

ROSSINI

Péchés de vieillesse • 7

(Sins of Old Age)

Excerpts from Volumes I, II, III, X, XI and XIV

Alessandro Marangoni, Piano and Organ
Ars Cantica Choir and Consort • Marco Berrini



**Gioachino
ROSSINI**
(1792-1868)

PÉCHÉS DE VIEILLESSE • VOL. 7

Excerpts from Volumes I, II, III, X, XI and XIV

From Vol. I: Album italiano

1	I. I gondolieri (2, 3, 4, 5)	5:23
2	XII. La passeggiata (1, 3, 4, 5)	6:19
3	Andantino mosso (Passy, 18th September 1858, manuscript, 1st recording) *	0:36

From Vol. II: Album français

4	I. Toast pour le nouvel an (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	3:08
5	VI. La notte del Santo Natale (1st recording of the original version, sung in Italian)**	
	(6; Alessandro Masi, Bass solo)	6:18
6	XII. Chœur de chasseurs démocrates (6)	3:44

From Vol XIV: Other Péchés de vieillesse

7	III. La Vénitienne – Canzonetta	5:58
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From Vol. III: Morceaux réservés

8	I. Chœur (Chant funèbre à Meyerbeer) (6)	3:47
9	IV. Ave Maria (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	6:04
10	VI. Le chant des Titans (6)	4:01
11	X. Cantemus (6)	2:12
12	XII. Le départ des promis – Tyrolienne sentimentale (6)	2:59

From Vol X: Miscellanée pour piano

13	I. Prélude blagueur	7:12
14	II. Des tritons s'il vous plaît (Montée-descente)	1:27
15	III. Petite pensée	2:10
16	VI. Petite Caprice (Style Offenbach)	2:35

From Vol XI: Miscellanée de musique vocale

17	VIII. Il candore in fuga (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	2:41
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From Vol XIV: Other Péchés de vieillesse

18	II. Vive l'empereur – Canon antisavant à 3 voix (6)	0:42
19	I. Or che s'oscura il ciel – Canone perpetuo per quattro soprani (6)	2:02
20	XI. Brindisi – Cianciafruscola musicale (6; Antonio Masotti, baritone solo)	1:51

From Vol. III: Morceaux réservés

21	VII. Preghiera (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	4:41
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From Vol. XI: Miscellanée de musique vocale

22	IX. Salve, o Vergine Maria – Motetto (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	2:36
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Alessandro Marangoni Piano (1-3, 5, 7, 10, 12-16, 19, 22); **Organ** (9) §

Ars Cantica Consort

Maria Candela Scalabrini, Soprano (1)

Ilaria Zuccaro, Soprano (2)

Morena Carlin, Mezzo-Soprano (3)

Massimo Lombardi, Tenor (4)

Antonio Masotti, Bass-Baritone (5)

Ars Cantica Choir (6)

Soprano: **Maria Candela Scalabrini**, **Ilaria Zuccaro**,

Monica Susana Elias (19), **Barbara Maiulli** (19)

Alto: **Morena Carlin**, **Floriano D'Auria**

Tenor: **Giuseppe Berrini**, **Massimo Lombardi**, **Sabino Manzo**, **Fulvio Zannella**

Bass: **Marco Grattarola**, **Alessandro Masi**, **Antonio Masotti**,

Luca Scaccabarozzi, **Ivan Cò** (21)

Marco Berrini

Conductor

Marco Olivero, Percussion (6, 8) • **Sabino Manzo**, Harmonium (5, 10) ***

* Special thanks to Reto Müller • ** Special thanks to Philip Gossett, Sergio Ragni and Patricia Brauner

*** Harmonium Debain (thanks to Paul Delferriere) • Portative Organ by Giulio Fratini, Porto San Giorgio (Fermo) Italy, 2012 §

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868): Péchés de vieillesse: Excerpts From Volumes I, II, III, X, XI and XIV

Gioachino Antonio Rossini was born in Pesaro in 1792. His father, a brass-player and later teacher of the French horn at the Bologna Accademia, had a modest career, disturbed by the political changes of the period as the French replaced the Austrians in Northern Italy. Rossini's mother was a singer and as a boy Rossini made his appearance with his father in the pit orchestra and from time to time as a singer with his mother on stage, going on to work as a keyboard-player in the opera orchestra.

Rossini's early studies in music were with his father and mother, and with other teachers through the generosity of rich patrons. In childhood he had already started to show ability as a composer and his experience in the opera-house bore natural fruit in a remarkable and meteoric career that began in 1810 with the production of *La cambiale di matrimonio* in Venice.

