

Günter RAPHAEL

ORGAN MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

FANTASIE UND FUGE ÜBER EINEN FINNISCHEN CHORAL, OP. 41, NO. 1

PARTITA ÜBER EINEN FINNISCHEN CHORAL, OP. 41, NO. 2

PASSACAGLIA ÜBER EINEN FINNISCHEN CHORAL, OP. 41, NO. 3

Ville Urponen
organ of St Paul's Church, Helsinki

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

GÜNTER RAPHAEL: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

by Malcolm MacDonald

Günter Raphael was born on 30 April 1903 in Berlin, to a family that was Jewish on his father's side: he was the son of the composer and church musician Georg Raphael (1865–1904), who had converted to Protestantism and was director of music at the Matthai Kirche in Berlin. His maternal grandfather, Albert Becker (1834–99), was also a notable composer whose students had included Sibelius. Surrounded by music virtually from the cradle, and performing from an early age with his mother, a fine violinist, Raphael began composing at the age of ten. He studied privately with Arnold Ebel and in 1923 won the Robert Schumann Leipzig Foundation scholarship to study at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, where his teachers were Max Trapp, Robert Kahn and others. Karl Straube, the Thomaskantor in Leipzig, who had been a friend of Raphael's father, became his mentor and arranged for Raphael to have further instruction from Arnold Mendelssohn¹ in Darmstadt. He began to attract attention from this period, with works performed by the Busch Quartet and other leading musicians; Wilhelm Furtwängler premiered his First Symphony in Leipzig in 1926. From that year until 1934 he was a professor at the Leipzig Conservatoire, teaching theory and composition, and also taught at the church music institute in that city.

But this highly promising early career of a remarkably knowledgeable and gifted musician was the prelude to years of struggle. Owing to the rise to power of the Nazi Party – under Hitler he was categorised as a 'half-Jew' – in 1934 Raphael was dismissed from his post in Leipzig and was unable to find employment during the

¹ The Silesian Arnold Mendelssohn (1855–1933), son of Wilhelm Mendelssohn, a cousin of Felix, studied law before taking up musical studies, becoming a director of church music and a professor in Darmstadt, where he taught both Hindemith and Raphael.

period of the Third Reich. In Copenhagen, he married his former pupil, the pianist Pauline Jessen, and they moved to Meiningen in Thuringia, where Jessen already held a teaching position: a town with a highly distinguished musical tradition, associated with Brahms, Hans von Bülow, Richard Strauss and others. But in 1937 Raphael contracted tuberculosis, a disease he had to battle for the remainder of his life, which was punctuated by several operations and long periods in sanatoria. (His doctors often protected him from the SS.) Nevertheless during this entire miserable period, often in mortal danger, he continued to compose prolifically.

With the end of the War Raphael moved to Laubach in order to be near his friend and surgeon Franz Volhard. His music had been banned from performance for so long that he found it very difficult to re-establish himself professionally, and though he assisted many friends to go through the de-Nazification process, there was little or no support for him. He did manage to find publishers for the works he had written under the Third Reich, and he formed a piano duo with his wife, giving numerous concerts and broadcasts. For his fortitude and musical achievement he was awarded the Franz Liszt Award in 1948. From 1949 to 1953 he taught at Duisburg Conservatoire (with a ten-month break at a sanatorium in Uppsala, financed by the Swedish government). In 1956 he was offered the post of Thomaskantor in Leipzig (formerly held by Karl Straube and, long before, by Bach), but he declined it, fearing he would forfeit his artistic freedom in East Germany. He lectured instead in Mainz and Cologne, and from 1957 was a professor at the Cologne Musikhochschule. He died on 19 October 1960, aged 57, in an ambulance en route to Herford in Westphalia, as a result of his long illness.

Raphael composed a substantial body of works including six symphonies and other orchestral pieces, *concertante* works for organ, violin, viola, cello, saxophone and flute, six string quartets, and a large amount of other chamber, organ, piano and choral works. He made numerous orchestrations (including one of Brahms' *Vier ernste Gesänge*), and a host of editions of Classical and Baroque works – for example, by Frederick the Great, Bach, Handel and Vivaldi – and was also responsible for securing the first performance in 1929 of Dvořák's early Cello Concerto in A major when it was discovered.

In his own music, Raphael can be heard carrying on a continuous dialogue with tradition, developing from the general ambience of Germanic late Romanticism into a much more personal mode of utterance during his difficult years under the Nazis, harmonically rich and yet contrapuntally highly developed, especially in the works of the early 1940s. After World War II he developed an interest in the twelve-note method of composition, though generally in a way that is clearly related to traditional tonality.

Malcolm MacDonald, born in Nairn in 1948, was the author of The Symphonies of Havergal Brian (three vols., Kahn & Averill, London, 1974, 1978 and 1983) and the editor of the first two volumes of Havergal Brian on Music (Toccata Press, London, 1985 and 2009). His other writings included books on Brahms, Foulds, Schoenberg, Ronald Stevenson and Edgard Varèse. He died on 27 May 2014.

