



GRAND
PIANO

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

RIETI
COMPLETE PIANO SOLO
& DUO WORKS • 2

GIORGIO KOUKL
VIRGINIA ROSSETTI

VITTORIO RIETI (1898–1994)

COMPLETE PIANO SOLO & DUO WORKS • 2

GIORGIO KOUKL, *piano solo*: 1–8, 14–18, 25–35; *piano 2*: 9–13, 19–24

VIRGINIA ROSSETTI, *piano 1*: 9–13, 19–24

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Piano Technician: Lukas Fröhlich

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www.tonyprice.org

	BRICIOLE (1920)	05:18
1	No. 1. Berceuse	01:09
2	No. 2. Il carillon rotto	01:06
3	No. 3. Il carillon scordato	00:23
4	No. 4. Chopin-Debussy	01:34
5	No. 5. Marionette	01:05
	DUE STUDI (1923)	04:14
6	No. 1. Semplice e con moto	02:05
7	No. 2. Scorrevole	02:08
	PIANO SUITE (1926)	01:39
8	IV. Canzonetta	01:39
	CHESS SERENADE (1941–45)	13:53
9	I. Prelude	02:46
10	II. Gavotte	04:19
11	III. Serenade	01:18
12	IV. Valse	02:56
13	V. Clown March	02:32
	CONTRASTI (1967)	07:45
14	No. 1. Preludio	01:11
15	No. 2. Variazioni	02:30
16	No. 3. Bagatella	00:57
17	No. 4. Elegia	00:48
18	No. 5. Girandola	02:15

	NEW WALTZES (1956–57)	22:56
19	No. 1. Belinda Waltz	02:07
20	No. 2. Valse Caprice	06:13
21	No. 3. Valse Champêtre	03:15
22	No. 4. Valse Légère	01:51
23	No. 5. Valse Lente	05:12
24	No. 6. Rondo Waltz	04:11
	CHIRONOMOS (1972)	10:13
25	I. Preludio	01:39
26	II. Allegro volante	01:03
27	III. Intermezzo	02:03
28	IV. Mazurka	01:49
29	V. Improvviso	01:47
30	VI. Epilogo	01:48
31	VALSE POUR LÉONOR (1972)	01:06
	FOUR PIANO PIECES (1992)	05:48
32	No. 1. Tempo giusto	01:01
33	No. 2. L'istesso tempo	00:48
34	No. 3. Andante poco mosso	02:30
35	No. 4. Allegro alla tarantella	01:29

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 73:19

VITTORIO RIETI (1898–1994) COMPLETE PIANO SOLO & DUO WORKS • 2

As a successful composer for the stage, Vittorio Rieti was blessed with an instinct for writing music rooted in dance. Throughout his long life, Rieti enjoyed alliances with prominent figures such as Sergey Diaghilev, Max Jacob and Jean Cocteau, as well as meeting important composers including Schoenberg, Hindemith, Weill and the members of Les Six. He was a regular visitor to cultural hotspots, frequently spending time in Vienna and Paris, before dividing his time equally between Europe and America from 1960 until 1980. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, he is listed as an American composer of Italian descent – a cosmopolitan writing music open to all those influences.

Throughout this time Rieti's constant companion was the piano, the instrument on which his musical career began. His daytime studies, however, were at the Bocconi University of Economics and Business in Milan, where he obtained a doctorate in 1917. The teenage Rieti was a self-taught musician, spending any free time at the piano, where he quickly learned the art of composition. In time he received support from fellow Italians Respighi, Casella and Malipiero, but his principal guide was Giuseppe Frugatta, piano tutor at Milan Conservatory. His studies were complemented by frequent trips to Paris as a youth.

Rieti enjoyed a richly productive career until his death in 1994, inspired by but not conforming to the work of Les Six, the Second Viennese School and Stravinsky. He acknowledged his compositional style to be neo-Classical, and like Stravinsky he wrote a good deal of music for two pianos, often using dance forms as his principal means of expression. His work for solo piano provided more regular entries in his musical diary, revealing deeper, intimate thoughts.

This second Grand Piano anthology of Rieti's works for one and two pianos confirms the consistency of his output. It also shows a youthful and at times mischievous approach, frequently putting a smile on the face of his music, together with a fondness for succinct structures that always offer up a melody or two in even the shortest form. Even a movement as brief as *Il carillon scordato*, at 23 seconds the shortest of the early *Briciole* suite, shows melodic and harmonic traits that would surely have been heard in Parisian clubs.

