

Luigi LEGNANI Guitar Works

Terremoto con variazioni
Gran Variazioni sul duetto
'Nel cor più non mi sento'
Gran Ricercario o Studio
Gran Variazioni sopra
un motivo tirolese
Gran Capriccio

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Marcello Fantoni

Luigi Legnani (1790–1877): Guitar Works

Terremoto con variazioni, Op. 1		9:43
1	Largo cantabile	1:38
2	Tema	0:37
3	Variation 1	0:39
4	Variation 2	0:34
5	Variation 3	0:39
6	Variation 4	0:37
7	Variation 5	0:42
8	Larghetto	2:27
9	Variation 6	1:50
Gran Ricercario o Studio, Op. 3		8:38
10	Moderato	8:38
Tema con variazioni sul terzetto ‘Pria che l’impegno’, Op. 4, (based on a theme by Joseph Weigl)		6:44
11	Tema	0:42
12	Variation 1	0:42
13	Variation 2	0:40
14	Variation 3	0:55
15	Variation 4	0:41
16	Variation 5	0:41
17	Variation 6	0:47
18	Trio andantino	0:48
19	Variation 7	0:48
Gran Capriccio, Op. 6		8:38
20	Largo	1:55
21	Allegro deciso	4:41
22	Più mosso	2:02
Scherzo ossia quattro variazioni, Op.10		3:20
23	Tema	0:33
24	Variation 1	0:32
25	Variation 2	0:33
26	Variation 3	0:32
27	Variation 4	0:32
28	Coda	0:38
Rondeau pour la guitarre, Op. 11		5:21
29	Largo	1:22
30	Rondò – Allegretto	3:59

Gran Variazioni sopra un motivo tirolese, Op. 12		10:22
31	Largo	0:49
32	Tema – Allegretto	0:28
33	Variation 1	0:26
34	Variation 2	0:27
35	Variation 3	0:25
36	Variation 4	0:27
37	Variation 5	0:27
38	Variation 6	0:30
39	Variation 7	0:29
40	Variation 8	0:54
41	Variation 9	0:34
42	Variation 10	0:32
43	Variation 11	0:32
44	Larghetto espressivo	1:52
45	Variation 12	1:30
Gran Variazioni sul duetto ‘Nel cor più non mi sento’ nell’opera ‘La molinara’, Op. 16 (based on a theme by Giovanni Paisiello)		20:13
46	Allegro	2:23
47	Tema con variazioni – Andantino grazioso	0:59
48	Variation 1	0:48
49	Variation 2	1:06
50	Variation 3	1:04
51	Variation 4	0:49
52	Variation 5	1:06
53	Variation 6	0:52
54	Variation 7	0:52
55	Variation 8	0:52
56	Variation 9	0:58
57	Largo cantabile	4:46
58	Variation 10	1:57
59	Coda – Allegro	1:41

Luigi Legnani, guitarist and composer, born in Ferrara, Italy, studied in his early years to be an orchestral string player, but he branched off into singing and appeared in operas by Rossini, Pacini and Donizetti as a tenor following his debut in Ravenna in 1807. He began his concert career as a guitarist in Milan in 1819, and performed in Vienna in 1822, later touring Italy, Germany and Switzerland,

His friendship with Paganini who described him as ‘the leading player of the guitar’ has often been written about and it is possible that they played concerts together including one in Turin in 1835. Late in the same year Legnani went to Paris to perform but is said to have injured his arm falling from a carriage and Fernando Sor played the concert instead.

In 1838 Legnani’s concerts included Dresden, Berlin and Monaco, and he also played in Vienna in 1839. In 1842 he was reported as having given a concert tour of Spain performing in Madrid. His last public appearance was in 1850 in Cervia, near Ravenna. Legnani then retired to Ravenna. The guitarist died at Ravenna on 5 August 1877, three months before his 87th birthday.

Legnani published around 260 works including solo compositions, duets for flute and guitar, or two guitars, a concerto, and a guitar method. In the 20th century his compositions were not often performed in recitals but over recent years there has been a resurgence of interest and a realisation of Legnani’s true status comparable with the finest guitar composers of his epoch.

Terremoto con variazioni, Op. 1 (‘Earthquake with Variations’) for solo guitar was first published by Ricordi in Milan (1820). Following a concert performed by Legnani in Verona, March 1841, a critic commented that the piece’s ‘rapidity and forcefulness’ united with ‘delicacy and a marvellous mastery’.

