



JAN HAGE • ORGAN

JANE CHAPMAN • HARPSICHORD

LA SERENISSIMA

RICHARD RIJNVOS

Richard Rijnvos

la Serenissima - the complete keyboard works

Jane Chapman (harpsichord), Jan Hage (organ)



CD1	quattro quadri (2018) for organ	46:16
CD2	lettura del labirinto (2024) for harpsichord	75:49

Recording supported by:



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quattro quadri

lettura del labirinto

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In 2001, under the umbrella title *la Serenissima*, Richard Rijnvos started a series of compositions dedicated to the city of Venice. This multi-year 'work-in-progress' currently includes seven compositions, the most recent two of which are the subject of this recording:

- *acqua alta* (2002) for harp & nine instruments
- *mappamondo* (2004) for voice, tuba & ensemble
- *ponte de la piet * (2010) for violin & twin orchestra
- *fuoco e fumo* (2013) for orchestra
- *barbara baccante* (2014) for soprano, cello & orchestra
- *quattro quadri* (2018) for organ solo
- *lettura del labirinto* (2024) for harpsichord solo

"Venice has been painted and described many thousands of times, and of all the cities of the world is the easiest to visit without going there. Open the first book and you will find a rhapsody about it; step into the first picture-dealer's and you will find three or four high-coloured "views" of it. There is notoriously nothing more to be said on the subject. Everyone has been there, and everyone has brought back a collection of photographs. There is as little mystery about the Grand Canal as about our local thoroughfare, and the name of St. Mark is as familiar as the postman's ring. It is not forbidden, however, to speak of familiar things, and I hold that for the true Venice-lover Venice is always in order. There is nothing new to be said about her certainly, but the old is better than any novelty. It would be a sad day indeed when there should be something new to say."

From: *Italian Hours* by Henry James



St. Sebastian

Nicholas Regnier (1590–1667)

quattro quadri (2018) for organ solo

- I. sofferenza silenziosa
- II. cuore cocciuto
- III. attacco animato
- IV. memento mori

Venice's success in commerce and shipping during the 16th and 17th century came with a heavy price: the Black Death. Believed to have originated in Central Asia, the bubonic plague was spread by rats and fleas hitchhiking on ships going westwards, along the Venetian trade routes. The 'invisible enemy' invaded *La Serenissima* in the year 1348, and triggered a total of twenty-two pandemic outbreaks over the course of 150 years. Between 1576 and 1577 a second wave claimed fifty thousand people, almost a third of the local population, whereas the final strike in 1680 was just as fatal: in just seventeen months eighty thousand people in Venice perished.

In those days, the Black Death was viewed as divine punishment. Nevertheless, the undeniably random nature of infection caused worshippers to liken the disease with being arbitrarily shot by an army of Mother Nature's archers. In desperation they prayed for the intercession of a saint associated with archers, that is to say, the patron Sebastian, in view of the belief he himself withstood the onslaught of arrows. As symbols of gratitude for the city's ultimate deliverance from the merciless pandemic, Venice constructed five votive churches: *San Giobbe*, *San Rocco*, *Il Redentore*, *the Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute*, and of course: *San Sebastiano*.

Born in Gallia Narbonensis – a Roman province located in what is now Languedoc and Provence – Sebastian was appointed a bodyguard officer of the emperor Diocletian, but was sentenced to death during the persecution of Christians (± 288 AD). It is said he was handed over to Mauretanian archers, who tied him to a tree and pierced him with arrows. According to legend, Sebastian survived his punishment, being rescued and nursed by Irene of Rome. Shortly afterwards, Sebastian harangued Diocletian for his cruelties, whereupon the emperor gave orders for the martyr to be seized and clubbed to death with cudgels.

In a more or less abstract way, the organ work *quattro quadri* depicts the four key moments during Sebastian's life, as immortalized by Paolo Veronese, painter of the *San Sebastiano*. In doing so, the piece explores the complex relationship between Venice and its decline, which is one of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, life and death. The piece is not intended as a religious exercise, rather as a spiritual and transcendental experience, universal and timeless.

I sofferenza silenziosa

An innocent bird chatters amidst the corporeal landscape.
Hasty arrows whistle in harmony through the air.
Behold the unrestrained bareness, trussed by rope:
the divine appearance suffers in silence.

II cuore cocciuto

An incredulous ear attends the smothering torso.
Lingering throbs seek to resonate.
"Weren't you expected to succumb?"
The stubborn heart is unwilling to yield.