GÜNTER RAPHAEL AND FINLAND

by Ville Urponen

Finnish and German musical circles were in close interaction from the early nineteenth century. Two of the most prominent figures in Finnish art-music in that century, Fredrik Pacius (1809–91) and his successor, Richard Faltin (1835–1918), were German-born. With rare exceptions, Finnish organists studied in Germany, and almost all the composers whom I discuss in this article – Jean Sibelius, Selim Palmgren, Leo Funtek, Sulho Ranta – likewise studied in Germany. Uuno Klami did not, though, and Ranta also studied in Vienna and Paris. Because Finnish musicians were generally fluent in German, contacts were natural and easy to maintain. It is therefore not at all surprising that the enterprising composer Günter Raphael (1903–60) made a name for himself in Finland at an early stage in his career. His music was apparently first performed in Finland in July 1930, when the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) relayed a concert from Leipzig, where the violist Hildegard Heinitz appeared with Raphael (possibly performing his Sonata in E flat major, Op. 13 (1925)), and in December of the same year there was a concert on Finnish radio where an orchestra conducted by Olof Lindner performed Raphael's *Variationen über eine schottische Volksweise*, Op. 23 (1928). The first live performance of Raphael's music in Finland came in October 1931, with Bronislaw Huberman playing his Violin Concerto in C major, Op. 21 (1928), with piano accompaniment. Raphael himself visited Finland in the following spring, in April 1932, and in a concert broadcast by YLE performed two of his piano works, the *Kleine Sonate* in E minor, Op. 2 (1922), and the *Kleine Sonate* No. 2 in F major, Op. 25 (1929); he was joined by Erik Cronvall (1904–79), leader of the Radio Orchestra, for his Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 12, No. 2 (1925). It appears that the only review of this concert was one published in the periodical *Radiomailma* ('Radio World'), where the critic seemed somewhat bemused by Raphael's music, considering him to be a 'typical example' of a young

German composer dedicated to achieving technical perfection before presenting his works to the public. But he was also recognised as a 'rare musical talent' whose music was original and fascinating in its 'somewhat Romantic yet healthy and fresh appearance'.¹

Raphael next visited Finland with his wife, Pauline, in July 1935. Together, they performed Bach's Concerto for Two Pianos in C major, BWV 1061, on the radio together with Raphael's as yet unpublished *Tanzsuite* (1933). Three years later, in July 1938, the Raphaels were in Finland again and appeared on the radio with Cronvall, performing a toccata for two pianos (probably Raphael's Toccata, Op. 45 (1937)); Pauline also performed the *6 Improvisationen*, Op. 3 (1923), and Raphael himself and Cronvall performed the Violin Sonata in C major, Op. 43 (1936).

Pauline and Günter Raphael visited Finland for performances one last time in June 1949. It is not known what the programme was, but their old acquaintance Erik Cronvall was also performing, along with the clarinetist Sven Lavela, and so it is likely that the concert would have featured works for piano (or two pianos), a violin sonata and Raphael's recent Sonatina ('*Enten-Sonatine*') for clarinet and piano, Op. 65, No. 3 (1948). It appears that none of these three concerts was written up or reviewed in the press. Although it may seem strange that all of Raphael's performances in Finland were radio concerts – his Finnish performances formed part of radio concert tours around the Nordic countries – his music obviously reached a far wider audience on the air than it would have in the concert hall.

Raphael and Sibelius

Raphael's relationship with Sibelius deserves discussion, since Sibelius was instrumental in arranging the radio concert in 1932. In November 1931, Raphael contacted Sibelius, introducing himself as the grandson of Albert Becker, Sibelius' teacher of music theory in Berlin. Raphael was planning a tour of radio concerts and asked Sibelius whether he would be able to help Raphael have a concert in Finland.² Raphael must have been

¹ *Radiomailma*, No. 19, 1932.

² Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 7 November 1931, quoted in Timothy L. Jackson, 'Sibelius the Political' in *Sibelius in the Old and New World: Aspects of His Music, Its Interpretation, and Reception*, ed. Timothy L. Jackson and Veijo Murtomäki, Peter Lang, New York, 2010, p. 108.

surprised at Sibelius' reply: he said he was well aware of Raphael and had attended a concert of the Singakademie in Berlin where Raphael had conducted one of his own choral works, and he would be pleased to help in any way he could. He had in fact already agreed on the matter with Toivo Haapanen, conductor of the Radio Orchestra, whom he advised Raphael to contact.³ Only a week later, Raphael thanked Sibelius profusely and reported that a radio concert had been agreed for April 1932. He also expressed his wish to meet Sibelius on that occasion.⁴ The two did meet on the day of the concert, but the only thing known about the encounter is Raphael's description of Sibelius as 'exemplary and radiating a great spirit'.⁵

