

VIOLA DA GAMBA Fantasia

John Coperario, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Lupo, Elway Bevin, William White

IL CONCERTO DELLE VIOLE

Roberto Gini (RG) Treble (S) Tenor (T) & Bass Viol (B)

Patxi Montero (PM) Treble (S) Tenor (T) & Bass Viol (B)

Teresa Lion Bass Viol (B)

01 J. Coperario - Fantasia IV of Three Parts TBB (a)	03:44	11 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 2 of Three Parts STB (c)	03:32
02 J. Coperario - Fantasia II of Three Parts STB (b)	02:43	12 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 3 of Three Parts STB (c)	02:50
03 J. Coperario - Fantasia IX of Three Parts TBB (a)	03:28	13 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 4 of Three Parts STB (c)	03:15
04 J. Coperario - Fantasia of Two Parts TB (d) RG-PM	03:09	14 W. White - Fantasia of Two Parts BB (e) RG-PM	03:17
05 J. Coperario - Fantasia X of Three Parts TBB (a)	03:53	15 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 5 of Three Parts STB (c)	02:28
06 J. Coperario - Fantasia VI of Three Parts TBB (b)	04:04	16 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 6 of Three Parts SSB (c)	02:44
07 J. Coperario - Fantasia III of Three Parts STB (b)	02:24	17 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 7 of Three Parts SSB (c)	02:59
08 J. Coperario - Fantasia XI of Three Parts TBB (a)	03:44	18 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 8 of Three Parts SSB (c)	02:41
09 T. Lupo (attr.) - Fantasia of Three Parts BBB (e)	04:17	19 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 9 of Three Parts SSB (c)	02:30
10 O. Gibbons - Fantasia 1 of Three Parts STB (c)	02:40	20 E. Bevin - Browning "The leaves be green" TBB (f)	03:17

SOURCES: (a) Numbering after Koninklycke Fantasien, Amsterdam 1648, (b) Numbering after Ernst H.Meyer VdGS, (c) Numbering after Fantasies of Three Parts composed by Orlando Gibbons, London ca.1620, (d) Cambridge, CKA MSS 112-3, (e) Tenbury, St Michael's College Ta MS 302, (f) London, Royal Music Library MS RM 24.d.2.

Total Time: 63:48

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Panel from the choir formerly in the church of Santa Maria di Brera, now in Brera Museum, Milan

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FANTASIA - "The most principall and chiefest kind of musicke which is made without a dittle is the fantasia, that is, when a musician taketh a point at his pleasure, and wresteth and turneth it as he list, making either much or little of it according as shall seeme best in his own conceit. In this may more art be shovne then in any other musicke, because the composer is tided to nothing but that he may adde, deminish, and alter at his pleasure. And this kind will beare any allowances whatsoever tolerable in other musicke, except changing the ayre & leaving the key, which in fantasia may neuer be suffered. Other things you may use at your pleasure, as bindings with discords, quicke motions, slow motions, proportions, and what you list. Likewise, this kind of musicke is with them who practise instruments of part in greatest use, but for voices it is but sildome used." (Thomas Morley: *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musick*, 1597. The third Part, p.180). Thomas Morley describes the nature of the instrumental Fantasia as well as one possibly can: just a few eloquent words to describe a musical genre whose form lies precisely in the absence of a pre-established form, other than the freedom proper to the art of eloquence. In this freedom from form, the composer's creative fantasy works on evoking a complete narration, leading both players and listeners along surprising and irregular paths. The perfection of counterpoint finds its utmost expression in the Fantasia. Counterpoint is the kingdom of equality: there is no hierarchy among the parts, but each one, in its own context and according to its position in the score, declaims its part *inter pares*. Borrowing from thoughts expressed by Ernst H. Meyer (*English Chamber Music*, 1946), we can say that in the Fantasia, the determining stylistic element of variety is unlimited; no rule or convention seems to prescribe a defined order of all the little sections that make up the Fantasia, which Meyer rightly describes as "a musical kaleidoscope" and "a festival of happy creations". An exhibition of various themes, reconsiderations, inner reflections, subjects insistently affirmed to impress, restful sections of calm, and harmonies both consonant and dissonant. The Fantasia should be understood as a rhetorical construction; a dramatic ensemble which from beginning to end presents a narration which passes through the typical stages of classical rhetoric: *Exordium*, *Narratio* and *Argumentatio* (with *Confirmatio* or *Refutatio*), *Peroratio* with *Epilogue*, *Affect* and *Pathos*. It seems contradictory to say that the Fantasia is a free form if at the same time we recognize a defined rhetorical form within it. And yet it is precisely within this apparent contradiction that the inventive freedom of author-cum-playwright, poet and perfect orator lies, or where self-expression in a Fantasia lies in the ability to evoke without defining (cf Franca Valera), following *Like a Madrigal* (Christopher Simpson), a logical but unforeseeable journey, in constant flux: the variety of themes and contrasts are always surprising, always eloquent and therefore fully persuasive. One adheres with total conviction to an English Fantasia of the first half of the 1600s, to its perfect beauty and wondrous parlance. In Orlando Gibbons' collection of 9 Fantasias (published in London around 1620), five veritable jewels stand out, partly different from the instrumental Fantasia described so far: these are the ones arranged for Two Treble-Viols and Bass-Viol, an unusual ensemble which nevertheless reflects the influence of Italian taste and style which was studied, appreciated and imitated in England. These compositions can be defined 'reimaginings' of the trio-sonatas in vogue in Northern Italy, reworked in a typically English style. Seventy years after Thomas Morley's words, Christopher Simpson picked up the thread adding an important point: the times had changed, England had lived through the years of Civil War, the Commonwealth and the dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell, and at the time of his treatise, England was in the midst of the Restoration of Charles II. The ancient authors, such as Elway Bevin, Giovanni Coperario (born John Cooper), Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Lupo and William White, were dead. The new generation of Matthew Locke, and years later, of Henry Purcell (born in 1659) did not betray the tradition of the instrumental Fantasia in a profoundly changed context in terms of musical taste, in which the aristocratic language of counterpoint seemed neither understood nor appreciated, and a lighter instrumental genre, more rhythmic, vertical, and basically more popular, was preferred: "We must now speak a little more of Musick made for Instruments; in which, Points, Fuges, and all other Figures of Descant are in no less (if not in more) use than in Vocal Musick. Of this kind, the chief and most excellent, for Art and Contrivance, are Fancies, of 6, 5, 4, and 3 parts, intended commonly for Viols.

