



Johann Adam Reincken
COMPLETE HARPSICHORD & ORGAN WORKS

Simone Stella

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Johann Adam Reincken was one of the most important German composers of the 17th century, a friend of Dietrich Buxtehude and a major influence on Johann Sebastian Bach.

This 3-set disc contains another stunning performance by the OnClassical featured talent, Simone Stella. This recording gained the 5-Diapason prize and plenty of nice reviews on some of the major music magazines.

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 Ballett, partite diverse – I. Thema	01:10:67
2 Ballett, partite diverse – II. Variatio 1	01:06:48
3 Ballett, partite diverse – III. Variatio 2	00:47:87
4 Ballett, partite diverse – IV. Variatio 3	01:11:46
5 Ballett, partite diverse – V. Variatio 4	00:49:25
6 Ballett, partite diverse – VI. Variatio 5	00:47:29
7 Ballett, partite diverse – VII. Variatio 6	00:54:60
8 Ballett, partite diverse – VIII. Variatio 7	01:00:89
9 Ballett, partite diverse – IX. Variatio 8	00:52:53
10 Ballett, partite diverse – X. Variatio 9	00:41:10
11 Ballett, partite diverse – XI. Variatio 10	01:24:57
12 Ballett, partite diverse – XII. Variatio 12	01:47:34
13 Suite No. 7 in G major – I. Allemande	03:03:23
14 Suite No. 7 in G major – II. Courante	02:04:17
15 Suite No. 7 in G major – III. Sarabande	02:32:13
16 Suite No. 7 in G major – IV. Gigue	02:31:48
17 Suite No. 5 in E minor – I. Allemande	02:48:24
18 Suite No. 5 in E minor – II. Courante	02:00:87
19 Suite No. 5 in E minor – III. Sarabande	02:24:99
20 Suite No. 5 in E minor – IV. Gigue	01:43:28
21 Toccata in A major	06:17:02
22 Choralfantasie, An Wasserflüssen Babylon	18:01:84

Disc 2

1 Toccata in g minor	05:47:11
2 Suite No. 8 in B-flat major – I. Allemande	02:36:00
3 Suite No. 8 in B-flat major – II. Courante	02:08:06
4 Suite No. 8 in B-flat major – III. Sarabande	01:38:84
5 Suite No. 8 in B-flat major – IV. Gigue	01:34:30
6 Suite No. 6 in F major – I. Allemande	02:40:94
7 Suite No. 6 in F major – II. Courante	01:48:07
8 Suite No. 6 in F major – III. Sarabande	01:39:42
9 Suite No. 6 in F major – IV. Gigue	01:24:72
10 Suite No. 1 in C major – I. Allemande	02:50:97
11 Suite No. 1 in C major – II. Courante	01:44:08
12 Suite No. 1 in C major – III. Sarabande	01:46:11
13 Suite No. 1 in C major – IV. Gigue	01:26:62
14 Fuga in g minor (for organ)	04:27:80
15 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – I. Variatio I	01:29:69
16 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – II. Variatio II	01:23:72
17 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – III. Variatio III	01:16:71
18 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – IV. Variatio IV	01:04:57
19 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – V. Variatio V	01:07:96
20 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – VI. Variatio VI	01:05:87
21 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – VII. Variatio VII	01:11:59
22 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – VIII. Variatio VIII	00:59:02
23 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – IX. Variatio IX	01:04:33
24 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – X. Variatio X	01:26:17

25 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XI. Variatio XI	00:55:56
26 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XII. Variatio XII	01:50:04
27 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XIII. Variatio XIII	01:05:22
28 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XIV. Variatio XIV	01:10:21
29 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XV. Variatio XV	01:19:50
30 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XVI. Variatio XVI	02:18:89
31 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XVII. Variatio XVII	01:59:44
32 Schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen – XVIII. Variatio XVIII	01:00:10