III attacco animato

The tougher the struggle, the sweeter it feels to emerge:
"Brace yourself to be reproached!"
Words will echo soundly through eternity.
Persona non grata versus status quo!

IV memento mori

*...it seems that many a time,
even in the midst of a sweet kiss,
a foretaste of the agony of death must have
furrowed his brow with a fleeting shadow of pain... **

(*) the four lines in italics are taken from: *Confessions of a Mask* (1949) by Yukio Mishima



Venezia, 1739

Ludovico Ughi (1705-1780)

lettura del labirinto (2024) for harpsichord solo

lettura del labirinto consists of six consecutive movements for harpsichord solo, each dedicated to a 'sestiere' (district or neighbourhood) in the city of Venice:

The 1972 novel *Invisible Cities* by the renowned Italian author Italo Calvino functions as the point of departure for *lettura del labirinto*. The book is a fantastical frame story in which the common thread is a tireless conversation between Kublai Khan and Marco Polo. The second, more emphasized narrative is a set of prose poems, in which the young merchant describes his travels, regaling the Tartar emperor with an ornate series of bite-sized fables. Many evenings have passed when eventually the Khan confronts the Venetian with the question why he does not include his home city. Marco Polo responds by saying: 'every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice.' By dividing the chapters into eleven thematic groups of five each, the book portrays a total of fifty-five fictitious cities, ingeniously fabricating a vast labyrinth for the mind.

By way of homage to Calvino *lettura del labirinto* aspires to create a parallel universe by fathoming the map of Venice, itself a staggering warren of alleys, bridges and little squares. The work depicts a walk through all six neighbourhoods ('sestieri'), starting at the eastern corner of Castello and ending near the western edge of Dorsoduro. During this so-called Eulerian trail any feature on the map is visited only once, while crossing the same path twice is avoided. Along the way we pause at fifty-five locations: 39 'campi', Piazza San Marco, another 14 'campi' and 1 'ultima fermata'. Whereas some squares look deceptively similar, as if triggering a game of spot the differences, others have distinct, sometimes even unique characteristics: the leaning bell tower of San Pietro, the spiral staircase of the Palazzo Contarini del Bovolo, the striking symmetry of the Procuratie Vecchie and the Procuratie Nuove, the Ponte dei Pugni just off Campo San Barnaba, to name just a few. And although these features are not fictional, their musical interpretation is imaginary: a collection of miniatures, evoking a feeling of getting lost and forever being incarcerated in an urban maze.

lettura del labirinto

Castello

1. Campo San Pietro	1:58
2. Campo de l'Arsenal	1:21
3. Campo San Martin	0:58
4. Campo Bandiera e Moro o de la Bragora	1:20
5. Campo San Francesco de la Vigna	0:56
6. Campo San Lorenzo	1:28
7. Campo San Zaccaria	1:10
8. Campo Santi Filippo e Giacomo	1:03
9. Campo Santa Maria Formosa	1:44
10. Campo di Santi Giovanni e Paolo	1:21

II. Cannaregio

11. Campo Santa Maria Nova	1:55
12. Campo dei Gesuiti	1:15
13. Campo Santi Apostoli	1:33
14. Campo Santa Sofia	1:15
15. Campo San Felice	1:09
16. Campo de l'Abazia	1:31
17. Campo de la Madonna de l'Orto	1:24
18. Campo de Gheto Novo	1:16
19. Campo Sant'Alvise	1:15
20. Campo San Marcuola	1:02
21. Campo San Geremia	1:23

III. Santa Croce

22. Campo dei Tolentini	1:38
23. Campo San Simon Piccolo	1:48
24. Campo San Simon Grando	1:01
25. Campo San Zandegolà	1:03
26. Campo San Giacomo da l'Orio	1:02
27. Campo San Stae	1:14

IV. San Polo

28. Campo Castelforte	1:46
29. Campo San Rocco	1:07
30. Campo dei Frari	1:15
31. Campo San Polo	1:36
32. Campo San Silvestro	1:10
33. Campo San Giacomo de Rialto	1:45

V. San Marco

34. Campo Manin	1:20
35. Campo San Beneto	1:06
36. Campo San Samuele	1:13
37. Campo Sant'Anzolo	1:03
38. Campo San Fantin	1:18
39. Campo San Zulian	1:07
40. Piazza San Marco	1:23
41. Campo San Moisè	1:09
42. Campo Santa Maria Zobenigo o del Giglio	1:19
43. Campo San Maurizio	1:33
44. Campo Santo Stefano	1:13