In this sort of Musick the Composer (being not limited to words) doth employ all his Art and Invention solely about the bringing in and carrying on of these Fuges, according to the Order and Method formerly shewed. When he has tryed all the several ways which he thinks fit to be used therein, he takes some other point, and does the like with it: or else, for variety, introduces some *Chromaticke* Notes, with Bindings and Intermixtures of Discords; or, falls into some lighter Humour like a Madrigal, or what else his own fancy shall lead him to: but still concluding with something which hath Art and excellency in it. Of this sort you may see many Compositions made heretofore in *England* by *Alfonso Ferabosco*, *Coperario*, *Lupo*, *White*, *Ward*, *Mico*, *Dr. Colman*, and many more now deceased. Also by *Mr. Jenkins*, *Mr. Lock*, and divers other excellent men Doctors and Bachelors in Musick yet living. This kind of Musick (the more is the pity) is now much neglected, by reason of the scarcity of Auditors that understand it: their Ears being better acquainted and more delighted with light and airy Musick. [...] You need not seek Outlandish Authors, especially for Instrumental Musick; no Nation (in my opinion) being equal to the *English* in that way; as well for their excellency, as their various and numerous Consorts, of 3, 4, 5, and 6 Parts, made properly for Instruments; of all which (as I said) *Fancies* are the Chief." (Christopher Simpson: *A Compendium of Practical Musick*, 1667. § 14 *Of Musick design'd for Instruments*, p.141). Nonetheless, counterpoint continued to be the very soul of Western music throughout the centuries: from the moment when the manuscript of the *Fantasias* was penned in 1680 by Henry Purcell (soon to appear in the Aulicus Classics catalogue), through J.S. Bach's *Kunst der Fuge* to the great Romantic composers, counterpoint has maintained its position of nobility and wisdom, while constituting the very basis of the education of every composer and mindful interpreter. The *Fantasias* for three viols by Giovanni Coperario (John Cowper) were published posthumously, together with the 9 by Orlando Gibbons, in Amsterdam in 1648 in a collection entitled "XX Konincklycke Fantasien Om op 3 Fiolen de Gamba en ander Speel-tuigh te gebruycken Gestelt door de Kostige Engelse Speel-meesters T.LUPO I.COPRARIO W.DAMAN. En noch IX. FANTASIEN Om met 3 Fioolen de Gamba en ander Speel-tuigh te gebruycken door ORLANDO GIBBONS [...]". The *Fantasias* by Coperario (who died in 1626) were written in the early decades of the 1600s, and first published in 1648, whereas the inclusion of Gibbons' *Fantasias* in the same edition was a reprint of a version published in 1620. The unusual *Fantasia* by Elway Bevin, built on the theme of a popular melody ("Browning" or "The Leaves be Green") on which several English composers have built compositions, and whose text hides an amusing double-entendre: "*The leaves be green, the nuts be brown, they hang so high, they will not come down*". "Browning" is a counterpoint intertwined with the popular melody which passes continuously from one viol to another.

Roberto Gini
(Translation by Amanda Murphy)



From left:
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