Disc 3

1 Was kann uns kommen an fur Not, Choralfantasie	12:39:48
2 Suite No. 4 in C major – I. Allemande	02:47:97
3 Suite No. 4 in C major – II. Courante	01:44:79
4 Suite No. 4 in C major – III. Sarabande	03:42:88
5 Suite No. 4 in C major – IV. Gigue	02:51:09
6 Hollaendische Nachtigall	02:54:20
7 Hollaendische Nachtigall – Variatio	02:19:21
8 Suite No. 2 in C major – I. Allemande	03:22:59
9 Suite No. 2 in C major – II. Courante	02:19:38
10 Suite No. 2 in C major – III. Sarabande	01:55:01
11 Suite No. 2 in C major – IV. Gigue	02:09:01
12 Suite No. 3 in C major – I. Allemande	02:47:73
13 Suite No. 3 in C major – II. Courante	02:06:25
14 Suite No. 3 in C major – III. Sarabande	03:12:09
15 Suite No. 3 in C major – IV. Gigue	03:18:43
16 Toccata in G major	09:14:00

Johann Adam Reincken Complete Keyboard Works

The life

The information on the exceptional longevity of Johann Adam Reincken, almost a centenarian, reach us by Johann Mattheson, who indicates the 27th of April 1623 as the date of birth. Reincken himself declared (on the title of *Hortus Musicus*) that his birthplace was Deventer, a town in the Netherlands, but no birth certificate was found there in support of the thesis of Mattheson. Reincken was baptized at Deventer on 10 December 1643, this is the date accepted by most scholars, although it appears strange, if the date of birth reported by Mattheson is correct, that Reincken has received baptism when he was 20 years-old.

In Deventer, in 1650, he began his musical apprenticeship with the renowned organist of the Grotekerk (Lebuinuskerk), Lucas van Lenninck, maybe a pupil of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck.

When he was 11 years-old, Reincken went to Hamburg to take organ lessons from the famous Sweelinck's pupil and organist of St. Catharine's Church (*Katharinenkirche*) Heinrich Scheidemann (c. 1595-1663). After three years of study in Hamburg, Reincken returned to Deventer to become organist at the Bergkerk, but shortly thereafter, in 1659, Scheidemann

called upon him to come back to Hamburg and be his substitute at the St. Catharine's Church. After Scheidemann's death (1663), in accordance with tradition, Reincken married his teacher's daughter, Anna Dorothea Scheidemann (with whom he had a daughter, Margaretha-Maria), and took the post of chief organist of his mentor.

The famous portrait of 1674 by the Dutch artist Johannes Voorhout, 'Domestic Music Scene' (preserved today in the Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte), depicts Reincken seated at the harpsichord playing together with Dieterich Buxtehude (at the viol). During his life, Reincken shared his interest in problems of music theory with eminent Hamburg colleagues as Matthias Weckmann and Johann Theile, but it seems to have been particularly close ties between Reincken and Buxtehude (who were probably the highest authorities of the organ at the time) as Voorhout's picture demonstrates containing a canon with an inscription: "*In hon: dit: Buxtehude: et Joh: Adam Reink: fratres*" (in honor of Dieterich Buxtehude and Johann Adam Reincken, brothers).

In 1678, in partnership with Gerhard Schott, a city councillor and a man of considerable wealth, he opened Hamburg's first opera house in the Gaensemarkt (Goose Market), by the River Alster; in this context, however, he had probably only organizational functions, but not musical.

In 1701 a young Johann Sebastian Bach walked the thirty miles from Lüneburg to hear him play. Reincken was then seventy-eight, but he did not hire an assistant until 1703. In 1720, when Bach was trying to find a way out of Cothen, he heard there was an opening at the Jakobikirche in Hamburg and journeyed over there to see what his chances were. On this occasion Bach had the opportunity to play for the old Reincken. He improvised on the chorale "An Wasserflüssen Babylon" (By the Waters of Babylon), which he had heard Reincken use similarly long ago. Reincken, reputedly a pompous, stiff-necked, and suspicious old fellow, was visibly shaken, and remarked that Bach possessed an art he has supposed long dead. The eminent musicologist Christoph Wolff adds as a further detail of this visit by Bach to Hamburg in 1722, that on that occasion he performed the organ fugue BWV 542, the theme of which is based on a Dutch popular tune (called 'Ik ben gegroet van...'), presumably as an homage to Reincken's Dutch origin. At any rate, Bach was evidently deeply impressed by Reincken's music, arranging several of the works from *Hortus musicus* (as BWV 954, 965 and 966). In 2006, the earliest known Bach autograph was discovered in Weimar: a copy of Reincken's *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*, which Bach made for his then teacher Georg Böhm in Lüneburg in 1700.