There followed a series of operas, comic and tragic, until the relatively poor reception of *Semiramide* in Venice in 1823 turned Rossini's attention to Paris. Under the Bourbon King Charles X Rossini staged French versions of earlier works and in 1829 *Guillaume Tell*. A contract for further operas came to nothing when the King was replaced in the revolution of 1830 by Louis-Philippe, although eventually, after some six years, Rossini was able to have his agreed annuity restored. With matters settled in France, in 1836 he returned to Italy and in spite of ill health concerned himself with the affairs of the Liceo Musicale in Bologna. The revolutionary disturbances there in 1848, activities with which he had little sympathy, seemed to threaten him and his second wife, Olympe Pélissier, whom he had married in 1846, after the death of his first wife, the singer Isabella Colbran, from whom he had been legally separated since 1837. For his own safety he moved first to Florence, but in 1855, partly in a search for better health, returned to Paris. In that city and a few years later at his new villa at Passy he passed the rest of his life.

Rossini's last ten years brought a return to composition, principally with a series of pieces described as *Péchés de vieillesse* (Sins of Old Age). Some of these are based on earlier works, some designed for performance at the informal Saturday evenings when he entertained guests in Paris, and others simply musical *obiter dicta*, as it were, pieces written as the mood took him. The *Péchés de vieillesse* are included in thirteen volumes, with a fourteenth compiled from other

works. The fourth to the eighth albums were grouped together by Rossini as '*Un peu de tout. Recueil de 56 morceaux semi-comiques pour le piano*' ("I dedicate these *Péchés de vieillesse* aux pianistes de la 4^{me} classe à la quelle j'ai l'honneur d'appartenir") (A little of everything. Collection of 56 semi-comic pieces for the piano: "I dedicate these Sins of Old Age to pianists of the fourth class, to which I have the honour to belong"). Rossini was unfairly modest about his abilities as a pianist, which were, it seems, not inconsiderable. Other volumes also contain piano pieces.

The first volume, *Album italiano*, contains twelve pieces involving voices. Of these the first and last are scored for soprano, alto, tenor and bass, with piano. The lilting opening piece, *I gondolieri* (The Gondoliers), is a charming and elegant celebration of the life of a gondolier. The twelfth piece, *La passeggiata* (The Excursion), after a piano introduction, introduces an operatic setting of a text that suggests a dangerous interruption to the outing, as the wind seems, for a moment, to be rising. This is here followed by a short piano *Andantino mosso* recently discovered in manuscript.

The second volume is the *Album français*. This opens with *Toast pour le nouvel an* (New Year's Toast), described as an *Ottettino*, for eight singers. The text is probably by Emilien Pacini, son of the composer Giovanni Pacini, to whom other texts here set by Rossini have been attributed. It was apparently performed at Rossini's house on 31st March 1865 and again on 17th April 1866, marking the year starting at the Feast of the Annunciation, rather than the beginning of January.

The light-hearted toast starts *sotto voce*, the words delicately pointed, and the work includes a prayer to the Virgin for prosperity.

Written in 1861, the gently lilting *La notte del Santo Natale* (Christmas Night), the sixth piece in the *Album français*, was sent to Vienna in 1863 as a contribution to a concert for a monument to Mozart. The Italian text was set by Rossini for eight singers, two to a part, a bass solo, piano and harmonium, the last suggesting shepherd pipes. Thanks to recent research it has been possible to perform this in its original version for the first time. This differs in some respects from the Fondazione Rossini edition of 1989, notably in the allocation of parts to the piano and the harmonium. After setting the Italian text, Rossini added a French version.

The *Album français* ends with a hunting-chorus, *Chœur de chasseurs démocrates* (Chorus of Democratic Huntsmen), the text, by Emilien Pacini, scored for male voices, with a final element included from two drums and tam-tam. Rossini and his wife had been invited by the Baronne James de Rothschild to the gala that attended the inauguration of the new Rothschild Château de Ferrières, a building designed by Joseph Paxton, on the model of his Mentmore for another branch of the Rothschild family in England. The gala, in December 1862, was marked by the presence of Napoleon III.

Volume XIV posthumously brings together other late compositions by Rossini, including the C major *Canzonetta, La Vénitienne*, a piano piece. It is followed here by excerpts from *Volume II, Morceaux réservés*. The first of the set of twelve pieces is a tribute to Meyerbeer, the text by Pacini scored for male voices and drum, *Quelques mesures de chant funèbre, à mon pauvre ami Meyerbeer* (A few bars of a funeral song for my poor friend Meyerbeer). It is dated precisely at 8.0 a.m. in Paris on 6th May 1864, on the day of Meyerbeer's funeral. It was said that Meyerbeer's nephew had written a funeral march for his uncle, that had provoked Rossini to the suggestion that it might have been better if the nephew had died, and Meyerbeer written the march.

The setting of the *Ave Maria*, for four-part chorus and organ, was dedicated to the Empress Eugénie, through whom Rossini hoped to restore the pension of his old friend Michele Carafa, who had ended his teaching at the Paris Conservatoire in 1858 and was otherwise to benefit from Rossini's generosity.

