

# RESPIGHI

CHURCH WINDOWS

BRAZILIAN IMPRESSIONS

BELKIS, QUEEN OF SHEBA

METAMORPHOSEON

ROMAN TRILOGY



PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

GEOFFREY SIMON

YAN PASCAL TORTELIER

Imago / AKG Images, London



Ottorino Respighi, c. 1935

# Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)

COMPACT DISC ONE

## Vetrate di chiesa, P 150 (1925–26)\*† 26:46

(Church Windows)

Four Symphonic Impressions

- |     |   |      |
|-----|---|------|
| [1] | I La fuga in Egitto (The Flight into Egypt)               | 5:37 |
| [2] | II San Michele arcangelo (St Michael Archangel)           | 5:48 |
| [3] | III Il mattutino di Santa Chiara (The Matins of St Clare) | 5:31 |
| [4] | IV San Gregorio Magno (St Gregory the Great)              | 9:38 |

## Metamorphoseon modi XII, P 169 (1930)\*\* 25:37

Theme and Variations for Orchestra

- |      |                                |      |
|------|--------------------------------|------|
| [5]  | Tema. Andante moderato –       | 1:48 |
| [6]  | Modus I. Moderato non troppo – | 1:53 |
| [7]  | Modus II. Allegretto –         | 1:37 |
| [8]  | Modus III. Lento –             | 2:22 |
| [9]  | Modus IV. Lento espressivo –   | 2:38 |
| [10] | Modus V. Molto vivace –        | 0:36 |
| [11] | Modus VI. Vivo –               | 0:43 |
| [12] | Modus VII. Cadenze –           | 6:38 |
| [13] | Modus VIII. Andantino mosso –  | 1:21 |
| [14] | Modus IX. Lento non troppo –   | 2:18 |

[15]	Modus X. Molto allegro –	0:41
[16]	Modus XI. Molto allegro –	0:51
[17]	Modus XII. Vivo non troppo	2:05
<b>Feste romane, P 157 (1928)§</b>		
[18]	I Circenses –	4:31
[19]	II Il giubileo –	6:36
[20]	III L'ottobrata –	7:41
[21]	IV La befana	5:35
		<b>TT 77:12</b>

COMPACT DISC TWO

<b>Fontane di Roma, P 106 (1915–16)§</b>		
[1]	I La fontana di Valle Giulia all'alba –	4:39
[2]	II La fontana del Tritone al mattino –	2:44
[3]	III La fontana di Trevi al meriggio –	3:38
[4]	IV La fontana di Villa Medici al tramonto	5:38
<b>Pini di Roma, P 141 (1923–24)§</b>		
[5]	I I pini di Villa Borghese –	2:49
[6]	II Pini presso una catacomba –	6:33
[7]	III I pini del Gianicolo –	7:10
[8]	IV I pini della via Appia	5:15

	<b>Belkis, regina di Saba, P 177</b> (1934)*†	22:31
(Belkis, Queen of Sheba)		
Suite for Orchestra from the Complete Ballet, P 171 (1931)		
[9]	I Il sogno di Salomone (The Dream of Solomon)	7:58
[10]	III Danza guerresca (War Dance)	2:51
[11]	II La danza di Belkis all'aurora (The Dance of Belkis at Dawn)	6:19
[12]	IV Danza orgiastica (Orgiastic Dance)	5:13
	<b>Impressioni brasiliiane, P 153</b> (1928)*†	18:46
(Brazilian Impressions)		
Suite for Orchestra		
[13]	I Notte tropicale (Tropical Night)	9:42
[14]	II Butantan (In a snake-garden near São Paulo)	4:50
[15]	III Canzone e danza (Song and Dance)	4:06
		<b>TT 80:14</b>

**Philharmonia Orchestra**  
 Raymond Ovens<sup>†</sup> • Christopher Warren-Green<sup>‡</sup> leaders  
 Leslie Pearson organ<sup>§</sup>  
 Geoffrey Simon<sup>\*</sup>  
 Yan Pascal Tortelier<sup>§</sup>