Two years later, in May 1934, Raphael again wrote to Sibelius, explaining that Becker's centenary would be celebrated in Germany in June. He asked Sibelius to write a reminiscence of his former teacher for the periodical *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*,⁶ but Sibelius declined, saying that it would not be possible.⁷ It could not have helped that Raphael required this contribution by the beginning of June,⁸ and so, considering the time it took for mail to travel, Sibelius would have had only around a week to write it. Although Sibelius declined in no uncertain terms, Raphael promptly wrote to him again, attempting diplomatically to reverse Sibelius' decision by explaining that an endorsement by Sibelius, who was highly regarded in Germany, for the centenary of Raphael's grandfather would help Raphael himself, who was half-Jewish, to retain his teaching job at the Leipzig Conservatoire that he otherwise stood to lose because of the racial laws of Nazi Germany.⁹ Sibelius never responded to this letter. In August, Raphael again wrote to Sibelius, reporting that he had in fact been dismissed from his post despite the support voiced for him by such leading German musicians as Richard Strauss, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Karl Straube. Raphael inquired whether Sibelius would be able to help

³ Letter from Sibelius to Raphael, 16 November 1931, quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 108–9.

⁴ Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 31 November 1931, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 109.

⁵ *Uusi Suomi*, 25 April 1932.

⁶ Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 18 May 1934, quoted in Jackson, *loc. cit.*, p. 109.

⁷ Letter from Sibelius to Raphael, 28 May 1934, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸ Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 18 May 1934, held in the National Library of Finland: Jean Sibelius RAK-RI. Coll.206.31.

⁹ Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 6 June 1934, held in the National Library of Finland: Jean Sibelius RAK-RI. Coll.206.31.

him find work in Finland as a composer or a teacher.¹⁰ One month later, Sibelius gave a negative reply, explaining that the potential in Finland was too limited.¹¹

Raphael turned to Sibelius for help on two further occasions. A letter from him dated August 1935 indicates that when he had met Sibelius in April 1932, the latter had promised to recommend Raphael to the Danish publisher Wilhelm Hansen. Raphael now requested Sibelius to provide the recommendation he had promised, since he had submitted to Hansen his *Tanzsuite für kleines Orchester* (1934), the two-piano version of which Sibelius had apparently heard at the Raphaels' radio concert in Helsinki one month earlier.¹² Raphael was afraid that he would be banned from publishing his music in Germany but thought that through a Danish publisher it would still be possible. Sibelius' response to this request has not survived, if indeed he ever responded; in any case, Hansen never did publish any works by Raphael. Undaunted, Raphael approached Sibelius again in March 1936, asking him for a brief endorsement which, along with those of other prominent musicians, Breitkopf & Härtel would use to market Raphael's music outside Germany.¹³ It seems that Helmuth von Hase, director of the publishing house, was trying to help Raphael earn royalties for his works,¹⁴ because there was a fear that they would be suspended in Germany – as indeed they were at the end of 1936. Sibelius was either unable or unwilling to understand Raphael's predicament, because his response was that he received so many requests for endorsements that he had been obliged to give up writing them altogether some time earlier. He was sorry that he was unable to help but was convinced that Raphael's music would speak for itself, with or without endorsements.¹⁵ Although Raphael did not receive help from the master he admired, the two remained on cordial terms and continued to correspond after the War.¹⁶ Moreover, one of Raphael's *7 Orgelchoräle über finnische Choräle*, Op. 42 (1948),

¹⁰ Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 16 August 1934, held in the National Library of Finland: Jean Sibelius RAK-RI. Coll.206.31.

¹¹ Letter from Sibelius to Raphael, 19 September 1934, quoted in Jackson, *loc. cit.*, p. 111. Jackson's article gives this date in the original German version of the letter, but in the English translation it is given as 19 November 1934 (*ibid.*, p. 73).

¹² Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 15 August 1935, held in the National Library of Finland: Jean Sibelius RAK-RI. Coll.206.31.

¹³ Letter from Raphael to Sibelius, 2 March 1936, held in the National Library of Finland: Jean Sibelius RAK-RI. Coll.206.31.

¹⁴ Jackson, *loc. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁵ Letter from Sibelius to Raphael, 28 March 1936, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 112–13.

is based on Sibelius' famous hymn-tune 'Soi kunniaksi Luojan' ('We Praise Thee, Our Creator', No. 6(a) of the ten *Songs for Mixed Chorus from the 1897 Promotional Cantata*, Op. 23, of 1897).

