



**Johann Gottfried Walther**  
**COMPLETE ORGAN TRANSCRIPTIONS**

**Simone Stella**

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**Another recording signed by Simone Stella for OnClassical. The 4-microphone recording includes the complete concert transcriptions made by the J.S. Bach's cousin, Walther. It is strange to notice that these compositions, though not original, are the best known and most performed music by the German composer!**

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Simone Stella is a pluri-awarded young organist and harpsichordist. He is acclaimed by the international critic worldwide for his monumental editions of Dietrich Buxtehude, George Boehm, Adam Reincken, Johann Gottfried Walther works.

**“Thoroughly imaginative and engaging” (Fanfare), “Convincing and surprisingly” (Klassic.com).”**

## Track-list

### Disc 1

1	Concerto del Signor Mancia in g – III. Allegro	02:25:27
2	Concerto del Signor Meck in C – I. Adagio	01:06:18
3	Concerto del Signor Meck in C – II. Allegro	04:01:88
4	Concerto del Signor Meck in C – III. Adagio	02:16:07
5	Concerto del Signor Meck in C – IV. Allegro	02:56:00
6	Concerto del Signor Albinoni in F – I. Allegro	02:29:43
7	Concerto del Signor Albinoni in F – II. Adagio	01:12:29
8	Concerto del Signor Albinoni in F – III. Allegro	03:47:71
9	Concerto del Signor Albinoni in B flat – I. Allegro	02:19:62
10	Concerto del Signor Albinoni in B flat – II. Adagio	01:00:52
11	Concerto del Signor Albinoni in B flat – III. Allegro	02:00:94
12	Concerto del Signor Blamont in A – I. Adagio	01:57:65
13	Concerto del Signor Blamont in A – II. Andante, allegro	06:18:39
14	Concerto del Signor Blamont in A – III. Pastorella	05:41:61
15	Concerto del Signor Gentili in A – I. Allegro	02:31:84
16	Concerto del Signor Gentili in A – II. Adagio	00:50:67
17	Concerto del Signor Gentili in A – III. Allegro	01:29:81
18	Concerto del Signor Gregori in B flat – I. Largo	01:35:78
19	Concerto del Signor Gregori in B flat – II. Allegro	01:15:05
20	Concerto del Signor Gregori in B flat – III. Adagio e staccato	00:54:08
21	Concerto del Signor Gregori in B flat – IV. Allegro	02:24:26
22	Concerto del Signor Mancia in g – I. Allegro	03:20:46
23	Concerto del Signor Mancia in g – II. Adagio	04:20:00

### Disc 2

1	Concerto del Signor Taglietti in B flat – I. Grave e Solo	03:01:71
2	Concerto del Signor Taglietti in B flat – II. Allegro	02:31:79
3	Concerto del Signor Taglietti in B flat – III. Adagio	01:43:24
4	Concerto del Signor Taglietti in B flat – IV. Allegro	02:23:75
5	Concerto del Signor Telemann in c (minor) – I. Adagio	02:51:70
6	Concerto del Signor Telemann in c (minor) – II. Allegro	02:24:03
7	Concerto del Signor Telemann in c (minor) – III. Adagio	02:15:07
8	Concerto del Signor Telemann in c (minor) – IV. Allegro	02:02:95
9	Concerto per la Chiesa del Signor Telemann in G – I. Fuga	01:29:31
10	Concerto per la Chiesa del Signor Telemann in G – II. A 2 Tastature	02:01:65
11	Concerto per la Chiesa del Signor Telemann in G – III. (Adagio)	03:50:30
12	Concerto per la Chiesa del Signor Telemann in G – IV. (Allegro)	01:46:18
13	Concerto del Signor Torelli in d (minor) – I. Allegro	02:57:38
14	Concerto del Signor Torelli in a (minor) – I. Allegro	02:31:56
15	Concerto del Signor Torelli in a (minor) – II. Adagio	02:09:95
16	Concerto del Signor Torelli in a (minor) – III. Allegro	03:11:52
17	Concerto del Signor Torelli in B flat – I. Allegro	03:01:57
18	Concerto del Signor Torelli in B flat – II. Adagio	02:10:61
19	Concerto del Signor Vivaldi in b (minor) – I. Allegro	02:44:29
20	Concerto del Signor Vivaldi in b (minor) – II. Adagio	03:30:55
21	Concerto del Signor Vivaldi in b (minor) – III. Allegro	02:59:52

## Johann Gottfried Walther (1684–1748)

### *The life*

Johann Gottfried Walther was born on 18 september 1684 in Erfurt (Mainz, Germany) and grew up in that city where, after a period of private instruction in reading and writing which lasted nearly three years, he entered the distinguished Merchant's School in 1691, where he studied singing with the Kantor Jacob Adelong and keyboard playing with the organists Johann Bernhard Bach and Johann Andreas Kretschmar.

After studying at the Gymnasium Senatorium from 1697 to 1702, he gave up his academic studies in order to devote himself completely to music. In 1712 Walther obtained his first position as organist at the Erfurt's Thomaskirche. He studied at Erfurt's Predigerkirche with Johann Heinrich Buttstett and then, interested in studying music treatises like those of Werckmeister, Fludd, and Kircher, started a period of travels in which he toured Germany and met influential musicians and theorists: in 1703 Walther was in Frankfurt and Darmstadt, in 1704 he moved to Halberstadt and Magdeburg, and in 1706 went to Nuremberg. In those educational trips, Walther made contacts with important personalities like Andreas Werckmeister, Johann Graf and Wilhelm Hieronymus Pachelbel.