**Yan Pascal Tortelier**

# Respighi: Orchestral Works

## Vetrare di chiesa, P 150

The musical reputation of Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) rests principally on two celebrated orchestral works, *Fontane di Roma* (Fountains of Rome) and *Pini di Roma* (Pines of Rome). To these can be added *Feste romane* (Roman Festivals), which conclude a 'Roman Trilogy' that has tended to eclipse many of his other, equally deserving compositions. Although the two works discussed here are not completely unknown, they are nevertheless rarely performed, yet contain some of Respighi's most evocative music. And despite their different inspirational origins, they have in common a quality found in much of the music of Respighi: an underlying thread of nostalgia, which in the present case is for the distant Italian past on the one hand, and for a visit to South America on the other.

In 1919, Respighi married one of his former composition students, Elsa Olivieri-Sangiacomo (1894–1996), who had made a special study of Gregorian chant. Within a few weeks of their marriage she had introduced him to the world of plainsong and this provided him for the rest of his life with

a constant source of musical inspiration. The first of his works to bear these ecclesiastical influences was composed at Capri in the summer of that year and entitled *Tre preludi sopra melodie gregoriane*, P 131 (Three Preludes on Gregorian Melodies). Elsa later wrote that Respighi's aim in writing music inspired by Gregorian Chorales was

to recast those magnificent melodies in  
a new language of sounds and free them  
from the rigidly formal Catholic Liturgy of  
the Roman Gradual.

These Preludes, for piano, were published in 1922, and three years later Respighi decided to orchestrate them, adding a further piece so as to make a four-movement symphonic suite. The Respighis had a close friend named Claudio Guastalla (1880–1948), a professor of literature, who listened to the four pieces as the composer played through them whilst they tried to come up with a suitable title for this new orchestral composition. Respighi's first suggestion was *Portali di tempio* (Entrances to a Temple) – an idea which seemed 'too colourless' to Guastalla, who proposed instead *Vetrare di chiesa* (Church Windows). This overall title

was immediately adopted, and it remained only to provide suitable sub-titles for the individual movements, illustrating them with fanciful texts appropriate to those biblical or religious scenes which might have appeared on actual stained glass windows.

The slow and stately first movement, with its constantly forward-moving accompaniment, suggested to Guastalla 'the passing of a chariot beneath a brilliant, starry sky'. What better, he said, than to call it 'La fuga in Egitto' (The Flight into Egypt), and enlarging on a verse in St Matthew's Gospel, he concocted an 'anonymous' attribution to be inserted in the score:

...the little caravan proceeded through  
the desert in the starry night, carrying the  
Treasure of the world.

Written in 5 / 4 time and composed in the quasi-oriental Phrygian mode, this is the most overtly 'romantic' of the four scenes, both in its conception and in the heady quality of its orchestration.

The original Preludes are by no means easy for the keyboard soloist to play, and in transcribing the second of them Respighi particularly requires the utmost orchestral virtuosity. To Guastalla, this tumultuous music suggested 'a clash of weapons - a battle in the skies' and so the title 'San Michele arcangelo' (Saint Michael

Archangel) was given, taken this time from the Revelation of St John the Divine (but misattributed in the score to St Matthew):

And a great battle was made in the  
Heavens: Michael and his Angels fought  
with the dragon, and fought the dragon  
and his angels. But these did not prevail,  
and there was no more place for them in  
Heaven.

The main theme is announced *Allegro impetuoso* in the orchestral bass to a fearful, upward-rushing accompaniment, and is followed by a second subject introduced on the horns and taken over by arpeggiated strings. A restatement of the opening theme subsides into a tranquil section in which the principal melody is played at half tempo by an off-stage trumpet. After a shortened reprise of the second subject, Satan's banishment from heaven is spectacularly realised by a *fff* crash on the largest available tam-tam.