Raphael and Elis Mårtenson

On the day after the radio concert in 1932, the newspaper *Uusi Suomi* ('New Finland') contained an article with the headline: 'German composer introduced on our radio. Günter Raphael meets Finnish maestro, a pupil of his grandfather's'. The journalist had caught up with Raphael at a cellar restaurant in Helsinki, in a party that included two conductors, a composer, a pianist, a violinist and an organist. One of the two conductors was probably Toivo Haapanen, conductor of the Radio Orchestra. The violinist was Erik Cronvall. The article is basically a light-hearted human-interest story. Raphael explained that he was not an atonal composer but that his composing persona was built on 'ancient German musical traditions'; he felt that atonal music might be described as 'inflation music'.¹⁷ Raphael said that he admired Paul Hindemith, describing him as a major talent and a master of musical form.¹⁸ One may speculate as to whether the journalist writing in the Swedish-language newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* had also met Raphael, since he wrote that Raphael was not an ultra-modernist, his output being written partly in an archaic Schütz style and partly in a modern Reger style.¹⁹

The unnamed organist in this convocation at the restaurant was most probably Elis Mårtenson (1890–1957), a future professor of organ at the Sibelius Academy. Mårtenson studied the organ with Oskar Merikanto at the Helsinki Music Institute (the predecessor of the Sibelius Academy) and went on to study with Karl Straube in Leipzig in 1919–20, scoring the highest marks in all examinations. His studies culminated in a recital at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in March 1920, where Mårtenson performed Bach's *Passacaglia* in C minor, BWV 582. Having returned from Germany, Mårtenson quickly established himself as the leading Finnish organist. He was appointed organist of the Southern

¹⁷ In 1932 the German economy was undergoing deflation, but the hyperinflation of the 1920s would still have been a vivid memory.

¹⁸ *Uusi Suomi*, 25 April 1932.

¹⁹ *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 24 April 1932.

Swedish congregation in Helsinki in 1922, being assigned first to St John's Church and from 1935 to Mikael Agricola Church, both in Helsinki. In 1939, he was appointed the first-ever professor of organ at the Sibelius Academy.

Raphael and Mårtenson must have been in regular contact, but if their correspondence has survived in German archives, I have not been able to trace it; there is certainly nothing in the Mårtenson family archives. Because Raphael was subject to persecution in Nazi Germany and his works were eventually banned from performance, he was actively looking for ways to bring his music to the public outside Germany. Mårtenson became an advocate for Raphael's music. As far as is known, Raphael's organ music was first heard in Finland, performed by Mårtenson, in March 1933. At a concert at St John's Church in Helsinki that was broadcast on radio, he performed Raphael's *Partita 'Ach Gott vom Himmel sieh darein'*, Op. 22, No. 1 (1930). The Stravinsky-influenced composer Uuno Klami²⁰ was harsh in his review: 'the "Partita" is a dry and tedious composition in its lack of innovation that is not representative of modern German organ music,'²¹ whereas another important Finnish composer, Selim Palmgren,²² wrote in his review that Raphael was a major talent and that his variations were inventive, his voice-leading masterly and his registrations colourful.²³

The world premiere of Raphael's Concerto for Organ, Op. 57 (1936), at Mikael Agricola Church in Helsinki in February 1938, was a grand occasion in Finnish musical life. Mårtenson played the organ, with Toivo Haapanen conducting the Radio

²⁰ Uuno Klami (1900–61) has been described as the most skilful orchestrator and a true cosmopolitan among the Finnish composers of his time. He studied composition from 1921 at the Helsinki Conservatoire with Erkki Melartin and in Paris with Florent Schmitt in 1924–25 and may have got to know Maurice Ravel, whom Klami idolised for rest of his life. Klami consciously distanced himself from Sibelius and for a long time avoided composing his First Symphony. He was a modernist among the prevailing 'national Romantic' style, although in the 1950s his colourful Franco-Russian style changed to Neo Classicism.

²¹ *Helsingin Sanomat*, 5 March 1933.

²² Selim Palmgren (1878–1951) studied piano in Berlin with Ferruccio Busoni and Conrad Anson and theory and composition with Wilhelm Berger and later with Wilhelm Klatte. In his day he was the best-known Finnish composer after Sibelius, especially in the United States. From 1921 to 1926 Palmgren worked as a professor of composition class at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. From 1939 he was professor of composition at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Labelled a 'Nordic Chopin', he composed c. 300 works for solo piano, five piano concertos, c. 100 solo songs, over 100 works for choir and an opera, *Daniel Hjort*.

²³ *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 5 March 1933.

Orchestra. The world premiere of a work by a foreign composer in Finland attracted widespread attention. Leo Funtek remarked that the work bore the unmistakable hallmark of genius.²⁴ The immigrant musicologist Nicolai van der Pals considered Raphael's composition style to be not quite coherent but felt that this shortcoming was compensated by his invention, his variety of sonority and thematic material and his virtuoso technique.²⁵ Klami was again the odd one out, declaring that, although the Concerto was proficiently written in technical terms, the composer lacked 'original creative power'.²⁶

In 1947, Mårtenson gave the first performance in Finland of Raphael's *Toccata, Choral und Variationen*, Op. 53 (1944), and in 1952, he premiered Raphael's *7 Orgelchoräle über finnische Choräle*, Op. 42 (1948). Mårtenson made himself a copy of the manuscripts of both works, since neither had been published at the time.

