

CEMBALO PARADISO

ANNA PARADISO HARPSICHORD

D Scarlatti, Leigh, Froberger,
A Scarlatti, Paradies,
Frescobaldi, JS Bach,
d'Anglebert, Royer

ANNA PARADISO

My first decisive meeting with baroque performance practice at the harpsichord was through Gordon Murray. Luckily all my piano teachers at the conservatory in Bari had been superb musicians (I received my solo diploma *cum laude* in piano in 1998) but while I was studying for my solo diploma in harpsichord (that I received with full marks in 2002) I attended at the same time the Summer courses with Murray at 'Antiqua BZ' in Bolzano, and I studied privately in Vienna. I learned many things there that still are part of my playing today. In the meantime, I graduated at the faculty of classical studies in Bari and I received a scholarship for a doctorate in Latin literature. Although Antiqua BZ awarded me with a tour of concerts at the Brezice Festival in Slovenia, by then my life had been overtaken by Ovid's poetry. I spent a period studying at Oxford University, where I also taught Latin grammar. I also taught classical culture at the Royal College of Technology in Stockholm, where I received a post-doctorate. It was then that I decided to dedicate myself entirely to my musical activities, studying also for an Advanced Master in harpsichord and basso continuo at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm with inspiring teachers such as Mayumi Kamata and Ulf Söderberg. Part of my Masters studies were at the Conservatorio Cimarosa in Avellino with Enrico Baiano, whose endless enthusiasm for lively discussions on Frescobaldi and French music from the 1600s were of great stimulation for me. Baiano is also one of the greatest experts of Neapolitan baroque music for keyboard, and of *partimenti* - both fields very dear to me. I have also played for Christophe Rousset, whose artistry and knowledge are always accompanied during our meetings by extreme kindness and patience in hearing my ideas.

I have played as continuist and soloist at the harpsichord, as well as at the piano, in most of the major festivals in Sweden and in the most prominent halls of Stockholm. I have performed also in Italy, England, Finland, Germany, USA and Japan. Together with my baroque ensemble Paradiso Musicale I have recorded JS Bach, CPE Bach and

Telemann for BIS. Among other enthusiastic responses from international critics, Paradiso Musicale's disc *The Father, the Son and the Godfather* was named by *BBC Music Magazine* 'chamber music choice of the month' in January 2012. In duo together with my husband, recorder player Dan Laurin, I have performed in many countries (both at the harpsichord and at the piano) and recorded twentieth century British music for BIS. Our next recording will include all sonatas for flute by JH Roman. I have also given lectures in European conservatories and courses about baroque music and classical rhetoric. When not performing, I enjoy researching ancient sources on original fingering and basso continuo and the vast semi-unknown collection of baroque Neapolitan manuscripts in San Pietro a Majella in Naples.

THE PIECES

Domenico Scarlatti's Sonata in D minor shows off both the composer and the player. Here Scarlatti seems even more than usual attracted to asymmetric phrasing and abrupt endings, followed by sudden rests where there is no music at all. Yet the piece propels forward with an irrepressible energy, imitating the mandolin, that fashionable instrument of eighteenth century Naples. The result is a mix of moods, and in my version I try to underline the nervous, paranoid feeling that runs throughout the piece - more of a 'character piece' than one would expect, quite Romantic in nature, about 100 years too early! Or maybe it's just a snap-shot of urban living in Southern Europe in the eighteenth century?

After the first world war, painters, composers and writers faced a massive destruction of aesthetic values and norms. Many thought it impossible to 'rebuild art' based on a lost society, and the link between ethics and aesthetics became a burden that eventually forced some artists to break any connection with tradition or the past. The loss of identity and purpose is still felt, but it also provided a 'clean slate' that gave us Berg's violin concerto, Webern's concentration of expression and Schönberg's string quartets. The English response to the

human catastrophe of 1914-18 was different. Composers indeed tried to reconnect to the musical language of the past, primarily through the use of historical forms and harmonic processes. At the same time the Early Music movement was gaining momentum from the urge to define a cultural belonging. Some of its first stars, such as recorder player Carl Dolmetsch and his musical partner for more than half a century, harpsichordist Joseph Saxby, set out to encourage composers of the day to write for their 'old' instruments. **Walter Leigh's Concertino** from 1934 is a beautiful example of how to adapt an ancient musical instrument to a new language without distorting its innate voice. Like many of his English colleagues, Leigh is a strong melody maker, whose contrapuntal approach weaves a fine texture where all players have something interesting to say. There is something grand about Leigh's music that I can only describe as the work of a truly great artist: the first