The third 'church window' was to prove more difficult than the others to interpret with a sub-text, as Guastalla felt that something essentially 'mystical, pure, and convent-like' was needed:

That little silver bell made me think of  
nuns in holy orders flocking like swallows  
to a birdcall.

After he and Respighi had racked their brains trying to think of a suitably chaste saint,

the idea finally came to them: the episode recounted in the thirty-fourth chapter of the *Fioretti di San Francesco* (Little Flowers of St Francis), which told how the ailing and disconsolate St Clare, founder of the Franciscan Order of Nuns, was

miraculously borne by the angels from her sickbed to the Church of St Francis, in order to be present at the entire Holy Service of Matins.

This piece, 'Il mattutino di Santa Chiara' (The Matins of St Clare), finds Respighi's musical talents at their most sensitive for, as one Italian critic noted,

it is full of intimate, meditative poetry,  
a translucent recollection of Gregorian  
melody, redolent of the cloister.

The scoring here is supremely delicate, Respighi providing a perfectly refined balance of sonorities between winds and harp, bells and celesta.

For the final piece, 'San Gregorio Magno' (St Gregory the Great), a kind of Papal Coronation in sound, Respighi wrote a massive *fantasia* on the Gloria from the Mass of the Angels. After a solemn introduction depicting the tolling of bells, the Gregorian chorale is first intoned on distant, muted horns. The music rises to a great climax whereupon the main theme is suddenly reintroduced in an imposing organ solo. After

a brief reference to some of the opening material, the brass take up the Gloria motif and bring the whole work to a conclusion of the utmost splendour. Such grandeur and solemnity, Guastalla proclaimed, should depict St Gregory, the great sixth-century reformer of Roman Catholic church music, and the score duly carries the superscription:

Ecce Pontifex Maximus!... Bless the Lord...  
Sing the Hymn to God. Alleluia!

Whilst the Roman trilogy had consisted of compositions specifically inspired by the sights and sounds of the Eternal City, each with four linked and indivisible sections, this new orchestral work of Respighi's featured separate and purely abstract pieces, each with its own construction. Guastalla described as 'shallow' those who simply bracketed *Vetrare di chiesa* with the Roman tone poems and failed to notice the substantial poetic differences. And in view of the fact that the various titles were added after the music was written, it remains to be noted with some amusement the statements of those commentators who would have us believe that

the work was inspired by religious events  
depicted in stained glass windows in  
various churches in Italy.

Nothing, as we have seen, could have been further from the truth!

### **Impressioni brasiliene, P 153**

The score of *Vetrare di chiesa*, completed in 1926, was first performed in 1927, and in May of that year the Respighis made their first recital tour of Brazil, which concluded with concerts in Rio de Janeiro where the composer had to work hard with an orchestra not used to playing symphonic music. Nevertheless, such was his success that Respighi was invited to return the following year, and as he had taken a great interest in the folk music of the country, he promised to bring a specially composed five-movement Brazilian Suite. The European concert season of 1927/28 took Respighi on a hectic tour which left him little time to fulfil his promise and he managed to produce only three movements. He did so, however, with considerable good humour and was later to say that he had written the music 'for fun and relaxation'.

Back in Rio in June, he gave the *Impressioni brasiliene* (Brazilian Impressions) its first performance and had just as much difficulty with the orchestra as on his first trip. The opening movement is an extended and deeply atmospheric 'nocturne', 'Notte tropicale' (Tropical Night), with half-lit recollections of dance rhythms and folksongs heard in the distance on a warm, tropical Brazilian evening, made especially picturesque by the exotic charm of Respighi's scoring.

The second piece, 'Butantan', recalls a visit which the Respighis made to the Butantan Reptile Institute just outside São Paulo, where thousands of snakes of every variety are collected for the production of serum. This 'Snake Farm' was founded at the turn of the century and has long been a tourist attraction (the snakes are milked for the benefit of interested onlookers at various times between 10 am and 4 pm, except Monday mornings), whilst a notice reads:

To Throw Stones at the Serpents is an Indication of Bad Character.