Fantasie und Fuge, Partita and Passacaglia, Op. 41

Raphael studied composition with Arnold Mendelssohn from 1925, during which time he first met Paul Hindemith, who was also studying under Mendelssohn.²⁷ Most of Raphael's organ works are based on Protestant hymn-tunes: it was typical for Mendelssohn students to employ traditional forms for their works, and Raphael maintained the practice in his maturity.²⁸ His Op. 41 contains three such works: *Fantasie und Fuge, Partita* and *Passacaglia*, all three based on Finnish hymn-tunes – although Op. 41 has no over-arching title to pull all three works together. He wrote them in autumn 1939 and dedicated them to Mårtenson, who gave their world premieres at his

²⁴ *Svenska Pressen*, 14 February 1938. The Slovenian-born Funtek (1885–1965), another product of the Leipzig Conservatoire, spent his working life in Finland, as violinist, conductor and teacher. His longest-standing appointment was as conductor of Finnish Opera, from 1915 to 1959. He helped shape the next generation of Finnish musicians, his students including Einar Englund, Usko Meriläinen and Jorma Panula.

²⁵ *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 13 February 1938. Nicolai van der Pals (1891–1969), born in St Petersburg, was the son of a wealthy Dutch industrialist who moved his family to Finland after the 1917 revolution. Van der Pals studied musicology at Leipzig University, was active as a conductor in Helsinki for two decades from 1921 and served as a music critic for *Hufvudstadsbladet* from 1920 to 1939.

²⁶ *Helsingin Sanomat*, 13 February 1938.

²⁷ Fredrik Pachla, *Günter Raphael: A Composer's Fate*, Hentrich & Hentrich, Berlin, 2019, p. 28.

²⁸ Jürgen Böhme, 'Entstehung und Stil der Orgelwerke Günter Raphaels', *Ars Organi*, Vol. 36, 1988, p. 122.

25th-anniversary concert at Mikael Agricola Church in Helsinki in September 1940. Once again, he played from manuscript copies; Breitkopf & Härtel did not publish the pieces until after the War, in 1947. The concert also featured Mårtenson's wife, Eini, who performed the song-cycle *Drei geistliche Lieder* (1938), and the ever-obliging Cronvall, who performed the *Andante sostenuto* and *Largo*, Op. 12, No. 1, with Mårtenson accompanying. The first half of the concert was broadcast.

The theme of *Fantasie und Fuge* is based on a Finnish folk-variant of a hymn-tune, 'Nyt ylös sieluni' ('Arise, my Soul'). The composers Ilmari Krohn (1867–1960) and Armas Maasalo (1885–1960) also wrote works based on this tune. Krohn's *Nyt ylös, sieluni*, Op. 18, No. 2 (1917), is a relatively simply theme and variations, but Maasalo's *Fantaisie 'Nyt ylös sieluni'*, Op. 28, No. 2 (1926), and its revised version, *Sursum corda*, Op. 53, No. 1 (1953), are rather more ambitious. Although it is plausible that Raphael might have had access to Krohn's and Maasalo's works and taken the idea for the theme for his fantasia from them, there are no identifiable similarities between his and their works.

The statement of the theme in the *Fantasie* [1] is followed by improvisational, technically challenging outbursts alternating with calmer and more harmonious passages. The outbursts could be considered to be diametrically opposed to the uplifting sentiment of the underlying chorale – *Sursum corda*, 'Lift up your hearts'. Variations on the hymn-tune are presented in the *Lento* and *Poco più andante* sections, after which Raphael returns to the freer fantasia idiom. The fugue theme incorporates sighing (*Seufzer*) gestures, recalling Bach. Like many late Romantic German organ fugues, this one [2] begins slowly and quietly, and both the tempo and the dynamic increase as the fugue progresses. After a Baroque-like section in *stylus fantasticus*, the work concludes with a chorale in grandiose registration. Typically for Raphael's style, both the fantasia and the fugue are mainly in two and three parts. This reserve lends a translucence to the texture, only momentarily interrupted by richer harmonies at climactic points. Raphael employed this technique in his freely conceived organ pieces from an early age, with the lucidity of the style recalling the idiom of his fellow student, Paul Hindemith, a strong influence.