The composition begins with an ornamented *Largo cantabile* with vigorous scale runs in the higher register and elaborate filigree. The theme is a lyrical march with dotted rhythms, brief and to the point. A series of virtuosic variations follow displaying triplets (*Var. 1*), rapid slurs on treble and bass strings (*Var. 2*), accelerated thirds (*Var. 3*), dazzling fast scale fragments (*Var. 4*), and sextuplets and chromatic scales (*Var. 5*).

A change of mood comes with a *Larghetto* episode introduction presenting a heartfelt theme with arpeggio accompaniment. Its final section involves rapid octaves and fragments of scales before a solemn close, *Variazione 6* begins as a remarkable study in velocity before metamorphosing into an orchestral-like coda.

Gran Ricercario o Studio, Op. 3, published in 1819, can be translated as an ‘exploration’, recalling the 16th-century compositional form of the *ricercare*, literally ‘a searching out’. A work of expansive melodies, the composition concentrates here on the instrument’s innate expressiveness and culminates in a coda which steadily gathers momentum.

Joseph Weigl (1766–1846), Austrian composer and conductor, was born in Eisenstadt, Hungary, and studied music under Albrechtsberger and Salieri. He became Kapellmeister in Vienna in 1792, and was Vice-Kapellmeister at the court from 1827 to 1838. He composed over 30 operas. The theme, *Pria che l’impegno* (‘Before I tackle this mighty task’) is from his opera *L’amor marinaio ossia il Corsaro* (‘The Sailor Lover or The Corsair’) (1797). Various composers including Beethoven and Paganini were inspired to write variations on this theme.

Legnani’s *Tema con variazioni sul terzetto ‘Pria che l’impegno’ Op. 4*, was published by Ricordi in 1819. *Variazione 1* is a study in thirds with bass accompaniment while *Variation 2* is a conversation between treble and bass strings. This is followed by a section in triplets (*Var. 3*). *Variazione 4* employs repeated notes with a vivid accompaniment, while *Variazione 5* is a demonstration of scale techniques on the guitar. The pace is further intensified in *Variazione 6* with a further study in sheer velocity. A contrasting *Trio andantino* interlude is then provided, rounded off by a final *Variation* which encapsulates the art of double octaves.

Gran Capriccio, Op. 6, also published in 1819, comprises three expansive sections, each with its own distinctive atmosphere. The *Largo* opens with majestic chords and intricate ornamentation before setting out its grand theme incorporating sweeping melodies and passages in octaves. An *Allegro deciso* movement sets off in resolute mood with a bold series of chords progressing into

stirring combinations of chords supported by alternate basses and vigorous arpeggios. The work proceeds in orchestral textures before modulating through various tonalities, finally changing key and entering a developmental middle section. The opening theme returns and the recapitulation is an opportunity for a brilliant display of pyrotechnics before presenting the *Più mosso* episode leading inexorably to a resounding finale.

Scherzo ossia quattro variazioni, Op. 10, published in Vienna in 1825, has been described by the Legnani scholar, Sergio Monaldini, as 'a bravura piece' frequently performed by the composer in his concerts. The work begins with an appropriately skittish theme, humorously staccato. Four challenging variations follow exploring a variety of the guitar's capabilities such as chromaticism, arpeggios, slurs across the strings, dialogue between treble and bass, etc., each quite short in duration. A *Coda* concludes the proceedings with superb vigour.

Rondeau pour la guitare, Op. 11, was published by Artaria in 1825. The introductory *Largo* is one of Legnani's most eloquent slow movements with a poignant theme. The *Rondò* is an exuberant creation full of wit and spirit climaxing in an appropriately energetic coda.

Gran Variazioni sopra un motivo tirolese, Op. 12, published in the same year as the *Rondeau*, prepares the ground with a gentle *Largo*, sharply contrasted against the theme's lively evocation of the Tyrolean dance. The twelve variations are compact explorations of guitar techniques. A *Larghetto espressivo* movement introduces a reflective element before the vivacious final variation.

Gran Variazioni sul duetto 'Nel coro più non mi sento' nell'opera La molinara, Op. 16, was published by Artaria in 1824. The theme, *Nel cor più non mi sento*, is a duet from

Paisiello's opera *L'amor contrastato* ('Love in Conflict') (1788) also named *La molinara* ('The Miller's Wife'):

*Nel cor più non mi sento
Brillar la gioventù.
Cagion del mio tormento,
Amor, ci hai colpa tu...*

In my heart, I no longer feel
The glow of youth.
The cause of my torment
Is love's fault entirely.