Here the reptiles – poisonous and otherwise – co-exist in their enclosures by sliding over one another in the grass, wriggling in the water, or simply dozing in the trees. Respighi's music graphically depicts these treacherous creatures with woodwinds which squeak and crawl up and down the stave (the score is actually marked *strisciante* – meaning 'slitheringly') and as an added effect the angry whirring of the rattlesnakes is reproduced by a tambourine played with side drum sticks. The macabre quotation of the Dies Irae from the Mass for the Dead shows just how traumatic an experience Respighi's visit to Butantan really was.

It is with some relief that Respighi turns away from the horrors of the snake-pit and reverts in the third section, 'Canzone e danza'

(Song and Dance), to the songs and dances of Brazil. Here is a recollection of Carnival time, or a visit to some nightclub in which the clientele are dancing the 'samba'. A present-day guidebook warns unwary visitors to São Paulo to

have a good look round before sitting down in one of the many nightspots as they are interspersed with gay bars and transvestite shows

– though whether Respighi was bothered by such things we do not know. However, the throw-away ending of the 'Canzone e danza' is so deliciously final that one instinctively feels it could hardly have been followed with two further movements. As it stands, then, the *Impression brasiliene* is a delightful and colourful souvenir of a trip to South America, which – rattlesnakes apart – seems to have been a highly enjoyable one.

© Edward Johnson

#### Suite from 'Belkis, regina di Saba', P 177

Respighi is justly famous as the most successful Italian composer of his time for music of poetic and visual inspiration, which, as John Waterhouse notes in his *New Grove* article on the composer, is 'preoccupied with vivid orchestral colours'. However, as Dr Waterhouse goes on to point out, 'one

should not ignore the series of large and unexpectedly sober abstract works' of Respighi's later years, which show a much more serious style. Both categories of music are represented here: a spectacular Suite from a brilliantly scored ballet is coupled with a virtuoso set of Orchestral Variations which are without pictorial or literary influences and therefore 'pure music'. These are two works among many of Respighi's compositions that reveal an unsuspected range and quality but which have been totally obscured by the success of his Roman trilogy. Their neglect is inexplicable both in the concert hall and on record, where they now appear for the first time.

In 1931, Respighi began composing the music for one of his most ambitious stage works: the full-scale epic ballet *Belkis, regina di Saba* (Belkis, Queen of Sheba), which was to be mounted by Teatro alla Scala, Milan the following season. The exoticism of the biblical legend of Solomon and Sheba had long held a special fascination for him and he drew on two elements in telling the story in his music: the Hebraic, in which he studied and emulated the melodic characteristics of ancient Hebrew songs; and the Arabic, in which he stressed oriental rhythms with a vast assortment of native percussion instruments.

The ballet evoked the wondrous journey undertaken in the year 1000 B.C. by Belkis, the Queen of Sheba, in response to an imperial message from Solomon, the King of Israel. The birds and the winds have told him that he is loved from afar by this beautiful young Queen of the South, so he sends for her to come to his throne that he may render her great honour and homage. Belkis travels across the desert in a huge treasure-laden caravan with warriors and slaves, elephants and camels, and her union with Solomon is celebrated by tumultuous rejoicing.

The full eighty-minute ballet required an enormous orchestra, including such unconventional instruments as sitars and wind machines, a phalanx of off-stage brass, a chorus, several vocal soloists, and a narrator who related the legendary story in verse. Respighi's wife, Elsa, attended the rehearsals and wrote that

the score is dazzlingly rich and contains many new and beautiful ideas.