The latter two of the three works in Op. 41 are based on tunes written by Heikki Klemetti (1876–1953). Klemetti is one of the rare genuine Renaissance men in the history of Finnish music. He had a finger in multiple pies in Finnish culture in the early decades of the twentieth century: he collected folklore, composed music, wrote articles and books, aired polemical views, and founded and conducted prominent choirs, many of which are still active today. The *Partita* is based on Klemetti's tune 'Jumala ompi turvamme' ('God is our Refuge'). There are seven variations on the theme [3], and their titles, such as 'Bicinium' [5] and 'Pachelbel-Form' [8], point to Baroque models. Unlike the *Fantasie und Fuge*, there are no daring chromatic or formal features in the *Partita*; it is instead an essay in the style of Baroque music.²⁹ In reviews, the *Partita* was dismissed with a brief mention, perhaps because its style makes it the least original of the three works in Op. 41.

The theme of the *Passacaglia* [10] is Klemetti's tune 'Taas siunattu päivä' ('The Blessed Day'). Anyone composing an organ passacaglia might have difficulties in avoiding at least some similarities, unconscious or otherwise, with the major exemplars in the literature: Bach's *Passacaglia* in C minor, BWV 582, (c. 1706–13), the last movement of Rheinberger's *Sonata* No. 4, Op. 132 (1882), and Max Reger's *Introduktion, Passacaglia und Fuge*, Op. 127 (1913) – rather than his *Introduktion und Passacaglia*, WoO IV/6. Raphael's theme is boldly long – seventeen bars – which in itself sets challenges for composition. But although Raphael was influenced by Reger's style in his youth, in the *Passacaglia* the *figurae* of the first two variations [11] [12] are much closer to Rheinberger's first variations, and Variation 7 [17] might be a reminiscence of Bach's fifth variation; Variation 12 [22], too, may be a nod to the ninth variation of Reger's Op. 127. And although Reger's third and fourth variations proceed in triplets, as do Raphael's corresponding variations [13] [14], the resemblance is only superficial. In many other variations, especially from Variation 8 [18] onwards, Raphael goes his own way; though he gradually reduces the temperature in Variations 17 and 18 [27] [28], as Reger does in his *Passacaglia*, both the invention and harmony in Raphael's variations can be very original, as in

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

Variations 8–11 [18]–[21] and Variation 22 [22]. Raphael then follows Variation 24 [34] with a strange improvisational pedal solo, the change in texture acting as a bridge to the closing statement of the Chorale [35]. Three of the variations are in two parts, and twelve in three.

The *Passacaglia* is the boldest of the three works in Op. 41 in terms of compositional technique and technical requirements for the performer, and whereas Raphael's early organ works show the influence of Max Reger, here that harmonic world has been left far behind.³⁰ Nils-Erik Ringbom wrote that Raphael had a thorough command of the technical potential and colour palette of the organ.³¹ Nicolai van der Pals ranked Raphael as one of the most important organ composers of his time. He wrote that the *Passacaglia* evolved into increasingly dramatic cascades of sound that led to an elevated atmosphere³² – an evolution which must have been helped by the spacious acoustic of the Mikael Agricola Church.

Raphael's Status in Finland after the Second World War

A new era began in Finnish organ music after the Second World War with the emergence of a generation of composers whose influences included Ernst Pepping (1901–81), Hans Friedrich Micheelsen (1902–73) and, in particular, Hugo Distler (1908–42). Swedish-speaking Finnish organists were particularly familiar with the Neo-Classical style, having become acquainted with it at Nordic conferences in the 1930s and in personal contacts with church musicians in Sweden and Germany. Raphael was an important influence on Sulo Salonen (1899–1976), who studied composition with him by correspondence between 1938 and 1944.³³ Three works by Salonen – the *Partita 'Sen suven suloisuutta'* (1942), *Variations and Fugue on 'Matkamiehen mieli palaa'* (1942 or 1943) and a *Passacaglia* (1944) – were specifically modelled on the works in Raphael's Op. 41.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Svenska Pressen*, 23 September 1940.

³² *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 22 September 1940.

³³ Peter Peitsalo, 'Uusasiallisuus ja Sulo Salonen partita, opus 15', in *Festschrift for Kari Jussila*, ed. Peter Peitsalo, Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, 2003, pp. 97–98.

From the late 1950s, the philosophy of the Danish organ-reform movement took hold in Finland, under which it was held that the organ works of most Romantic composers in general and late-Romantic composers in particular were ‘un-organlike’. Instead, modernism was embraced, and Raphael’s works could be found in the libraries of several Finnish organists; his music thus did not sink into obscurity with Mårtenson’s death. As an example, when Finlandia Hall, designed by Alvar Aalto, was completed in 1973, the first organ concerto performed on the organ in the concert hall was Raphael’s, played by Mårtenson’s illustrious pupil Tauno Äikää and the Helsinki Philharmonic. However, once the generation of organists who had studied with Mårtenson began to retire, Raphael’s music quickly receded from view, mainly because of shifting tides in Finnish organ music, as the organ-reform movement began to wane and organists rediscovered French Romantic organ music and organ arrangements, which had previously been anathema. These discoveries were exhilarating, and it was at this time at the latest that the favourites of the previous generation, including Raphael, fell into obscurity. Yet these new trends were not necessarily the only reason. Sulho Ranta, one of Finland’s modernists in the 1920s, wrote of Mårtenson’s performance of Raphael’s *Partita über ‘Ach Gott vom Himmel sieh darein’*, Op. 22, No. 1: ‘He [Raphael] is not in any way an atonal composer, nor a Neo-Classical composer, but he is nevertheless German.’³⁴ As demonstrated by other early reviews, the problem with Raphael’s music seems to have been that his style was difficult to categorise – as, indeed, the works in his Op. 41 demonstrate.