VI. Dorsoduro

45. Campo San Vio	1:22
46. Campo de la Salute	1:14
47. Campo San Trovaso	1:31
48. Campo Ognissanti	1:07
49. Campo San Barnaba	1:58
50. Campo San Pantalon	1:10
51. Campo Santa Margarita	1:24
52. Campo San Sebastian	1:35
53. Campo de l'Anzolo Rafael	1:17
54. Campo San Nicolò dei Mendicoli	1:10
55. Ultima fermata	3:22



Richard Rijnvos

photo © John Sniijders 2008

RICHARD RIJNVOS (b.1964)

“Style is remarkably instantaneous. Whether we listen to music, admire a painting, read a novel, or watch a film, within mere seconds Style shows itself to be an apposite protagonist. True, it is not easy to put into words what Style is, but that makes reflecting on it all the more fascinating. On the other hand, Style is never the point of departure for my creative process. As I explore new, unknown sounds I travel through many regions, such as: Concept, Design, Structure, Process, Form, Development, Character, Mood, and Meaning. Style is actually the unexpected final destination”.

This is, in his own words, how Richard Rijnvos interprets the numerous manifestations of his music. It is not uncommon for his latest composition to cause slight confusion amongst listeners due to the apparent contrast with previous works. Nevertheless, the sculptural stasis of *Block Beuys*, the iron skyscraper chords in *Times Square Dance*, the poised calm in *acqua alta*, the jazz band reminiscences in *NYConcerto*, the contemplative theatricality of *mappamondo*, the feathery suppleness of *Riflesso sul tasto*, the slow harmonic vaporization in *Riflesso sull'acqua* – one by one these pieces originated from the same mind, setting off on an expedition towards 'terra incognita'.

With over twenty original works for orchestra, as well as numerous orchestral arrangements, Richard Rijnvos' main creative focus in the last fourteen years has been the symphonic apparatus. His works have been performed by many ensembles and orchestras around the world, amongst which the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo (OSESP, Brazil), Gyeonggi Philharmonic Orchestra (South Korea), Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and Residentie Orchestra. During the concert season 2010-11 Richard Rijnvos was composer-in-residence at the Netherlands Broadcasting Music Centre, including collaborations with the Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Between 2011 and 2017 he enjoyed a long-term residency with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (Amsterdam).

In October 2009 Richard Rijnvos was appointed Head of Composition in the Music Department of Durham University. He was awarded a Higher Doctorate from the same UK institution in June 2012, and holds a Chair in Composition since 2014.

In 2000 Richard Rijnvos was awarded the Matthijs Vermeulen Prize – the most prestigious award for composers from the Netherlands – for his orchestral composition *Times Square Dance*. In 2008 his *NYConcerto* was voted “the best composition premièred the previous year in the Netherlands”, and it subsequently received the Buma Toonzetters Award. In June 2011 Richard Rijnvos was awarded the Matthijs Vermeulen Prize for a second time, on this occasion for the song cycle *Die Kammerzängerin*. www.richardrijnvos.com

Campo San Sebastian

Poco lento (♩=58)
molto espressivo, cantabile, poco rubato

11 | *p*

4

7

From *Campo San Sebastian*, 52nd movement of *lettura del labirinto* (2024)

JANE CHAPMAN is one of Britain's most distinguished classical harpsichordists. Her repertoire stretches from early music to contemporary avant-garde. Described in *The Independent* on Sunday as "Britain's most progressive harpsichordist", and in the *Guardian* as "a fearless contemporary music performer" she is at the forefront of creating and inspiring new music for harpsichord. She has premiered over 200 solo, chamber and electro-acoustic works for the instrument worldwide, collaborating with groundbreaking composers, artists and dancers, and working with musicians from the worlds of Indian music, jazz, and the avant-garde. Through her innovative performances, she aims to bring the harpsichord to a wider public, and to combine repertoire in ways that engage and challenge her audiences. Jane is co-editor of *Harpsichord Reimagined - Resonances in Contemporary Music* and is harpsichord professor at the Royal College of Music in London.

<https://janechapman.com>



Jane Chapman at Prix Annele de Man

photo © Co Broerse

JAN HAGE studied at the Utrecht Conservatory (organ with Jan Welmers, and music theory), Utrecht University (musicology) and the Netherlands Institute for Church Music. He studied for two years with André Isoir at the Conservatoire National de Région in Boulogne-Billancourt. He won first prizes at various national and international organ competitions.

