

The background of the entire cover is a watercolor illustration. On the left, a large, multi-story Roman building with arched windows is depicted in warm, earthy tones of ochre and brown. To the right, several tall, dark, rectangular columns stand against a deep blue sky. The overall style is painterly and atmospheric.

RESPIGHI

Roman Trilogy

Roman Festivals • Fountains of Rome • Pines of Rome

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta

Ottorino
RESPIGHI
(1879–1936)

Roman Trilogy

Feste romane ('Roman Festivals'), P. 157 (1928) 23:59

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|---|---------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | I. Circenses ('Circus Maximus') | 4:28 |
| 2 | II. Il Giubileo ('Jubilee') | 6:43 |
| 3 | III. L'Ottobrata ('October Festival') | 7:47 |
| 4 | IV. La Befana ('Epiphany') | 5:01 |

Fontane di Roma ('Fountains of Rome'), P. 106 (1916) 15:55

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| 5 | I. La fontana di Valle Giulia all'alba ('The Fountain of Valle Giulia at Dawn') | 4:18 |
| 6 | II. La fontana del Tritone al mattino ('The Triton Fountain in the Morning') | 2:36 |
| 7 | III. La fontana di Trevi al meriggio ('The Trevi Fountain at Middyay') | 3:27 |
| 8 | IV. La fontana di Villa Medici al tramonto ('The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset') | 5:34 |

Pini di Roma ('Pines of Rome'), P. 141 (1924) 22:01

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| 9 | I. I pini di Villa Borghese ('The Pines of Villa Borghese') | 2:46 |
| 10 | II. Pini presso una catacomba ('Pines near a Catacomb') | 6:45 |
| 11 | III. I pini del Gianicolo ('The Pines of the Janiculum') | 7:12 |
| 12 | IV. I pini della via Appia ('The Pines of the Appian Way') | 5:18 |

Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)

Roman Trilogy

Ottorino Respighi began his life in music as a child, taking piano and violin lessons from his father. Exceptional progress soon led to his enrollment at the Liceo Musicale Lucio Dalla in his native Bologna, where he added composition to his instrumental studies. At the age of 21, Respighi accepted a position as principal violist of the Russian Imperial Theatre Orchestra in Saint Petersburg. The post enabled him to meet and study with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who left a commanding imprint on Respighi's orchestral craft.

Other influences on his original music were the divergent styles of Richard Strauss and the exponents of French Impressionism, including Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. But with regard to artistic disposition, Respighi possessed a strong affinity for graphic expressions of images and scenes from the world at large. In particular, he admired the literary work of Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, whose writing was marked by a Latin exuberance and a passion for verismo. Moreover, reacting to the cerebral trends of atonality and the burgeoning avant-garde in the early decades of the 20th century, Respighi joined a cadre of influential musicians who issued a manifesto in 1932:

'We are against art which cannot and does not have any human content and desires merely to be a mechanical, intellectual puzzle. We must not forget the logical chain which binds the past to the future – the Romanticism of yesterday will remain the Romanticism of tomorrow.'

Following his residency in Russia, Respighi returned to Italy in 1903 and continued to compose while serving as the first violinist in a touring string quintet. His subsequent opera, *Semirâma* of 1909, was a notable success along with various instrumental works, which led to his appointment as professor of composition at the Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia in Rome. It was there he met his wife, the composer and mezzo-soprano Elsa Olivieri-Sangiaco, who performed many of his vocal works and became the composer's devoted biographer.

Although Respighi's enthusiasm for the Baroque era is manifest by his editions and adaptations of the works of Monteverdi, Frescobaldi, Tartini and Vitali, he is best known today as a composer of tone-poems based on scenes from the Italian panorama. Of these, the most frequently performed comprise the lavishly orchestrated '*Roman Trilogy*' featured on this recording. Lesser known but no less accomplished are the sets of *Ancient Airs and Dances* and a variety of descriptive pieces, such as *Botticelli Triptych*, *Church Windows* and *Metamorphoseon Modi XII*. On the lighter side, Respighi also applied his musical wit in the orchestration of obscure but charming piano pieces by Rossini titled *La Boutique fantasque* ('The Magic Toy Shop'), and scored for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris. Otherwise, the composer's catalogue is replete with diversity, with nine operas and many settings for voice, a trove of chamber music and showcase concertos.