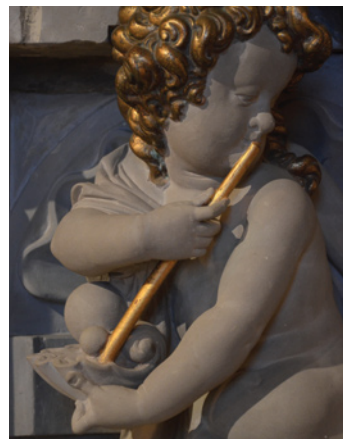
movement's strong intellectual approach to thematic material is contrasted with the elegant flow of gestures and the slightly jazzy harmony of the long cadenza; the second movement is so sad, so heartbreakingly beautiful that only the rustic playfulness of the third movement may prevent the soloist from bursting into tears... Again Leigh comes very close to the central ideas of the baroque: the constant struggle between reason (counterpoint) and passion (melody). Hence there are many parallels between the Bach concerto on this recording and Leigh's concertino. In his short life, Leigh managed to develop an individual style which is also reflected in many works for the recorder. He was killed in action in Tobruk, Libya, in 1942.

We of course have to consider performance practice with Leigh's music as well as with any other style. The harpsichord at the time of the concertino was 'modern-



ized': Joseph Saxby's score (which formed the base for my interpretation) is full of annotations such as numerous indications of dynamics, achieved through pedal-operated registration changes. I chose to use an 18th century French harpsichord for this recording - authentic or not, I very much like the resulting 'neo-baroque' lightness, which also underlines the origins of this jewel of a concertino.

Johann Jakob Froberger was a true world musician: born in Germany he spent most of his life in Rome, Vienna, and Paris, and wherever he worked he profoundly influenced colleagues and musical styles. Even Mozart and Beethoven are said to have studied his works hundreds of years later, and only today he is thoroughly underestimated. The toccata represented here is entirely Italian in flavor. Like Frescobaldi in some of his toccatas,



Froberger here creates a struggle between reason (*prima pratica*) and passion (*seconda pratica*). This contrast is made very clear in the contrasting of freely arpeggiated chord sequences with strong counterpoint sections, and the favorite theme of the baroque comes to life: how shall we live? To what extent do we need to control our desires? In this recording I have chosen to use the fingerings suggested by Gerolamo Diruta, as we know that his book was in the Froberger library - the only didactic work in that collection and hence of importance not only to Froberger but also to me.

Alessandro Scarlatti, father of Domenico, was the first great composer of the glorious *opera napoletana*. His keyboard music (which forms only a small part of his immense output) includes some fascinating work for harpsichord, including the set of variations on the popular *Follia di Spagna* theme. This is the last movement of a long piece entitled 'Toccatà VII, Primo Tono. Toccatà per cembalo d'ottava stesa. Napoli 1723'. The variations are an excellent occasion for the harpsichordist to show off all sorts of tricks, and the incredible variety of different characters and *affetti*, in my opinion, lets us understand the close connection between Scarlatti as an opera composer and as an instrumentalist. There are plenty of 'special effects' in Scarlatti's treatment of the harpsichord to which I have added some extra flavour of *acciaccature* (passing dissonances) in the chords. In the manuscript every variation ends with what appears to be a repeat sign, but following the practice of the day I have chosen not to observe them - I like the resulting direction of phrasing. To play this piece is like donning a series of masks - some variations are very lyrical and even romantic in a modern sense, some sparkingly virtuosic, some rather controlled, some simply crazy! And who said that Beethoven invented character variations in music!?

Pier Domenico Paradies's keyboard sonatas are remarkable pieces. Apart from the misnamed 'Toccatà in A', which has become well-known in Italy in recent times when RAI TV used it as an intermission jingle, the rest

of his work is still relatively unknown. Paradies (some sources say Paradisi) was born in Naples, a most influential musical centre. Neapolitan opera was to have unparalleled influence on composers like Mozart and Rossini. The typical Neapolitan *galante* manner, invented by composers like Domenico Sarro and Nicola Porpora, is further developed in Paradies's music. His elegant style and natural flow of ideas to a certain extent foreshadow some works by Mozart. Besides the beautiful melodies and the intensely lyrical and melancholic flavour of some passages, a particular and very effective use of the sonata form is evident. Paradies's almost monothematic technique avoids the simple use of a contrasting second theme to create dialectic drama; rather he turns up the emotional temperature by harmonizing a thematic structure in a variety of ways, to signal ambivalence and uncertainty. This is particularly evident in the beginning of the second half of the first movement - a theme that seemed to breathe self-confidence and trust changes into a twisted, unbalanced statement, painfully ambushed by a diminished chord coming out of nowhere. Everything we thought we knew as listeners is rejected, and a familiar landscape all of a sudden appears threatening and dark. This is what in rhetorical terms is called *confutatio*; the technique of baroque composition is still present. The composer's playful approach must, in my opinion, trigger the same attitude on the part of the player, establishing a delicate balance between form and freedom, between the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