Reincken died on November 1722, five months short of his hundredth birthday, active to the end. He left numerous pupils, including his son-in-law Andreas Kneller, and perhaps Georg Böhm. On his gravestone, which has survived, there is an inscription chosen by Reincken: "Mortal, soon the time will come for you to rest in your grave; before life is taken from you, serve Him who gave you life."

The keyboard works

Except for the Sonatas contained in the chamber music collection *Hortus Musicus* (Hamburg, 1688), written for strings and continuo, the majority of Reincken's surviving works is conceived for keyboard instruments, especially for the harpsichord: eight suites and three cycles of variations (including the large *Partite diverse sopra l'aria: schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen, altrimente chiamata la Meyerin*) have unequivocally a writing for the stringed keyboard instrument. There are also three toccatas and a fugue in g minor that are playable at the harpsichord or at the organ. Specifically for the organ are the two lengthy chorale fantasias on the chorale melodies "An Wasserflüssen Babylon" and "Was kann uns kommen an für Not"; a print with unknown contents, Reincken's *Galante Orgelstück* (Hamburg, before or around 1704), is unfortunately lost.

Harpsichord or organ?

As already mentioned, the instrument of destination of some Reincken's keyboard compositions is unmistakable. The suites and the variations have a writing that specifically refers to the harpsichord literature of their time. The two chorale fantasias, because of their request of the use of pedalboard, and also for their liturgical base, are unequivocally for the organ. The toccatas and the g minor fugue pose a problem to us: there are no indications that refers to a specific instrument, and their writing is more "neutral", so we could intend to play those compositions equally at the harpsichord or at the organ.

In this recording the tonal range of the pieces has been compared to make a choice. The chorale fantasias seem to be tailored to the Reincken's organ of St. Catharine's Church in Hamburg, because their writing respects the limits of that instrument (short octave in the manuals, F# only in the pedal and a manual range up to a2); the other 'manualiter' works, however, need a keyboard that reaches up to c3, and the toccatas also require chromatic notes below A, therefore we think that those pieces are not conceived for the organ. I have done only an exception for the Fugue in g minor, that I have played though at the organ, not only because it is one of the Reincken's most played works on that instrument, but also because its writing remind us two organ Fugues by Johann Sebastian Bach, the one in D major BWV 532 and the one in g minor BWV 542, on which this Reincken's work has exerted a special influence.

The Suites

As in Dieterich Buxtehude's output, the majority of Reincken's survived harpsichord works consists of suites. The style of these suites is subjected to a French influence: this can be found especially in the clavier suites of north German composers, owing mainly to the composer Johann Jakob Froberger, who helped establish, with his direct experience of the French tradition, the characteristic texture of the keyboard suite and also the standard order of suite's movements in the second half of the 17th century. Matthias Weckmann also contributed to the diffusion of the French style in northern German composers.

The order of movements in Reincken's suites follows the traditional sequence *allemande* (4/4) - *courante* (¾) - *sarabande* (¾) - *gigue* (12/8). The movements often are in variation form. Also the widespread use of the "style brisé" (especially in the *Sarabandes*), which contains many broken chords imitating the lute playing, and the *gigues* developed in fugue-like polyphonic imitations, confirm us the musical connection between Reincken and Buxtehude.

The Variation sets

Using three different type of tunes, the variation sets shows various techniques, accosting virtuosistic fireworks to emotional moments, and give to the performer the chance to widely explore the timbres of the various registers of the harpsichord, for example in some two-voiced variations which seem to be structured to use two different sonorities on the two keyboards of the instrument, to realize a duet-like playing.

The "Holländische Nachtigall" consists of two parts, a theme on the very used subject of the 'nightingale', where the animal's verso is imitated in the upper voice, and one 'variatio' with a running sixteenth-note motion. The "Ballett" is a set of eleven partitas on an Italian dance tune re-elaborated by the composer. The "Partite diverse sopra l'aria: schweiget mir von Weiber nehmen, altrimente chiamata la Meyerin" is a large series of 18 variations on a theme originally composed by Johann Jakob Froberger, where the sweetness of the original melody is elaborated in a rich variety of forms combining all the elements of the virtuosity and the inventiveness of Reincken; in terms of duration, this variations set is second only to the 32 harpsichord Partitas on "La Capricciosa" written by Dieterich Buxtehude.

