



GRAND
PIANO

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

RIETI
COMPLETE PIANO SOLO
& DUO WORKS • 3

GIORGIO KOUKL
VIRGINIA ROSSETTI

VITTORIO RIETI (1898–1994)

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GIORGIO KOUKL, *piano solo*: 23–32; *piano 1*: 16, 20, 21; *piano 2*: 1–15, 17–19, 22
VIRGINIA ROSSETTI, *piano 1*: 1–15, 17–19, 22; *piano 2*: 16, 20, 21

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Piano Technician: Lukas Fröhlich

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1	SCHERZO-MARCH for two pianos (1976)	03:45
	VARIAZIONI ENARMONICHE for two pianos (1986)	10:25
2	Tema corale	01:11
3	Variation 1	00:42
4	Ritornello I	00:24
5	Variation 2: Meno mosso	00:55
6	Variation 3: Allegretto scherzoso	00:36
7	Ritornello II	00:13
8	Variation 4: Poco meno	00:42
9	Variation 5: Vivace	00:27
10	Variation 6: Andante moderato espressivo	01:33
11	Ritornello III	00:17
12	Variation 7: Poco meno	00:45
13	Variation 8	00:43
14	Variation 9: Allegro con spirito	00:31
15	Coda	01:26
16	IMPROVVISO for two pianos (1979)	03:29
	TRIPTYCH for two pianos (1982)	09:21
17	I. Andante tranquillo – Allegretto	01:55
18	II. Andante tranquillo – Dolcemente moderato	05:02
19	III. Andante tranquillo – Allegro	02:24

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20	INTRODUZIONE E BAGATELLA for two pianos (1978)	02:08
21	MOONLIGHT DANCE for two pianos (1978)	00:51
22	RONDO for two pianos (1989)	02:11
	TRE MARCIE PER LE BESTIE (pub. 1922)	09:55
23	No. 1. Marcia funebre per un uccellino	03:31
24	No. 2. Marcia nuziale per un coccodrillo	03:51
25	No. 3. Marcia militare per le formiche	02:33
26	PASTORALE (1920)	03:21
27	VALENTINE WALTZ (1956–57)	01:12
28	MEDITAZIONE IN ISTILE DI RICERCARE (date unknown)	01:54
29	ALLA FRANCESE (1961)	02:39
	TRE PRELUDI	08:56
30	No. 1. Vivace e scorrevole (1927)	02:08
31	No. 2. Allegretto marziale (1930)	03:07
32	No. 3. Allegro impetuoso (1931)	03:41

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TOTAL TIME: 60:49

VITTORIO RIETI (1898–1994)
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When Vittorio Rieti spoke to *The New York Times* from his apartment in the city in late 1972, he was keen to acknowledge an affinity with music of the stage. 'The thing I remember most vividly in my career was my connection with Diaghilev. I was associated with him in the last four years of his existence, 1925 to 1929. My familiarity with Stravinsky began then, and he was the strongest influence in my musical build-up, a fact that I admit very gladly.'

Throughout his life Rieti maintained this close relationship, whether it be writing for orchestra or in the intimate medium of music for keyboard. He was surely influenced by his part in the London première of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, on 14 June 1926 at His Majesty's Theatre. There he was the third of the four pianists, alongside Francis Poulenc, Georges Auric and Vernon Duke.

This third anthology of Rieti's music for one and two pianos begins with a clutch of later works. Many are written on a small scale, but all exhibit the properties of choreographed movement. Rieti was a composer whose creativity extended well into his later years, as evinced by a review of his 90th birthday concert at Merkin Concert Hall in New York. 'What is so pleasing about Mr Rieti's style', wrote John Rockwell, 'is that he has kept finding fresh things to say within his idiom, and that he is showing few signs of slackening in his creative fecundity.'

The freshness of expression is found in the *Scherzo-March* for two pianos, written when the composer was 78. While Rieti made sketches for an orchestral version this was never completed – yet the two-piano completion reveals the potential for middle and lower strings to bring through its songful second theme, in contrast to the carefree first.

The *Variazioni enarmoniche* of 1986 is compact in design, its theme and nine variations crossed by a linear Ritornello, a musical scenery change akin to that of the gallery visitor in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The solemnity of the chorale theme soon dissolves in the variations, the first tripping along with the air of a *marche militaire*. Good humour and easy charm are maintained in the early variations, with lively triplets in the upper part for the fifth, then a brief period of reflection for the sixth. The dancing starts again in the seventh variation, with an elegant turn for the eighth and a clipped staccato march for the ninth. The mysterious Coda revisits the thoughtful chorale, ending in reflective calm.

The *Improvviso* of 1979 has furtive beginnings, its repeated bass notes a springboard for lightly syncopated play in the upper parts. More substantial is the *Triptych* completed three years later, written as a tribute to Rieti's close friend, harpsichordist Sylvie Marlowe. Being enamoured with the instrument from the 1930s, Rieti intended to write a concerto for Wanda Landowska, which became the *Piano Concerto No. 2* in 1937 (recorded on Naxos 8.574505). Noting Stravinsky's successful use of the instrument in *The Rake's Progress*, Rieti wrote a total of eight works for the harpsichord, including the *Partita* for harpsichord, flute, oboe and strings for Marlowe herself in 1946. Inscribed 'to the memory of Sylvie Marlowe', the *Triptych* was played in her honour at Carnegie Hall in December 1985. Its crisp rhythms are easily accommodated in the light, witty exchanges of the *Allegretto* that follows a brief *Andante tranquillo* introduction. The intimate *Andante tranquillo* second movement has a lyrical manner in its graceful outer sections but a faster central section, while the third movement, *Allegro*, recalls the calm introduction of the first before a playful figure takes charge.