In particular, Respighi's tone-poems are scored with a tonal-chromatic palette that ranges from subtle earth tones to fluorescent timbres, with provocative harmonies from the resounding cornucopia of the 20th century. He also plies his sonic canvases with a savvy sense for suggestive rhythms and melodic intrigue.

Feste romane ('Roman Festivals'), P. 157

The proverb rings still true: all roads lead to Rome. As the world's first universal hub of scientific and artistic expression, we might say that the Eternal City was really the epicentre of modern civilisation. Indeed, through the long expanse of world history Rome has been a magnet for artists, architects, mathematicians, religious leaders, poets, scholars, astronomers, musicians and filmmakers. Even the Roman cityscapes are intoxicating (we will overlook the madcap traffic jams). Apart from the Colosseum, the Forum, the Vatican, and other architectural marvels in marble, the city is dotted with portals, piazzas, gardens, fountains, and wooded parks of inspiring beauty. As a tribute to this heritage, Respighi, one of Italy's favourite sons, scored a trilogy of works,

each dedicated to a particular motif from his beloved Roma: the *Fountains of Rome* of 1916, the *Pines of Rome* of 1924, and *Roman Festivals* of 1928.

Respighi also provided evocative narratives for each of the tableaux. For *Roman Festivals* he noted:

'Circus Maximus – a threatening sky hangs over the Circus Maximus, but it is the people's holiday: *Ave Nero!* The iron doors are unlocked, the strains of a religious song and the howling of wild beasts mingle in the air. The crowd comes to its feet in a frenzy. Unperturbed, the song of the martyrs gathers strength, conquers and then is drowned in the tumult.

'Jubilee – pilgrims trail down the long road, praying. Finally, from the summit of Monte Mario appears to ardent eyes and gasping spirits the holy city: Rome! Rome! A hymn of praise bursts forth, the churches ring out in reply.

'October Festival – it is the October wine harvest in the Roman Castelli covered with vines; echoes of the hunt, tinkling bells, songs of love. Then in the tender twilight arises a romantic serenade on the mandolin.

'Epiphany – It is the night before Epiphany in the Piazza Navona; a characteristic rhythm of trumpets dominates the frantic clamour; above the swelling noise float, from time to time, rustic motives, saltarello cadenzas, the strains of a barrel organ in a booth and the call of a barker, the harsh song and the lively *stornello* in which is expressed the popular sentiment "*Lassatece passa, semo Romani!*" ("We are Romans, let us pass!").'

Fontane di Roma ('Fountains of Rome'), P. 106

Respighi provided the following commentary about the *Fountains of Rome*, completed in 1916:

'The work is a tone-poem of four of Rome's fountains contemplated at the hour in which their character is most in harmony with the surrounding landscape, or in which their beauty appears most impressive to the observer. Valle Giulia depicts a pastoral landscape: droves of cattle pass and disappear in the fresh damp mists of a Roman dawn. A sudden loud and insistent blast of horns above the whole orchestra introduces the Triton Fountain. It is like a joyous

call, summoning troops of naiads and tritons, who come running up, pursuing each other and mingling in a frenzied dance between the jets of water. Next appears a solemn theme borne on the undulations of the orchestra. It is the fountain of Trevi at midday. The solemn theme, passing from the woodwind to the brass instruments, assumes a triumphal character. Trumpets peal: across the radiant surface of the water there passes Neptune's chariot drawn by seahorses, and followed by a train of sirens and tritons. The procession then vanishes while faint trumpet blasts resound in the distance. The Fountain of Villa Medici is announced by a sad theme which rises above a subdued warbling. It is the nostalgic hour of sunset. The air is full of the sound of tolling bells, birds twittering, leaves rustling. Then all dies peacefully into the silence of the night.'

Pini di Roma ('Pines of Rome'), P. 141

The *Pines of Rome* was scored in 1924. The composer notes:

'The Pines of Villa Borghese – children are at play in the pine grove of the Villa Borghese, dancing the Italian equivalent of "Ring Around a Rosy" mimicking marching soldiers and battles; twittering and shrieking like swallows at evening; and they disappear.

