereal reminiscence of a dance – a stately pavane, say – that also makes reference to Brahms and Schubert (the *Three Intermezzi*, Op. 117 and the *Four Impromptus*, Op. 142 respectively). The reference to the four elements in the title of *Wasserklavier* (i.e., 'Water Piano') is continued in *Erdenklavier* ('Earth Piano', 1969), *Luftklavier* ('Air Piano', 1985) and *Feuerklavier* ('Fire Piano', 1989). *Erdenklavier* is dedicated to the American teacher and academic Thomas Willis. It makes great poetic and structural use of the resonance of the piano, exploiting with extraordinary skill the harmonic resonance of notes held down while others are being played, thus creating a complex halo of sound. *Luftklavier*, the longest of these six encores, seems literally to be composed of air, so beautifully suggestive is its quiet and rapid figuration of the movement of wind. *Feuerklavier*, dedicated to Peter Serkin, is also a kind of *moto perpetuo*, but the extremely careful use of dynamics and articulations suggest the menace of fire barely under control but abruptly extinguished.

In spite of its very traditional name, the *Piano Sonata* is one of Berio's last works, completed in 2001 to a commission from the Zurich Festival, but arising from an earlier, brief work called *Interlinea*, written in 2000 for Pierre Boulez's 75th birthday. Its first performance was given by Andrea Lucchesini in the year of its composition. It employs some of the techniques heard in his earlier piano music – and, indeed in his output more generally – such as an obsession with one repeated note, in this case B flat, a sort of almost Ligetian clock ticking, which is then subjected to a wide range of decorations, attacks and blandishments using various techniques. The note changes, multiplies itself and fragments, creating thereby a fascinating and utterly unpredictable sonic journey of compelling drama. The B flat returns at the end, but the journey has utterly transformed it, and the music fades gently away.

*Rounds* was originally conceived for harpsichord in 1965, but two years later the composer completely reimagined the piece for piano. In spite of its chronological distance from the *Sonata*, its nervous figuration shares with the later work an obsessiveness and an intensity of narrative purpose. The first of the work's three sections is repeated at the end, but at a faster speed. Of the harpsichord version Berio said that it was 'a kind of firework of lines and timbres blended and ramified *ad infinitum*', and the same description may certainly be used of the reworking for piano.

The *Sequenza* is the fourth in a series of nine works Berio wrote between 1958 and 1980, the first being for flute and the last for clarinet. The latter also exists in a version for saxophone by the composer, and there is a transcription for cello of the sixth for viola (1967) though not by Berio. Some of the *Sequenze* also gave rise to further works, notably a number of the *Chemins* series. All of them are virtuosic (though, as the composer pointed out, this involved the performer's complicity, rather than being virtuosity for virtuosity's sake<sup>1</sup>), and the fourth adds to this a sense of improvisation.

Indeed, Berio wrote it, unusually, at the piano, and he spoke of the challenges in transcribing improvised music and popular songs – at the time, the composer was living in the United States, and the sudden changes in character and deployment of multiple textures would seem to reflect this. All the musical material of the piece is presented in the chords that open it, which are already characterised by greater and lesser resonance created through their harmonic structure, and they form the basis of the antagonism between chords and rapid chromatic writing, underpinned by a slow elaboration of a sequence of pitches derived from the work's opening. An interesting feature of the work is its use of the piano's third pedal, with which Berio creates what is effectively an extra melodic layer.

Andrea Lucchesini was also the dedicatee of two very brief pieces for four hands, *Touch* and *Canzonetta*, dating from 1991. The first was written to celebrate the wedding of Lucchesini and his wife, also a pianist, Valentina Pagni, and the second for her parents. In common with the *Sonata*, these works are built from obsessive, almost mechanistic, repetitions which are then subtly disrupted.

**Ivan Moody**

---

<sup>1</sup> Luciano Berio, *Intervista sulla musica*, a cura di Rossana Dalmonte, Rome: Laterza, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, p. 98

## MATTEO BEVILACQUA

Italian concert pianist Matteo Bevilacqua currently holds the position of artist-in-residence at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Belgium, studying under the tutelage of renowned pianists Frank Braley and Avedis Kouyoumdjian. Bevilacqua has garnered international recognition, having recorded for esteemed labels such as Naxos Records and Grand Piano. His albums have been reviewed in prestigious publications such as *Gramophone* magazine, and his performances have been featured on the Italian national radio station Rai Radio 3.

Bevilacqua has performed in some of the most prestigious international venues, including the Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre, the Arsonic in Mons, the Schlosstheater of the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, Teatro Civico in La Spezia and Teatro Palladium in Rome. Throughout his career, he has presented over 100 solo concerts and has been a sought-after performer at various festivals, including Vaux Hall Summer, Castel dei Mondi, Mittelfest, Perosi and Legno Vivo, among many others. In addition to his musical career, Bevilacqua explores multidisciplinary performances between the arts and science. One of his latest projects has involved a recital where the pianist has worn an EEG neuronal headset, capturing their brain activity and transforming it into real-time visual art. The concept creates an immersive environment, offering audiences a glimpse into the profound inner workings of a musician's mind.

[www.matteo-bevilacqua.it](http://www.matteo-bevilacqua.it)



**MATTEO BEVLIACQUA**  
© Stefano Bergomas

## LUCA TRABUCCO

Renowned Italian concert pianist Luca Trabucco has achieved significant recognition through winning numerous piano competitions. Some of his notable achievements include success at the 1993 Premio Venezia and the 1995 Premio 'Città di Treviso', and he was also one of the top prize winners at the prestigious 2005 New Orleans International Piano Competition. Trabucco has captivated audiences worldwide with his performances, and he has collaborated with esteemed organisations such as the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, the Lyceum Club in Florence and Kawai concerts at Bocconi University in Milan. While Trabucco's repertoire encompasses various musical periods, he has dedicated himself to the works of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, for whom he is an international point of reference.

*[www.lucatrabucco.com](http://www.lucatrabucco.com)*



LUCA TRABUCCO



LUCIANO BERIO  
© HNH International

# LUCIANO BERIO (1925–2003)

## COMPLETE PIANO WORKS

---

The piano was a constant presence throughout Berio's life, from the charming early *Petite Suite* to the compelling drama of the *Piano Sonata*, one of his last works. Berio's profound exploration of this instrument's timbres and possibilities is further in evidence in the Webern-like concision of *Cinque variazioni* and the famously virtuoso *Sequenza*. The obsessiveness of *Rounds* and the deeply personal *Six Encores* complete a recording that marks the 20th anniversary of Berio's death in 2023.



MATTEO BEVILACQUA

1–5	PETITE SUITE (1947)	09:05
6–11	SIX ENCORES (1965–90)	14:30
12	SEQUENZA IV (1966)	12:00
13	CANZONETTA for piano four hands (1991)*	00:37
14	TOUCH for piano four hands (1991)*	01:37
15	CINQUE VARIAZIONI (1952–53, rev. 1966)	08:34
16	ROUNDS (1964–65) (version for piano, arr. 1967)	03:55
17	PIANO SONATA (2001)	23:58

\* with LUCA TRABUCCO

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 74:25



SCAN FOR MORE  
INFORMATION



© & © 2023 HNH International Ltd. Manufactured in Germany. Unauthorised copying, hiring, lending, public performance and broadcasting of this recording is prohibited. Booklet notes in English. Distributed by Naxos.

GP903