Le Chant des Titans, the sixth piece in the volume, is scored for four male voices in unison, accompanied by piano and harmonium and dedicated to Rossini's friend, the amateur bass singer Conte Pompeo Belgioioso of Milan. An orchestral version of the work was performed in Paris in December 1861 in aid of the proposed Cherubini monument in Florence.

Cantemus (Let us sing) is for unaccompanied double choir, an example of Palestrina counterpoint, to which Rossini added the comment "*Voilà du temps perdu!*" (What a waste of time!). The text set, from Exodus, forms part of the Easter Vigil liturgy, after the second reading, and is taken from the song of Moses after his successful crossing of the Red Sea.

Le départ des promis, Quatuor, Tyrolienne sentimentale (The Bridesgrooms' Departure), scored for two sopranos, two

contraltos and piano, with words by Pacini and in Tyrolean style, bids a charming farewell from girls whose betrothed are leaving home to serve as soldiers.

The tenth volume, *Miscellannée pour piano*, contains six piano pieces. The first, *Prélude blagueur* (Joking Prelude), would make demands on a pianist of the fourth class. It makes much use of sequence in its rapid progress, broken by contrasting episodes. The second piece is *Des tritons s'il vous plaît (Montée-descente)* (Tritons, if you please: ascending, descending). This ascends in C major in sequences, to descend in A minor. The E flat *Petite pensée* (Little Thought) gradually makes increasing technical demands. It is followed here by the sixth piece, *Petite Caprice (Style Offenbach)*, a witty response to Offenbach's quotation from *Guillaume Tell* in his *La belle Hélène*. Marked *Allegro grottesco* the parody of Offenbach found a place in Respighi's arrangement in *La boutique fantasque*. The other two pieces from the album, *Bagatelle* and *Mélodie italienne* are included in the sixth volume of the present series (Naxos 8.573107).

An eleventh volume brings together ten vocal pieces, including *Il candore in fuga*, a fugal setting of an *Amen* for five unaccompanied voices. Included in the fourteenth volume are the *Canone antisavant à 3 voix*, "*Vive l'empereur*" (Anti-learned Canon for three voices, "Long live the Emperor"), a short tribute to Napoleon III, with Rossini's added note *Paroles et musique du Singe* (Words and music by the Monkey), and *Canone perpetuo per quattro soprani*, "*Or che si oscura il ciel!*" (Perpetual Canon for four sopranos, "Now the sky grows dark!") The latter was written in November 1853 in the album of the German-born singing teacher, Mathilde Marchesi, wife of the Italian baritone Salvatore Marchesi, as the Marchesi were about to leave Florence for Ferrara. The piece is seemingly a parody of the style of singing continued at the Sistine Chapel and was used elsewhere by Rossini as an album-leaf. The *Brindisi*, descriptively subtitled *cianciafruscola musicale* (musical bagatelle), is a drinking-song for bass solo and men's chorus, written to mark the name-day of the Marchese Antonio Busca, a friend who supplied him with gorgonzola cheese from Italy.

The final items included here are the *Preghiera* (Prayer) for four tenors, two baritones and two basses, apparently modelled on an earlier setting of words by Metastasio, and the motet *Salve, o Vergine Maria* (Hail, o Virgin Mary), for four-part chorus and piano.

Keith Anderson



Photo: Andrea Topi

Marco Berrini

Marco Berrini is one of the most active choral conductors in Italy today. He graduated in piano, choral conducting and polyphonic composition and has been particularly involved in concert activity and recording in Italy and abroad with his Ars Cantica Choir and Consort. He was deputy choral conductor of the Rome RAI Chamber Choir and has worked with theatre choruses in Málaga and Seville, as well as with the Orchestra and the Chorus of The Community of Madrid. He has conducted in the Middle East and in South America, and served as guest conductor of the Argentine National Youth Choir and the Chorus of the Córdoba Municipal Theatre. In 2013 he was appointed chorus-master of the Genoa Teatro Carlo Felice Foundation and from December in the same year he was invited to conduct the Gesualdo Consort. Since 2010 he has been permanent conductor of the C.E.I. Giovanni Maria Rossi National Chorus. He is Professor of Choral Music at the at the Vivaldi Conservatory in Alessandria, where he also conducts the Chamber Choir.



Ars Cantica Consort

The Ars Cantica Consort is a specialist vocal and instrumental group which uses original instruments and performs according to historical principles. The Consort has performed at important festivals and in concert in Italy and abroad and has been active in the rediscovery and performance of unpublished or otherwise rare repertoire. Recordings include the *Salmi Suavissimi et Devotissimi a 5* of Vincenzo Ruffo and Michelangelo Grancini's *Giardino Spirituale de' varii fiori musicali*, both world premières. Since its foundation the Consort has been directed by Marco Berrini.