His literary collaborator, Claudio Guastalla, supplied the scenario by using an opera libretto on the subject, which he had once fashioned from holy writ. The noted Russian choreographer Léonide Massine arranged tableaux and dances of immense variety; for the part of Belkis he engaged an excellent Persian ballerina, Leila Bederkhan, whilst

giving the part of Solomon to David Lichine, one of the finest young dancers of his generation. For the décor, Nicola Benois produced a stunning array of opulent backcloths and grandiose sets, as well as the designs for more than 600 costumes, and a sumptuously decorative entertainment was thus devised.

The ballet was premiered with tremendous success on 23 January 1932 and received high praise not only in the Italian press but also abroad. In *The New York Times*, Raymond Hall wrote:

Respighi has achieved a technical *tour-de-force*: he strove mainly for colour and spectacle and has achieved his goal brilliantly, immersing his score in vivid oriental atmosphere from beginning to end. As a lavish spectacle, *Belkis, regina di Saba* represents one of the milestone achievements of this house.

Two years later, Respighi extracted the purely Orchestral Suite recorded here. The order of movements in the published Suite mainly follows the action of the ballet, but the present performance interchanges the two middle movements so as to heighten the overall musical and dramatic contrast. The first movement is entitled 'Il sogno di Salomone' (The Dream of Solomon) and comes from the opening scene in the torch-lit

harem of Solomon in Jerusalem. The brief brooding prelude, depicting his solitude as he gazes at a bright starry sky, is followed by a solemn march episode:

The beautiful King enters, his bearing religious and majestic, lost in profound thoughts.

After an expressive cello solo, unison strings break in with passionate love music from the scene, later in the ballet, portraying the actual meeting between Belkis and Solomon:

And when, raising her eyes, she recognises that wise and mighty and beautiful King whose call of love she has heard from the ends of the earth, the young virgin, overcome by emotion, falls at his feet like a little dead dove.

The 'Danza guerresca' (War Dance) which follows takes music from two different scenes in the ballet. The opening is a raunchy 'Dance on the Drums' which occurs during the final scene of celebration:

Bronzed and near-naked young athletes run on, rolling enormous drums onto which they jump and dance, thundering out the rhythm with frantic feet.

This section calls for 'large and small War Drums' and it leads straight into an *Allegro impetuoso* in which Solomon's negro warriors, by way of salutation on the Queen of Sheba's arrival in Jerusalem,

utter savage war cries whilst brandishing long lances and dancing their fantastic dance.

The next movement features the languid, irregular rhythm of an Arab Drum and is entitled 'La danza di Belkis all'aurora' (The Dance of Belkis at Dawn). It contains some of Respighi's most sensual music and is an erotic picture of the first appearance of the Queen of Sheba in the ballet. She is seen at daybreak on a ruby-studded divan of green malachite, watched over by four black slaves, in the luxuriant hanging gardens of Kitor. In the distance are the towers of the royal palace and further off is the Red Sea, coloured purple by the sunrise.

Beautiful as the olive in the field and languishing for love of Solomon, Belkis sleeps her pure sleep. She awakens and, raising her hands to salute the light of the world, dances barefoot in honour of the newly risen sun.

The last movement of the Suite constitutes the ballet's finale - 'Danza orgiastica', an 'Orgiastic Dance' marking the union of Solomon and Sheba. Raymond Hall wrote:

The final orgy of the thousand-odd people on the stage at La Scala works up into a deafening tumult of sound and a paroxysm of rhythm that finds a par only in the Dionysian climaxes of the *Sacre*

*du printemps*. Respighi has pounded out this uproar with an insistence little short of sardonic fury... At the Scala première it brought the audience to its feet in a frenzy of excitement that burst into an interminable ovation.

The setting is Solomon's marvellous palace garden of cedars and palm trees, in which a great feast of rejoicing is prepared:

A mighty horde of young men and girls, warriors and slaves of every race and colour, rises up in an orgiastic dance, letting loose a mighty clamour of laughter and greetings. And then, at the peak of the furore, two high thrones gradually become visible in the distance, and seated majestically upon them are King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba – motionless as idols of gold.