Rieti wrote a series of short two-piano works in December 1978. *Introduzione e bagatella* is alternately carefree and graceful, the syncopations of the bagatelle reinforcing a mood of playfulness. The short, canonic *Moonlight Dance* is in the same key of G major and is similarly witty. For the *Rondo* of 1989 Rieti moves to F major, contrasting quicker dance steps with more assertive block chords.

The piano was a constant companion throughout Rieti's life. The *Tre marcie per le bestie* for solo piano were published while the composer was in Rome in 1922, predating his alliances with Diaghilev and Stravinsky but revealing a musical imagery with which they would surely have identified. The three portraits begin with the *Marcia funebre per un uccellino* ('Funeral March for a Little Bird'), a keenly descriptive affair where initial sorrow, expressed through a slow alternation of chords, leads to the bird taking flight halfway through and soaring upwards at the end. The *Marcia nuziale per un coccodrillo* ('Wedding March for a Crocodile') drags its feet humorously in the manner of a Habanera, its gruff left-hand motif never far from the action before fading into the middle distance. *Marcia militare per le formiche* ('Military March for the Ants') is also led by the left hand, its melody placed against alternating chords. The insects are characteristically restless, the left hand depicting their return beneath the earth's surface.

The *Pastorale* of 1920 has a bittersweet nature, its right-hand figurations occasionally florid before descending to introspection. Later on comes *The Valentine Waltz*, a chromatic sketch dating from 1956–57. It was intended for the ballet dancer Tanaquil Le Clercq, who had sadly become paralysed when on a tour of Europe with the New York Ballet.

Meditazione in stile di Ricercare has an unknown composition date, an intimate aside in which Rieti is found in contemplative mood. The *Alla francese*, from 1961, dances gracefully in G major with a natural ebb and flow, its elegance briefly disturbed by energetic asides. The first of Rieti's *Tre preludi*, marked *Vivace e scorrevole*, is notable for its urgent triplet movement but also the Bachian notes of its fluent counterpoint. A staccato march follows, its attractive theme given a substantial workout before a commanding introduction brings stature to the third prelude. Though unnamed, this is another character piece where the listener can easily picture the movement on stage.

Ben Hogwood

VIRGINIA ROSSETTI

Virginia Rossetti (b. 1988) began her piano studies with Massimiliano Ferrati, later attending the 'Antonio Buzzolla' Conservatory in Adria, her hometown, where she graduated with honours. She continued at the Hochschule für Musik in Basel with Filippo Gamba, and at the Royal Flemish Conservatoire in Brussels with Aleksandar Madzar. She was also awarded a Master in Pedagogy at the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana in the class of Anna Kravtchenko. Since 2000 she has been a winner in numerous national and international competitions, including bronze at the 2009 Premio Venezia and a special recognition at the Marizza in Trieste 'for her depth of thought, supported by skilful expression and sound research'. She has performed at the Gran Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the Teatro Focè in Lugano, the Volkshaus in Zurich, the Rondo Saal in Pontresina, the Sala Tartini in Trieste and for the Portogruaro International Music Festival. She has recorded live for Rai Radio 3, taking part in I concerti del Quirinale from the Cappella Paolina. Rossetti is a piano teacher at the Music Conservatories of 'Agostino Steffani' in Castelfranco Veneto, and 'Franco Vittadini' in Pavia, and is the curator of the Into the Music project, with concert lessons and podcasts for secondary schools, fulfilling her passion for bringing classical music to younger generations.

www.virginiarossetti.com



VIRGINIA ROSSETTI
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GIORGIO KOUKL

Giorgio Koukl is a highly accomplished pianist known for his expressive performances, exceptional technique and profound musicality. With a passion for both traditional repertoire and contemporary works, Koukl continues to captivate audiences worldwide through his performances and recordings. A renowned specialist in Parisian music of the 1920s and 'silver age' composers from St Petersburg, he is also considered one of the world's leading interpreters of Martinů's piano music, having recorded that composer's complete solo piano music, together with five albums of Martinů's vocal music and two albums of his piano concertos for Naxos. His discography also includes an acclaimed series of the complete solo piano music of Alexander Tcherepnin, and lauded recordings of works by Vítězslava Kaprálová, Paul Le Flem (awarded a Diapason d'Or), Carl Maria von Weber, Johannes Brahms and Alexandre Tansman. He has also made world première recordings of works by Witold Lutosławski, Arthur Lourié and Tibor Harsányi. Koukl performs extensively throughout Europe, North America and Asia, and collaborates with renowned orchestras and conductors in solo performances and chamber music concerts.

www.koukl.com



GIORGIO KOUKL
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Vittorio Rieti at home in Rome, 1925.
Courtesy of Léonor Rieti, granddaughter of the composer.

VITTORIO RIETI (1898–1994)

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Vittorio Rieti won esteem for his orchestral music which was conducted by titans such as Toscanini and Stokowski, but the piano remained his greatest musical love. Rieti's vivid freshness can be appreciated in the selections in this volume, which ranges from the choreographed movement of his late works, including the *Variazioni enarmoniche* – an example of his elegance, humour and command of variational form – to the deliciously descriptive wit of his early works. Giorgio Koukl, whom *The Art Music Lounge* called 'one of the five or six greatest living pianists today', is once again joined by award-winning pianist, Virginia Rossetti – together they offer 'an object lesson in duo-piano balance' (*Fanfare* on Volume 2 in this series, GP938).

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