The duet is sung twice in the opera's second act, first by the miller, Rachelina (soprano) and Callorando (tenor) and then by Rachelina and the notary Pistofolo (baritone). This theme has been used as a basis for variations by a number of composers including Beethoven, Paganini, Sor (*Fantasie, Op. 16* for guitar, 1823) and Mauro Giuliani (guitar and keyboard).

Before the theme is stated, Legnani has written an introductory *Allegro*. The variations offer a comprehensive exhibition of the guitar's capabilities, intricate technical elements including slurs, melody and accompaniment, dialogue between treble and bass, rapid scales, repeated notes, slow legato performance of melody, chordal studies and split octaves performed with velocity. The *Coda* offers sumptuous quasi-orchestral textures building up to a dramatic finale.

Graham Wade

Grateful acknowledgement in the writing of these notes is due to Sergio Monaldini's monograph, *Chitarra romántica, Luigi (Rinaldo) Legnani e il virtuosismo strumentale nell'Ottocento* (Longo Editore Ravenna, 2015).

Marcello Fantoni

Marcello Fantoni has studied classical guitar since the age of eight. Under the guidance of Lena Kokkaliari and with Paolo Paolini at the Conservatory of Milan he graduated *summa cum laude* in performance, as well as studying composition. Later he studied musical analysis at the University of Cremona. He was awarded a Sergio Dragoni Foundation scholarship and in 1996 took advanced courses with Eliot Fisk at the Salzburg Mozarteum, with Leo Brouwer in Córdoba, and with Oscar Ghiglia at the Accademia Chigiana, Siena, where he won a scholarship and a diploma of merit. The Rome ARAM Association hailed him as an emerging talent, inviting him to play during their concert season. He attended masterclasses held by Eduardo Fernández (2005), Timo Koronen (2005), Leo Brouwer (2006) and Pavel Steidel (2006) at the Conservatory of Florence where, in 2007, he earned a master's degree in performance. His compositions include *Perpetuum*, *omaggio a Egberto Gismonti* (for solo guitar, 2004), *Omaggio a Michel Petrucciani*, *Omaggio a Manuel de Falla* and *Sonata Semplice*. He has a number of broadcasts and recordings to his credit, including the works of Spanish composer Tomás Marco released on the Italian label Dynamic. In 2014 Tomás Marco dedicated his chamber work *Trio Concertante No. 5 'Cartografias of Melodrama'* (for flute, viola and guitar) to Marcello Fantoni. In 2015 he made the world premiere recording of guitar works by the Sevillian composer Manuel Castillo (1930–2005) on Naxos [8.573365].

www.marcellofantoni.com.



Photo: Davide Gardino

Luigi Legnani was one of the great guitar virtuosos of the 19th century, a friend of Paganini and noted as a performer throughout Europe. Legnani's substantial legacy of works for his instrument has remained largely neglected, but here we can experience the 'delicacy and marvellous mastery' of the *Terremoto con variazioni* ('Earthquake with variations'), the expansive melodies of the *Gran Ricercario o Studio*, and the quasi-orchestral textures and brilliant pyrotechnics of the *Gran Capriccio*. This world premiere recording provides an essential rediscovery of Legnani's works for guitar, and confirms his status as one of the finest guitar composers of his generation.

Luigi
LEGNANI
(1790–1877)
Guitar Works

1–9	Terremoto con variazioni, Op. 1 (1820)	9:43
10	Gran Ricercario o Studio, Op. 3 (1819)	8:38
11–19	Tema con variazioni sul terzetto 'Pria che l'impegno', Op. 4 (based on a theme by Joseph Weigl) (1819)	6:44
20–22	Gran Capriccio, Op. 6 (1819)	8:38
23–28	Scherzo ossia quattro variazioni, Op. 10 (1825)	3:20
29–30	Rondeau pour la guitarre, Op. 11 (1825)	5:21
31–45	Gran Variazioni sopra un motivo tirolese, Op. 12 (1825)	10:22
46–59	Gran Variazioni sul duetto 'Nel cor più non mi sento' nell'opera <i>La molinara</i>, Op. 16 (based on a theme by Giovanni Paisiello) (1824)	20:13

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Marcello Fantoni, Guitar

Recorded: 4–5 January 2017 at Spazio Sirin, Milan, Italy

Producer and editor: Marcello Fantoni • Engineer: Andrea Fantozzi • Booklet notes: Graham Wade
Cover photo: Church of St Peter in Porto Venere, La Spezia, Italy © bluejayphoto / istockphoto.com



8.573728

DDD

Playing Time
73:23



Made in Germany
www.naxos.com

© & © 2018 Naxos Rights US, Inc.
Booklet notes in English