Ars Cantica Choir

The Ars Cantica Choir was established in 1988 in Milan and today, as a body of professional singers, has won a reputation for its versatility and ability to tackle repertoire from the Renaissance to the contemporary. The Choir has triumphed in a number of national and international competitions and has performed at important festivals and in concert in Italy and abroad, including the Rovereto International Mozart Festival, the Sagra Musicale Umbra, the Società del Quartetto di Milano, the Settimane Musicali of Stresa and of Lago Maggiore, I Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, the Teatro Bellini, Catania, the Teatro Due, Parma, the Associazione Scarlatti, Naples, Ferrara Musica, the Orchestra Sinfonica Marchigiana, the International Chor Forum (Germany), the Málaga Festival of Early Music and the Festival of Torre del Mar (Spain). The founder and director of the Choir is Marco Berrini.



Alessandro Marangoni

Born in Italy in 1979, Alessandro Marangoni studied the piano with Marco Vincenzi, obtaining a diploma with honours and continuing his studies at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole with Maria Tipo. He graduated with honours in philosophy at the Università di Pavia as a merit student of the Almo Collegio Borromeo. After winning national and international awards, he has appeared throughout Europe, America and China as a soloist and as a chamber musician, collaborating with some of Italy's leading performers, including Mario Ancillotti, Aldo Ceccato, Valentina Cortese, Enrico Dindo, Massimo Quarta, Quirino Principe, Milena Vukotic and the Nuovo Quartetto Italiano. He has also given more than a hundred concerts for the Second Life virtual platform. He is a member of the Trio Albatros Ensemble, and in 2007 recorded the piano works of Victor de Sabata for the fortieth anniversary of the latter's death, playing in a recital at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan with Daniel Barenboim. His recordings for Naxos include the ongoing cycle of the complete piano works of Rossini (*Péchés de vieillesse*), Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum* (8.572325-28) and Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Two Piano Concertos* (8.572823) and *Evangélion* (8.573316). In 2007 he won the prestigious Amici di Milano International Prize for Music. He teaches piano and chamber music in master-classes in Europe and South America. He created the *Chromoconcerto* with Pierpaolo Venier.

www.alessandromarangoni.com

Also available



8.572315



8.572608-09



8.573050



8.573107

Volume 7 of Rossini's complete piano music, *Péchés de vieillesse* (Sins of Old Age), ranges across six of the fourteen albums to include works for both solo piano and for piano and voices. Two of the pieces – *Andantino mosso* (track 3), recently discovered in manuscript, and *La notte di Santo Natale* (track 5) receive their first recording. 'Alessandro Marangoni sounds completely at home... and he presents the music with style, good humour and no mean virtuosity' (*MusicWeb International* on 8.573107 / Volume 6).

**Gioachino
ROSSINI**
(1792-1868)

Playing Time
78:26

Complete Piano Music • 7
Excerpts From Volumes I, II, III, X, XI and XIV

1-2	From Vol. I: Album italiano I gondolieri • La passeggiata	11:42
3	Andantino mosso *	0:36
4-6	From Vol. II: Album français Toast pour le nouvel an • La notte del Santo Natale (original version, sung in Italian) • Chœur de chasseurs démocrates	13:10
7	From Vol XIV: Other Péchés de vieillesse La Vénitienne – Canzonetta	5:58
8-12	From Vol. III: Morceaux réservés Chœur (Chant funèbre à Meyerbeer) • Ave Maria • Le chant des Titans Cantemus • Le départ des promis – Tyrolienne sentimentale	19:03
13-16	From Vol X: Miscellanée pour piano Prélude blagueur • Des tritons s'il vous plaît Petite pensée • Petite Caprice (Style Offenbach)	13:24
17	From Vol XI: Miscellanée de musique vocale Il candore in fuga	2:41
18-20	From Vol XIV: Other Péchés de vieillesse Vive l'empereur – Canon antisavant à 3 voix • Or che s'oscura il ciel – Canone perpetuo per quattro soprani • Brindisi – Cianciafruscola musicale	4:35
21	From Vol III: Morceaux réservés Preghiera	4:41
22	From XI: Miscellanée de musique vocale Salve, o Vergine Maria – Motetto	3:36

Alessandro Marangoni, Piano and Organ
Ars Cantica Choir and Consort • Marco Berrini

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING *

Recorded at the Baroque Hall, Ivrea, Italy – Studio SMC Records, 25th-27th September 2013 • Producers, Engineers and Editors:
Renato Campajola and Mario Bertodo • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson • Cover: Paolo Zeccara
Special thanks to Fondazione Gioachino Rossini, Pesaro, Italy • A full track and artist list may be found on pages 2 and 3
The sung texts and English translations may be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/573292.htm