#### **Metamorphoseon modi XII, P 169**

The other work discussed here is *Metamorphoseon modi XII* – 'Tema e Variazioni per Orchestra' – a forbidding title which disguises music of real beauty, yet which completely excludes the 'picturesque' element so often found in Respighi's work. There is, in short, not a pine tree or a fountain in sight!

The piece was one of several which were commissioned from an international range

of composers by Serge Koussevitzky to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930. During the celebrations, Koussevitzky also gave the premières of Stravinsky's *Symphonie de psaumes*, Hindemith's *Konzertmusik* for Strings and Brass, Honegger's Symphony No. 1, Roussel's Symphony No. 3, Prokofiev's Symphony No. 4, and several American works, including Howard Hanson's *Romantic Symphony*.

Respighi was no stranger to Boston audiences: he had already conducted the orchestra in 1927 and was often championed by Koussevitzky himself, who had premiered *Vetrare di chiesa* that same year and duly introduced *Metamorphoseon* on 7 November 1930. The following day, the Boston *Traveler* wrote:

Respighi's *Theme and Variations* emerged as a colossal achievement... His is a rare genius for melody, an absolute technical command and above all, brilliant orchestration. Altogether the new work is a masterly composition.

At first sight, it would appear that Respighi has written another of his works in ecclesiastical style, as each of the twelve variations is numbered as though in reference to a mediaeval mode. But in fact he uses the word 'mode' in its meaning of a

'manner' or 'way' of transforming a theme, and although the music does have a quasi-modal character, it is actually rooted pretty firmly in B flat minor. And in writing a work especially for one of the world's greatest ensembles, Respighi particularly sought to exploit the virtuosity of each soloist or instrumental group, so that the result became a brilliant 'concerto for orchestra' in the format of a theme and variations.

Interestingly, although Respighi uses a basic ABA pattern for the variations – so that calm outer sections flank briefer outbursts of stormier music throughout – he does in fact employ two major themes, not one. The first *Tema* is sonorously stated at the outset by the full string orchestra. A counter-melody on the clarinet provides material which will be heard again in various guises throughout the work. The *Poco più mosso* middle section features a rising 'motto' in the lower registers of the orchestra, which forms the basis of the more dramatic central episodes in the succeeding variations.

*Modus I:* Undulating strings introduce the second of the work's two major themes, heard first in the woodwinds and later – after the contrasting middle section – in the unusual combination of solo cello and first violins in unison. *Modus II:* A solo viola, in duet with the cor anglais, plays a variant of

the first theme, the overall musical character lightened by tripping woodwind and *pizzicato* accompaniments. *Modus III:* This oboe-led variation (also based on the first theme) is a fervent lament with tragic rising and falling configurations in the lower strings.

*Modus IV:* Respighi reverts to his second major theme for a variation which provides a superb example of the kind of sonority which this master orchestrator could conjure from instrumental forces. This section – marked *Con grande espressione* – occupies the same position in *Metamorphoseon* as 'Nimrod' does in Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, except that Elgarian nobility is here replaced by music of impassioned tragedy, which reaches a brass-laden climax before dying away to a series of fateful crashes on the tam-tam.

The same secondary theme is heard in the two scherzo variations which follow, in which the metre constantly changes back and forth between triple to duple time. *Modus V:* The clarinet has a brilliant solo to an accompaniment brightened by glockenspiel and piccolo. *Modus VI:* The whole orchestra is put through its paces in a display-piece variation in which the theme appears in the bass line.

*Modus VII:* This extraordinary section particularly caught the audience's ears at the première as it consists entirely of

accompanied cadenzas. The featured solo instruments – several of which make more than one appearance – are harp, cello, violin, viola, horn, bassoon, flute, clarinet, oboe, and bass-clarinet.