³⁴ Suomenmaa, 5 March 1933.

Ville Urponen is one of Finland's most prominent organists. He completed diplomas in both the organ and the piano at the Sibelius Academy, having studied the organ with Kari Jussila and the piano with Meri Louhos. He went on to study the organ with Jacques van Oortomerssen and Pieter van Dijk at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam. He also attended several organ master-classes. He completed his Master of Music degree at the Sibelius Academy in 1996 and his Doctor of Music degree at the Sibelius Academy in 2009.



Photograph: Studio Liikelaiva

He has performed in numerous countries in Europe and in Japan, China, South Korea and Russia and appeared at many major music festivals at home and abroad. Among his achievements are performing the entire organ output of Johann Sebastian Bach in Helsinki in summer 2012 and playing the opening concerts of the twentieth-anniversary celebrations of the Bach organ at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in July 2020. He gave one of the inaugural recitals of the new Rieger organ at the Music Centre in Helsinki in January 2024. Over the course of his career, he has given more than 30 world premieres and the first performances in Finland of numerous contemporary works.

He is known for his ensemble skills and regularly works with leading Finnish singers and instrumentalists and has also given concerts with some of Finland's best-known choirs. He has played solo organ and harpsichord parts with orchestras and often plays orchestral organ parts with a variety of Finnish orchestras, including the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Orchestra of the Finnish National Opera and the Turku Philharmonic. He has collaborated with conductors such as Nicholas Collon, Roy Goodman, Hannu Lintu, Grant Llewellyn, Klaus Mäkelä, Sakari Oramo, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Leif Segerstam, Vassily Sinaisky, John Storgårds and Mark Tatlow. He has also sat on the juries of international organ competitions and given organ master-classes in numerous countries in Europe, in South Korea and in China.

Ville Urponen has released several solo albums to international acclaim, including music by Bach and Sibelius and a selection of Romantic Finnish organ music. He also appears on several albums with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Nicholas Collon and Sakari Oramo, with the Turku Philharmonic under Leif Segerstam and with the Tampere Philharmonic under

Hannu Lintu, and can be heard as accompanist on several albums of choral music, including one by the YL Male Choir conducted by Pasi Hyökki.

Since 1994, he has made dozens of studio and concert recordings for the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) as soloist and with singers, instrumentalists, choirs and orchestras. In addition to core organ repertoire, he has recorded the complete organ works of the Finnish composers Martha Dahl-Salonen, Väinö Haapalainen Sr, Väinö Haapalainen Jr, Armas Maasalo, Erkki Melartin and Aarre Merikanto. He has further recorded a considerable amount of Finnish music for YLE, including solo songs by Aarre and Oskar Merikanto with the mezzo-soprano Essi Luttinen and the song-cycle *Die Liebenden* by Einojuhani Rautavaara with the soprano Helena Juntunen, with accompaniment arranged for the organ by Ville Urponen himself. He has appeared on TV and radio broadcasts in Finland and abroad.

In addition to his career as a performing artist, Ville Urponen is a prolific scholar and writer. In 2010, he published a book on Finnish organ music up to the Second World War (*Intomielisen nuoruuden vääjäämätöntä voimaa. Suomalainen urkumusiikki toiseen maailmansotaan asti* ('The Inexorable Power of Passionate Youth. Finnish Organ Music until the Second World War'), Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, 2010, rev. edn. 2020). He has written articles for Finnish and foreign publications, appeared as an expert on YLE radio discussions and produced a three-part series on Finnish organ music for YLE.

Ville Urponen is a Lecturer in Organ at the Sibelius Academy. He is the artistic director of the Turku Organ Festival and deputy chairman of the organ concert working group at the Music Centre in Helsinki. He was on the design committee for the new Rieger organ at the Music Centre in Helsinki (2024). He held the chair of the Organum Society, the oldest organ-music association in the Nordic countries, from 2003 to 2009, and in 2015 he was awarded the Organum Society trophy for his long-standing high-profile contributions to the art of organ music.