Briciole is a short collection of five movements showing Rieti's ability to create characters and impressions as soon as the fingers touch the keyboard. Its *Berceuse* has a lilting contour but an underlying restlessness. A lightly playful *Il carillon rotto* follows, the pianist using the thumbnail on the short side of the keyboard to imitate the charging noise of the mechanics. *Il carillon scordato* is a quickfire *prestissimo*, its high-register clamour over in a flash. The sharps of its key signature contrast with the flats of the following *Chopin-Debussy*, a more substantial invocation of the preludes of both composers. Meanwhile the block chords of *Marionette* paint a mischievous character, left to run amok.

The *Due studi* of 1923 were completed soon after Rieti sealed a publishing arrangement with Universal Edition in Vienna. The first has flowing contours and rich colours, the right-hand melody progressively more expansive as the left wanders freely. The second features a gruff, drone-like figure that is soon competing with the treble figuration. Presently the distance between the hands increases, the two musical ideas going their own separate ways. The short *Canzonetta*, another Viennese publication, is a charming piece, its folksy melody given over rustic drones.

Rieti began his two-piano work *Chess Serenade* in 1941, a year after his emigration to the United States. The five-movement piece occupied him for four years, and while it might draw initial comparisons to Debussy's *En blanc et noir*, with its proximity to a World War, there is an unmistakable whiff of New York Broadway about it. The staccato *Prelude*, in a spiced-up C major, finds the ideas of both pianos intertwined, working together with strong forward momentum. The *Gavotte* brings out Rieti's neo-Classical side, a dance packed with ideas of bittersweet lyricism expressed through clean, balletic lines. The brief but touching *Serenade* is shot through with sadness and longing but ends on a hopeful note, picked up by the graceful *Valse*, which spins its way elegantly across the floor. Finally the octave figures and 'wrong' harmonies of the *Clown March* depict an awkward yet entertaining encounter.

By the time he wrote the short piano suite *Contrasts* in 1967, Rieti was dividing his time equally between Europe and America. Though published in New York the individual movements bear Italian titles, suggesting a neo-Baroque suite. The undulating *Preludio* is followed by night-time wanderings of the mind in a sequence of *Variazioni*, notable for their changes of mood. A piquant *Bagatella* and introspective *Elegia* follow, setting up a final flourish of *Girandola* ('Fireworks'). These recall Debussy's own *Feux d'artifice*, a riot of colourful explosions.

In the mid-1950s Rieti was enjoying a productive output for the stage, completing the radio opera *Viaggio d'Europa* in 1954 and *The Pet Shop* in 1957. While working on these he simultaneously composed a substantial suite for two pianos in triple time. In *New Waltzes* he uses the weightier textures of the two instruments for fuller part writing, though a touching intimacy remains. *Belinda Waltz* has a motif of block chords and a ready smile. It is an upbeat to *Valse Caprice*, a fantasy in all but name that proves contemplative and forceful by turn. *Valse Légère* has a persuasive lilt to its rhythm, working in two-bar units with a four-figure theme in the right hand, while *Valse Lente* is a moving meditation complemented by more extravert flights of fancy. The *Rondo Waltz* is a fitting finale that heads onto the dancefloor, spinning energetically to the power of its second main theme.

The solo piano work *Chironomos* was published in New York in 1972. Here Rieti creates a similar framework to *Contrasts*, moulding a short suite of contrasting characters. This time the titles suggest a Romantic approach, with a mysterious *Preludio* and an irrepressible *Allegro volante*, with a wandering triplet figuration. A night-time *Intermezzo* holds intimate counsel before its neighbouring *Mazurka* asks a questioning melody, then an *Improvviso* where, as its name suggests, the player is given a free rein. The *Epilogo* returns to pensive contemplation, distracted harmonies resolved by a consonant final chord. As a postscript we hear the *Valse pour Léonor*, completed the same year, its graceful stature bringing Poulenc to mind.