In 1707 Walther became organist at the Weimar's Church of St. Peter and Paul, and retained that post until his death. In Weimar he also served as music teacher to Prince Johann Ernst, nephew of the reigning duke, his sister and various other noble and common personages. Between 1708 and 1714 Walther formed a friendship with Johann Sebastian Bach, of whom he was a second cousin. During this time he wrote an important handbook, the 'Praecepta der musicalischen Composition' (dated 1708, published only in 1955 in the Peter Benary's edition), a treatise of musical theory that included information on such subjects as notation, musical terms, and the art of composing, probably written as an instruction manual for Johann Ernst. From 1721 Walther headed the ducal orchestra of Wilhelm Ernst, with the title of *Hof-musicus*.

In 1732 Walther completed and published his most important work, the 'Musicalisches Lexicon', an enormous dictionary (nearly 700 pages) of music and musicians. Not only was it the first dictionary of musical terms written in the German language, it was the first to contain both terms, biographical information about composers and performers up to the early 18th century, and bibliographies. In all, it defines more than 3000 musical terms; Walther evidently drew on more than 250 separate sources in compiling it, including theoretical treatises of the early Baroque and Renaissance. The single most important source for the work was the writings of Johann Mattheson, who is referenced more than 200 times. Nowadays the Musicalisches Lexicon remains one of the most invaluable sources in the study of Baroque music.

Johann Gottfried Walther died in a deteriorated financial situation (on 19 September 1740 he wrote to H. Bokemeyer in Wolfenbüttel "the lack of the money forces me to separate myself from that which is dear to me") on 23 March 1748, at the age of 63. As a composer, he writes sacred vocal works, but he became famous especially for

his organ transcriptions of orchestral concertos by contemporary Italian and German masters. He made 14 transcriptions of concertos by Albinoni, Blamont, Gentili, Meck, Mancina, Taglietti, Telemann, Torelli and Vivaldi. These works were the models for Bach to write his famous keyboard transcriptions of concertos by Vivaldi and others. On the other hand, as a church organist Walther composed more than 130 choral preludes and variations on Lutheran chorale melodies, in addition to some free keyboard pieces.

### ***The organ transcriptions***

It would appear that there were hardly any losses in Walther's organ music. In a letter to Johann Mattheson of 28 December 1739, Walther wrote that he had composed, in addition to 92 vocal works and 119 keyboard works based on chorales, only very few instrumental works and keyboard pieces. We can assume that the surviving eight free organ works represent the sum of Walther's contribution to this category. In the same letter Walther also quotes the pieces written by other composers which he had transcribed for the keyboard, "a total of 78 altogether". This surprising high number would mean that 64 arrangements would be lost, because only 14 transcriptions have come down to us. 13 of these transcriptions are contained in the same source, the autographic Codex actually preserved in the Staatsbibliothek of Berlin. Only the *Concerto per la Chiesa in g major del Signor Telemann* has been passed down separately. All the transcriptions were intended for the organ and seem to be collected in a selection made by the composer himself. About the lost repertoire, we can only surmise that those pieces were possibly not intended for the organ but principally for the harpsichord (like J. S. Bach's 16 well-known concerto transcriptions BWV 972–987).

Transcribing ensemble music for keyboard instruments has a long history, which has its roots in the early organ music by the practice of transcribing vocal pieces into an idiom suited to the keyboard (intabulation, coloration), and develops in the next centuries. Mattheson, for example, reports about the blind Amsterdam organist Jacob de Graaf (1672–1738), "who knew by heart all the most recent Italian concertos, sonatas, etc. in three and four parts, and played them with exceptional precision on his wonderful organ".

Regarding Johann Gottfried Walther's case, according to his autobiographical reports, in 1707 he "began to instruct His Serene Highness Prince Johann Ernst and Her Serene Highness Princess Johanna Charlotte in the art of keyboard playing immediately upon assuming his office of Michaelmas (29 September). This noble example was followed by a number of other titled and untitled personages". In this predominantly courtly ambient, music lovers were undoubtedly delighted to have access to the then most popular genre of aristocratic ensemble music, the Italian concerto, through transcriptions for a solo keyboard instrument. The pieces were thus made available to all in a "single user" form which did not require the participation of a court ensemble. We can assume that Walther always had a great feeling for the needs or demands of his time, because he can be considered the very initiator of the art of transcribing ensemble music in Weimar.

Simone Stella

### **Phonic disposition of the Francesco Zanin (2006) organ in the Church of S. Antonio Abate, University College Don Mazza, Padova (Italy)**

#### I Ruckpositiv

C - g

*Bordone 8*

*Quintadena 8*

*Principale 4*

*Flauto 4*

*Ottava 2*

*Flautino 2*

*Cembalo 3 file*

*Sesquialtera 2 file*

*Dulcian 8*

#### II Hauptwerk

C - g

*Bordone 16*

*Principale 8*

*Flauto 8*

*Viola 8*

*Ottava 4*

*Flauto 4*

*Nazardo 2.2/3*

*Superottava 2*

*Flauto in V 1.1/3*

*Mixtur 5 file*

*Tromba 8*

#### Pedal

C - g

*Subbasso 16*

*Principale 8*

*Ottava 4*

*Trombone 16*

*Trombone 8*

#### Couplers

HW-RP

HW-Ped

RP-Ped

Mechanical transmission; A=440 Hz

Recorded at: Chiesa di Sant'Antonio Abate, Collego Don Mazza, Padova, 2013  
Engineer: Alessandro Simonetto