The Main Organ of St Paul's Church in Helsinki, Finland

**Kangasalan Urkutehdas,
1931
Veikko Virtanen Oy, 2005**

*=from the 1931 organ

I C-a³

Principal 16'
Octava 8'
Flauto Major 8'
Quintatön 8'
Rohrflöte* 8'
Gamba 8'
Octava* 4'
Flöte* 4'
Quinta* 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ '
Octava 2'
Kornett* 3-4 f
Mixtur* 4-6 f 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ '
Fagott 16'
Trompete 8'

II C-a³

Quintadena* 16'
Geigen Principal* 8'
Flöte* 8'
Nackthorn* 8'
Gemshorn* 8'

Octava 4'
Querflöte* 4'
Piccolo* 2'
Sesquialtera* 2 f 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ '
Krummhorn* 8'
Singend regal* 4'
tremolo

III C-a³

Lieblieh Gedact* 16'
Principal 8'
Fugara 8'
Spitzflöte* 8'
Gedact* 8'
Voix celeste* 2 f 8'
Flauto dolce* 4'
Viola d'amore 4'
Querpfefe* 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ '
Flageolet* 2'
Terz* 13/5'
Harmonia aetheria 4 f 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ '
Basson* 16'
Trompet harmonique 8'
Oboe 8'
Vox humana* 8'
Klarine 4'
tremolo

Pedal C-f¹

Grand Bordun 32' (octave transmission)
Violonbass 16'
Subbass* 16'
Echobass 16' (transmission)
Violoncello 8'
Flötenbass 8' (transmission)
Octava* 4'
Bombarde 16'
Trompete 8' (transmission)
Klarine 4' (transmission)

Couplers

II-I 8'
III-I 8'
III-II 8'
I, II, III-P 8'
III-I 16'
III-16'
II-I 4'
III-I 4'
III-II 4'
I, II, III-P 4'
General coupler 8'
General crescendo
Setzer





Recorded on 15 June and 14 October 2024 in St Paul's Church, Helsinki
Registration assistant: Harriet Tulokas
Recording engineer: Antti Pohjola
Producer: Ville Urponen

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Ville Urponen

Booklet texts: Malcolm MacDonald and Ville Urponen
Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi
Cover design: David M. Baker (david@notneverknow.com)
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Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020 E-mail: info@toccataclassics.com

GÜNTER RAPHAEL Organ Music, Volume One

*Fantasia und Fuge über einen finnischen Choral, Op. 41, No. 1 (1939)**

- | | | | |
|---|----|---|-------|
| 1 | I | Fantasia: Choral – Vivace – Moderato – Lento – Poco più andante – Animato – Largo | 25:02 |
| 2 | II | Fuge: Molto tranquillo – Un poco mosso – Poco più mosso – Più animato – Moderato | 10:58 |
| | | | 14:04 |

Partita über einen finnischen Choral, Op. 41, No. 2 (1939)

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-------------------------|-------|
| 3 | I | Chorale | 12:33 |
| | | | 1:28 |
| 4 | II | Trio | 1:34 |
| | | | 1:12 |
| 5 | III | Bicinium | 1:43 |
| | | | 2:20 |
| 6 | IV | Minore | 2:06 |
| | | | 2:10 |
| 7 | V | Cantus firmus | |
| 8 | VI | Pachelbel-Form | |
| 9 | VII | Choral (Basso ostinato) | |

*Passacaglia über einen finnischen Choral, Op. 41, No. 3 (1939)**

- | | | | |
|----|--|----------------|-------|
| 10 | | Chorale – | 23:00 |
| | | | 0:47 |
| 11 | | Variation 1 – | 0:49 |
| | | | 0:48 |
| 12 | | Variation 2 – | 0:52 |
| | | | 0:49 |
| 13 | | Variation 3 – | 0:50 |
| | | | 0:46 |
| 14 | | Variation 4 – | 0:43 |
| | | | 0:33 |
| 15 | | Variation 5 – | 0:32 |
| | | | 0:37 |
| 16 | | Variation 6 – | 0:38 |
| | | | 0:39 |
| 17 | | Variation 7 – | 0:57 |
| | | | 0:50 |
| 18 | | Variation 8 – | 0:38 |
| | | | 0:45 |
| 19 | | Variation 9 – | 0:53 |
| | | | 1:04 |
| 20 | | Variation 10 – | 0:35 |
| | | | 0:31 |
| 21 | | Variation 11 – | |
| | | | |
| 22 | | Variation 12 – | |
| | | | |
| 23 | | Variation 13 – | |
| | | | |
| 24 | | Variation 14 – | |
| | | | |
| 25 | | Variation 15 – | |
| | | | |
| 26 | | Variation 16 – | |
| | | | |
| 27 | | Variation 17 – | |
| | | | |
| 28 | | Variation 18 – | |
| | | | |
| 29 | | Variation 19 – | |
| | | | |
| 30 | | Variation 20 – | |

31	Variation 21 –	0:46
32	Variation 22 –	0:39
33	Variation 23	1:03
34	Variation 24 – pedal solo –	2:19
35	Chorale	2:37

TT 60:39

Ville Urponen

organ of St Paul's Church, Helsinki

*FIRST RECORDINGS