The *Four Piano Pieces* of 1992 are dedicated to pianist Bennett Lerner, who appeared in a 90th birthday concert in Rieti's honour in 1988, playing the composer's concertante work *Enharmonic Variations*. The quartet of sketches may be slight in length, but they are infused with a good deal of melodic and emotional content. The *Tempo giusto* has a thoughtful disposition, in contrast to the bold *L'istesso tempo*, with its continuous melody in the right hand. A Chopinesque *Andante poco mosso* follows, laced with youthful nostalgia, before the *Allegro alla tarantella* rumbles into life, a jaunty dance full of wit and charm.

Ben Hogwood

VIRGINIA ROSSETTI



© Erika Moretto

Virginia Rossetti began her piano studies with Massimiliano Ferrati, later attending the 'Antonio Buzzolla' Conservatory in Adria where she graduated with honours. In May 2013 she obtained her Master of Performing Arts with distinction at the Hochschule für Musik in Basel with Filippo Gamba, and in 2014 undertook studies at the Royal Flemish Conservatoire in Brussels with Aleksandar Madzar. She was also awarded a Master in Pedagogy at the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana in the class of Anna Kravtchenko. She has participated in masterclasses with eminent artists and teachers including Konstantin Bogino and Elisabeth Leonskaja, and at the Sommerakademie Mozarteum in Salzburg with Sergio Perticaroli. Rossetti is a prize winner of several national and international piano competitions including the Premio Venezia 2009, reserved for the best graduates under the patronage of the Republic's President, and the Premio Marizza in Trieste. She has performed across Europe in numerous concert halls, theatres and festivals such as the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Teatro Foce in Lugano, Volkshaus in Zurich, Rondo in Pontresina and the Portogruaro International Music Festival. Since 2011 she has been the pianist of the Lunaire Piano Trio with whom she has recorded live on I concerti del Quirinale for Rai Radio 3.

www.virginiarossetti.com

GIORGIO KOUKL

Giorgio Koukl is a pianist/harpsichordist and composer. He was born in Prague in 1953, and studied there at the State Music School and Conservatory. He continued his studies at both the Conservatories of Zürich and Milan, where he took part in the masterclasses of Nikita Magaloff, Jacques Février and Stanislas Neuhaus, and with Rudolf Firkušný, friend and advocate of Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů. It was through Firkušný that Koukl first encountered Martinů's music, prompting him to search out his compatriot's solo piano works. Since then he has developed these into an important part of his concert repertoire and is now considered one of the world's leading interpreters of Martinů's piano music, having recorded that composer's complete solo piano music, together with five discs of Martinů's vocal music and two discs of his piano concertos. As a logical continuation of this work, Koukl has recorded the complete solo piano works of Paul Le Flem, Alexander Tcherepnin, Arthur Lourié, Vítězslava Kaprálová, Witold Lutosławski, and, more recently, Alexandre Tansman and Tibor Harsányi.

www.koukl.com



GIORGIO KOUKL
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Vittorio Rieti at home in Rome, 1925.
Courtesy of Léonor Rieti, granddaughter of the composer.

VITTORIO RIETI (1898–1994)

COMPLETE PIANO SOLO & DUO WORKS • 2

Vittorio Rieti's admission that his musical style was largely neo-Classical belies a cosmopolitan openness to influences that range from Les Six, the Second Viennese School and Stravinsky. This recording shows a youthful and at times mischievous approach – Rieti frequently puts a smile on the face of his music, united with a fondness for brevity, and melodies reminiscent of the atmosphere of Parisian clubs. The *Chess Serenade* has a whiff of New York Broadway about it, and the dance character in many of these pieces reflects Rieti's successful work for the stage. Following on from the critically acclaimed first volume (GP921), Giorgio Koukl – described as 'one of the five or six greatest living pianists today' by *The Art Music Lounge* – is once again joined in the works for piano duo by the prize-winning pianist Virginia Rossetti.

1–5	BRICIOLE (1920)	05:18
6–7	DUE STUDI (1923)	04:14
8	PIANO SUITE: IV. CANZONETTA (1926)	01:39
9–13	CHESS SERENADE (1941–45)	13:53
14–18	CONTRASTI (1967)	07:45
19–24	NEW WALTZES (1956–57)	22:56
25–30	CHIRONOMOS (1972)	10:13
31	VALESE POUR LÉONOR (1972)	01:06
32–35	FOUR PIANO PIECES (1992)	05:48



GIORGIO KOUKL



VIRGINIA ROSSETTI



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INFORMATION

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