Girolamo Alessandro Frescobaldi was organist in Rome for most of his life. His historical and music significance is reflected in the numerous handwritten copies of his works which date from throughout the following centuries. Composers of all ages rendered homage to him, mainly for his impeccable contrapuntal style. However, the innovative, powerful genius of this man speaks most clearly to me in another facet of his work - his renowned and astonishing improvisatory style. The two toccatas in this album belong to this category. They are composed in the *stylus phantasticus* (free collage-technique with

strong contrasts) - examples of the *seconda prattica*, full of the *affetti* ('expressions of feelings') promoted by Monteverdi in his vocal work. Thus Frescobaldi, for the first time, assigns to instrumental music the same role as vocal music: even notes without words can bear a meaning, a story to tell, to move, to amaze! This can be done by using the same musical formulas - that is, the same rhetorical devices and ornaments used in vocal music. They include repetitions to emphasize a concept, sudden breaks to create suspense, jumps and sighs, strange harmonies to express pain or wonder... Familiarity with rhetorical principles and Italian vocal ornamentation is a crucial factor in understanding and performing this music. These kind of toccatas are the distillation of the Italian baroque aesthetic: lights, shadows, theatrical gestures that break a mood, harmonic proportions that are distorted into unexpected shapes, rich contrasts. This music is for me like a Caravaggio painting, where religious devotion and celestial beatitudes are expressed with realistic - often even violent - vitality, rather than by means of contemplative meditation. I wonder if these two supreme geniuses of my country ever met in the streets of Rome...

The fingering I have chosen for these toccatas is the one described by Girolamo Diruta in his didactic book *Il Transilvano*, popular in Italy in Frescobaldi's period, and even later, too as shown by treatises and surviving fingered pieces in Italy between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The musical result of this repertoire depends a lot on the use of old fingering. For instance, Diruta uses different fingerings for the left and the right hands depending on the direction of the scales, creating an interesting *inégale* effect with off-beat accents that help delineate individual musical figures.

Using old fingerings was for a long time almost a taboo subject within the keyboard world. Where recorder players would go on forever talking about *te-re, di-dl, le-re, ta-ka* and *ha*, and violin players try to make the difference between bow-strokes as clear as possible, a

harpsichordist using fingerings suggested by some of the greatest composers and players of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries might be met either with silence or contempt. Even stranger is that amongst those who *did* advocate the use of old fingerings some espoused a 'middle way', believing that the articulations that naturally result shouldn't be heard, and that the player should still strive for an equal touch. And yet so many original sources dealing with articulation describe how to make fine patterns of different accents, and couple that to the theory of 'good' and 'bad' notes (*nota cattiva* and *nota buona*). No original source from before 1800 that I ever came across talks about equalization of the notes as a goal. On the other hand every player is entitled to his or her own opinion, and we leave this to the aesthetic outlook of each and every performer. I for my part teach my beginner students of the harpsichord old fingering, which isn't more complicated than any other fingering system - and I firmly believe that the choreography of the fingers helps shape the phrasing.

Johann Sebastian Bach is no stranger to music which almost seems to bleed with emotion. The F minor concerto is a piece full of uneasiness and commotion, another 'romantic' piece if you wish. But it is also a journey, from a complicated first movement with an abundance of strained harmonies and twisted melodies, passing a moment of divine beauty and peace in the second, to a very happy ending in the third movement – or, at least, as happy as you will ever get in F minor!

Bach was known as a first-rate rhetorician by colleagues at universities. Following the schemes laid out by Quintilian in the 1st century AD he managed to give instrumental music an unparalleled structure and organization, the purpose being to convince the listener about the 'absolute truth' of music. By understanding the rhetorical devices it is possible for the player to 'unlock' the piece and find suitable expressions. Starting with the key, F minor, one is reminded of how uncomfortable this is as regards keyboard fingering as well as the intonation of

the strings. Furthermore, repeating the same idea in the eight opening bars is a typical rhetorical tool (*anaphora*) that builds up more and more tension, like an obsessive thought going nowhere. The extensive use of dissonant intervals (*salit duriusculi*) clearly indicates a troubled mind and a distorted voice. Elsewhere, a series of rapid ascending or descending phrases evoke an image of someone turning with anxiety in different directions. Also, long sections with repeated patterns ascending higher and higher create what in rhetoric is called a climax, a peak of tension.