Jan Hage is particularly known as an advocate and sought-after performer of contemporary organ music. He has appeared as a soloist with the Percussion Group The Hague, the Asko Ensemble and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. Among recent CD recordings are the *'Jets d'orgue'* by Jan Vriend and the complete organ works of Jehan Alain and of Jan Welmers. He is also active as a composer and writer. In 2006 he received the silver medal of the Parisian Société Académique Arts Sciences Lettres for his services to French organ culture. Jan Hage was organist of the Kloosterkerk in The Hague from 1995 to 2011. In 2011 he took up the post of organist at the Dom in Utrecht.



Jan Hage

photo © Vincent Doek

Poco meno mosso ($\text{♩}=60$)
Pos:
+ flûte 2'
+ octave 2'

Musical score for the *Poco meno mosso* section. It features a treble clef staff with a flute part and a bass clef staff with a double bass part. The flute part includes dynamic markings *mf* and *pp*, and performance instructions such as *senza* and *pp*. The double bass part includes the instruction *pp*. The tempo is marked as *Poco meno mosso* with a quarter note equal to 60 beats per minute.

Musical score for the *Tempo I* section. It features a treble clef staff with a flute part and a bass clef staff with a double bass part. The flute part includes dynamic markings *ff* and *mf*, and performance instructions such as *fonds 8'*, *Pos*, *G + R*, and *G + R +*. The double bass part includes the instruction *ff*. The tempo is marked as *Tempo I* with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute.

Musical score for the *L'istesso tempo* section. It features a treble clef staff with a flute part and a bass clef staff with a double bass part. The flute part includes dynamic markings *mf* and *mf*, and performance instructions such as *R: fonds 8' + 4' + 2' + 1' + carrillon*, *g*, *m.d.*, *m.s.*, *Pos: fonds 8' + octave 4'*, and *flûte 8' + octave 8'*. The double bass part includes the instruction *mf*. The tempo is marked as *L'istesso tempo*.

From *attacco animato*, 3rd movement of *quattro quadri* (2018)

RECORDING DATES, COMMISSIONS AND PREMIÈRES

quattro quadri (2018)

Composed with financial support from the Performing Arts Fund NL, *quattro quadri* is dedicated to the memory of James Cowan. The work was written for Jan Hage, who gave the première performance on 16 February 2019 at the Domkerk, Utrecht, Netherlands.

The first recording took place on 30 May 2023 at the Orgelpark, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Jan Hage performed on the Utopa Baroque organ and the Sauer organ.

Production, editing, and mastering by **Hans Erblisch**, a Netherlands-based recording engineer with over 15 years' experience working with leading artists and composers in the Dutch classical music scene

lettura del labirinto (2024)

Composed with financial support from the Performing Arts Fund NL, *lettura del labirinto* is dedicated to the memory of Louis Andriessen. Jane Chapman gave the première performance on 20 November 2025 at the Orgelpark, Amsterdam, as part of the Prix Annelie de Man 2025 Festival.

The first recording was made on 26–27 June 2025 at Willey Place, Bentley, Hampshire, UK. Jane performed on a harpsichord made by David Rubio (1984), after Blanchet (early 18th century). Tuning by Simon Neal (equal temperament, A = 415).

Production, editing, and mastering by **Raphaël Mouterde**, a Grammy and ECHO Klassik award-winning classical music producer. Over the past two decades, he has collaborated with a wide range of major labels, production companies, and recording artists. www.lemniscat.com

THANKS

To: the Orgelpark in Amsterdam for the use of their organs and space; Idelette van den Assem for organ registration on the recording of *quattro quadri*; Sarah Hard for hosting a recording session in the UK; Simon Neal for harpsichord tuning and transportation; and to the artist Gianfranco Missiaja for permission to use his painting *Venezia fuori dalla pandemia* (2021) on the cover of this CD.

This recording has been made possible through generous support from the Hinrichsen Foundation; and the commissions through the support of the Performing Arts Fund NL.



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Labirinto Borges, Venezia

Richard Rijnvos (b. 1964) - la Serenissima

the complete keyboard works

quatrro quadri (2018) for organ solo

1	I. sofferenza silenziosa	11:10
2	II. cuore cocciuto	13:50
3	III. attacco animato	11:46
4	IV. memento mori	9:30

Total CD1: 46:16

lettura del labirinto (2024) for harpsichord solo

01-10	I. Castello	13:22
11-21	II. Cannaregio	15:00
22-27	III. Santa Croce	7:49
28-33	IV. San Polo	8:41
34-44	V. San Marco	13:44
45-55	VI. Dorsoduro	17:13

Total CD2: 75:49

Musicians

Jan Hage - organ

Jane Chapman - harpsichord