'The Pines near a Catacomb – we see the shadows of the pines, which overhang the entrance of a catacomb. From the depths rises a chant which re-echoes solemnly, like a hymn, and is then mysteriously silenced.

'The Pines of the Janiculum – there is a thrill in the air. The full moon reveals the profile of the pines of Gianicolo's Hill. A nightingale sings (represented by a recording of a nightingale song, heard from within the orchestra).

'The Pines of the Appian Way – misty dawn on the Appian Way. The tragic landscape is guarded by solitary pines. Indistinctly, incessantly, the rhythm of innumerable steps. To the poet's fantasy appears a vision of past glories; trumpets blare, and the army of the Consul advances brilliantly in the grandeur of a newly risen sun toward the Sacred Way, mounting the Capitoline Hill in triumph.'

Edward Yadzinski

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra



Founded in 1935, the GRAMMY® Award-winning Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), under music director JoAnn Falletta, is Buffalo's leading cultural ambassador and presents more than 120 classics, pops and youth concerts each year. Since 1940, the orchestra's permanent home has been Kleinhans Music Hall, a National Historic Landmark, designed by Eliel and Eero Saarinen. The BPO has toured the United States and Canada, including several Florida Friends Tours with JoAnn Falletta. In 2013, the BPO made its 24th appearance at Carnegie Hall as a participant in the Spring For Music festival. In March 2018, it became the first American orchestra to perform at the Beethoven Easter Festival in Warsaw, Poland. Over the decades, the BPO has matured in stature under leading conductors, including William Steinberg, Josef Krips, Lukas Foss, Michael Tilson Thomas, Maximiano Valdés, Semyon Bychkov and Julius Rudel. During the tenure of JoAnn Falletta the BPO has rekindled its distinguished history of radio broadcasts and recordings, including the release of 46 new albums of diverse repertoire on the Naxos and Beau Fleuve labels. The Philharmonic's Naxos recording of composer John Corigliano's *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan* (8.559331), featuring soprano Hila Plitmann, received GRAMMY® Awards in the Classical Vocal Performance and Classical Contemporary Composition categories.

www.bpo.org

JoAnn Falletta

Photo: Guerin Blask



JoAnn Falletta serves as music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, and is the principal guest conductor of the Brevard Music Center of North Carolina. She has guest conducted over a hundred orchestras in North America, and many of the most prominent orchestras in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. She served as principal conductor of the Ulster Orchestra from 2011 to 2014, with whom she made her debut at the BBC Proms in London and recorded works by Gustav Holst, E.J. Moeran and John Knowles Paine. Recipient of the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, winner of the Stokowski Competition, and the Toscanini, Ditson and Bruno Walter conducting awards, Falletta became the first female conductor to lead a major American ensemble upon her appointment as music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in 1999. She has received twelve ASCAP awards, served on the US National Council on the Arts and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. As a champion of American music, she has presented over five hundred works by American composers including well over one hundred world

premieres. Her Naxos recordings include the double GRAMMY® Award-winning disc of works by John Corigliano and GRAMMY®-nominated discs of works by Tyberg, Dohnányi, Fuchs, Schubert, Respighi, Gershwin, Corigliano, Richard Strauss, Hailstork and Holst.

www.joannfalletta.com

Respighi is renowned as the composer of the lavishly orchestrated *Roman Trilogy*, sumptuous tone-poems full of provocative harmonies and suggestive rhythms, which celebrate the city's architectural marvels, its festivals, pines and fountains. The composer's kaleidoscopic writing encapsulates romantic serenade and rustic dance, solemn melody and pastoral landscape, children at play and visions of past martial glories. JoAnn Falletta's previous Respighi recording of *Church Windows*, *Brazilian Impressions* and *Rossiniana* (8.557711) was a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice.

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(1879–1936)

Roman Trilogy

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(‘Roman Festivals’), P. 157 (1928) | 23:59 |
| 5–8 | Fontane di Roma
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Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
JoAnn Falletta

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

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Booklet notes: Edward Yadzinski

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