The second movement on the other hand is calm and lyrical, a beautiful melody freely hovering in the air over a steady pizzicato bass - like the human soul singing her song of life and beauty while every thing before was agitation and trouble. The final fugato seems to solve all the emotional struggles, leading them to order through hard intellectual work. However, it doesn't manage to do so completely, leaving open some cracks for the soloist to reveal her anguish. Curiously enough Bach also seems to involve himself in the ancient conflict between reason (*prima pratica*) and emotion (*seconda pratica*). The classics never were far away for an intellectual like Bach.

Jean-Henri d'Anglebert is in one way the quintessence of French music. Before Francois Couperin, he can be considered the composer with whom French works reached their most refined and most elaborate level. I believe that once a player can master his style and technique, the access to later harpsichord French music becomes easier. The three pieces I chose for this album demonstrate some of d'Anglebert's most outstanding qualities. The wonderful harmonic travel of the *prélude non mesuré* unravels itself in different rhetorical gestures and dramatic expressions contained in the chords, and in the melodic elements that now and then peep out. The dreamy Allemande emerges from a rich and elegant ornamentation. In the Courante, the two hands have different roles, where the right hand contains the typical melodic and syncopated rhythm of this dance, whereas

the left hand plays a more fluid accompaniment. The courante will encounter a similar treatment later in the French tradition, for example in Rameau.

In one way **Joseph-Nicolas-Pancrace Royer's Le Vertigo** is typical of the descriptive style of French harpsichord repertoire from this period, with its presentation of a particular aspect of the human soul, or character. I agree with those who believe that the word vertigo in this context doesn't mean really 'dizziness', but I cannot say with absolute confidence if it might mean 'sudden anger' or rather 'whim' (as I believe more probable on the basis of a text by Molière from the same time). In any case, Le Vertigo stands out for the innovative virtuosic technique that it demands: a true parade of dexterity for the player. Nevertheless, the piece displays a refined theatrical drama, where an apparent calm is constantly ruffled by turbulence and explodes periodically in a burst of percussive chords.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My warmest thanks go first of all to Dr David Hansell, internationally renowned radiologist, accomplished recorder player, and most kind and generous sponsor for this recording. May this CD be a humble token of gratitude and friendship for you, David!

I should also like to thank my friend Robin Bigwood for giving me the opportunity to record on his label. Skilled, patient and tolerant producer, wonderful harpsichord player, many-sided talent, Robin has been the most ideal companion in this journey.

Thanks also to the outstanding musicians who have joined me in the two harpsichord concertos: my friends Mats and Henrik from my group Paradiso Musicale, together with Jonas, Josef and Tomas.

Warm thanks go also to Fredrick Österling and Anders Blomqvist at Musikaliska; Andrew Mayes, for finding me of a copy of Leigh's *Concertino*; the staff at T-Light

Design in Hägersten; Masao Kimura for sending his beautiful Guarracino harpsichord from Japan just on time for the recording; Margaretha Willberg at BIS; Jan Åkerblom for many hours of patient and silent filming of the recording sessions; and my parents, Marisa and Nicola Paradiso, for giving a much needed mainland home to our harpsichords.

I want to conclude with a thought of gratitude and love for my husband Dan Laurin. This recording would never have happened without him. His sublime artistry and profound experience in the musical field will never cease to amaze and inspire me! *Non satis est ullo tempore longus amor.*

Anna Paradiso



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in Sweden, at Musikaliska Stockholm and Länna Church

Production, recording & editing: Robin Bigwood
Tuning: Dan Laurin

Booklet photos & design: Robin Bigwood
Anna Paradiso photos: Pelle Piano

INSTRUMENTARIUM

French harpsichord by Francois Paul Ciocca (2008)
after Nicolas and Francois Blanchet (1730)
PARADIES, D SCARLATTI, ROYER, BACH, LEIGH

Neapolitan harpsichord by Masao Kimura (2012)
after Onofrio Guarracino (ca. 1650)
FRESCOBALDI, A SCARLATTI

Flemish harpsichord by Antonio de
Renzis (1987) after Anonymous
(end of the 17th century)
FROBERGER, D'ANGLEBERT

ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS

Jonas Lindgård (leader, Bach)
Josef Cabrales (leader, Leigh)
Henrik Frendin (viola)
Mats Olofsson (cello)
Tomas Gertonsson (bass)