The Chorale Fantasias

The Chorale Fantasia, a type of large organ composition based on a choral melody, first appeared in the 17th century in the works of North German composers such as Heinrich Scheidemann (who, with sixteen works of this type, must be considered as the leading master of this genre) and Franz Tunder (who, however, rarely used the term). Their works would treat each phrase of a chorale differently, thus becoming large, sectional compositions with elaborate development of the chorale melody.

At 327 measures, "An Wasserflüssen Babylon" is the lengthiest and most important of the surviving chorale fantasias of the North-German school. With its wealth of figures and complex harmonies, its stylistic variety and cleverly planned layout, it offers a genuine compendium of Hamburg's organ art. It's a work rich of virtuoso passages in both hands, double pedals, and "cadenza" passages where one solo part unfolds dazzling figurations over sustained harmonies. The lengthy first section ('Exordium') is an exposition of the fantasia's highly contrasting program. The 'Medium' section is the most extensive part of the work, with great symmetric elaborations and contrasts between the outer and the inner lines of the chorale. The third section ('Finis') contains only two chorale lines, divided into four sections in canonic and recitative-like style.

"Was kann uns kommen an für Not" in G major (222 measures) also belongs to the larger North-German chorale fantasias. This piece is laid out more uniformly than "An Wasserflüssen Babylon", and is dominated by a running sixteenth-note motion.

The other manualiter works

Reincken's toccata style clearly distinguished itself from his organ style, as exemplified in the chorale fantasias, in that the toccatas are written solely for manuals and tailored primarily to the harpsichord. Nevertheless, both with respect to the transmission and to the style of these works, the toccata group lacks uniformity. Only two toccatas (G major and g minor) have actually come down to us with an attribution to Reincken.

The longest is the Toccata in G major, which is transmitted in the "Andreas Bach Book" and had seemed until recently to be the only extant work of Reincken's in this genre. The two fugues integrated into it and constructed on two variants of the same subject follow a model found in Reincken's *Hortus Musicus*.

As for the Toccata in g minor, which closely echoes the Italian style, the emphasis is on the free sections; the contrapuntal passages are to be categorized less as fugues than as fugatos. Although the work is preserved only in a copy dating from the 19th century, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity.

The Toccata in A major has alternately been ascribed to Michelangelo Rossi, Henry Purcell, Robert King and Johann Sebastian Bach; however, after a proper source evaluation, none of these composers can be the father of the work. The eminent scholar Pieter Dirksen has shown in an article that this piece is unquestionably of North-German origin, whereby certain stylistic characteristics strongly suggest Johann Adam Reincken. A connection can also be done mentioning Johann Wolfgang Franck (1644–1710), a composer and conductor who worked in Hamburg during the early days of the Hamburg Opera., when Reincken was one of its directors. In 1690 Franck moved to London, where he worked with Robert King, who also plays an important role in the transmission of this Toccata.

Another Toccata in G major could belong to Reincken. In a lost source, a manuscript miscellany, the piece is listed as being "di Sig.r Frescobaldi". This composition could let us make great reservations about the attribution to Girolamo Frescobaldi, not only because all the pieces in the miscellany are from Middle and Southern German masters such as Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, Johann Pachelbel and Johann Krieger, therefore offering no stylistic points of reference,

but also because this work clearly bears North-German style traits. This Toccata has some characteristics that can be brought into relationship with Reincken; nevertheless its attribution to Reincken could only be made under great reservations, so I have decided to not include it in the present recording.

The manualiter Fugue in g minor, with its violinistic theme, is stylistically related to the toccatas. Especially with the toccatas in G major and A major, this Fugue recalls various elements of some Bach's keyboard works, demonstrating the great influence the old Reincken had on the young genius of Eisenach.

Simone Stella

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Recorded at: Pieve di Sant'Eusebio, Bassano del Grappa, Vicenza, 2012
Engineer: Alessandro Simonetto

Flemish harpsichord made by William Horn after Joannes Ruckers (Antwerp, 1638)
Organ by Francesco Zanin (2006), Church of S. Antonio Abate, University College Don Mazza, Padova (Italy)