*Modus VIII*: Respighi brings back his principal opening theme for a delightful serenade in the style of an intermezzo with a quirky Prokofiev-like key change from A to B major, and, like the other variations, a more intense central episode. *Modus IX*: High muted *pianissimo* strings usher in the first major theme whilst a few bars of the second are heard in counterpoint on the harp. After several windswept moments, the tranquillity of the opening reasserts itself, and descending chords lead straight into the exuberant finale.

This consists of the last three variations, linked together without pause, all based on Respighi's first theme. *Modus X*: The music launches into a short yet confident five-in-a-bar section with deft interplay between winds and *pizzicato* strings. *Modus XI*: The entry of the horns, upward-rushing scales on the violins, and a time change to 4/4, signal the onset of the penultimate variation, the virtuosity of the writing adding to the headlong excitement of the music. *Modus XII*: A change of tempo heralds the brilliant coda in which Respighi transforms his principal theme into

a resplendent brass chorale, complete with organ accompaniment, bringing the whole work to a jubilant conclusion in B flat major.

© Edward Johnson

### Roman trilogy

There is a certain irony in the fact that the best-known works by Ottorino Respighi (excepting his arrangements of music by other composers) should have linked his name so indissolubly to Rome. Like most people with more than a cursory knowledge of the Eternal City, he did eventually fall under its spell, but it was a slow and often uncomfortable process. When he arrived in the capital from his native Bologna in 1913 (to take up his appointment as Professor of Composition at the Liceo di Santa Cecilia), he felt intimidated rather than inspired by its grandeur and the awesome presence of its past. He found his earliest solace in the beauty and timeless serenity of Rome's many fountains ('the very voice of this city', he later wrote), and before the year was out he had conceived the idea of enshrining them in a symphonic poem.

### *Fontane di Roma*

Whatever the joy of its conception, however, the gestation of *Fontane di Roma* (Fountains

of Rome) was slow and arduous. It was not until three years later, in 1917, that the piece was unveiled – not, as originally planned, by Arturo Toscanini but by a relatively obscure conductor, one Antonio Guarneri (1880–1952). Nor was the occasion all that Respighi might have wished. The press damned the work with faint praise (predictably, the orchestration was admired) and the audience treated the composer to a chorus of boos, hisses, and catcalls. How much of this was attributable to the ‘efforts’ of Signor Guarneri is difficult to say, but when at last Toscanini did conduct the work, on 11 March 1918, it scored a resounding success, and from that day to this it has enjoyed a popularity accorded to few twentieth-century scores.

Although played without a break, the piece falls into four distinct sections, each depicting a particular fountain at a particular time of day. The first, inspired by the Giulia Valley fountain at daybreak, paints a pastoral landscape in which the composer imagines droves of cattle ‘disappearing into the fresh damp mists of a Roman dawn’. With the sun fully risen we pass on to a vision of ‘The Triton Fountain in the Morning’, in which a raucous blast from the horns calls up a procession of naiads and tritons. As the sun approaches its full height we advance to the fountain of Trevi where,

to the pealing of trumpets across the radiant surface of the water, there passes Neptune’s chariot, drawn by seahorses and followed by a train of sirens and tritons. The procession then vanishes, while faint trumpet blasts resound in the distance.

The hours of dusk now approach, and to the sounds of the fountain at the Villa Medici are added the tolling of evening bells, the twittering of birds, and the rustle of wind in the leaves of the trees. As the piece draws to an end, so does the day and we are left with the illusory silence of the night.

#### Pini di Roma

Some seven years were to pass before Respighi returned symphonically to Rome, and when he did, in 1923–24, now celebrating the city’s famous pines, he lavished on it all the instrumental colour of which he was so consummate a master. He called on a vast orchestra, including a large percussion section, harp, celesta, piano, organ, six flugelhorns (standing in for the trumpets of an ancient Roman army) – and a gramophone, disgorging the song of a nightingale. At the first performance of this new symphonic poem there was an unwelcome reminder of the reception accorded its predecessor on its premiere. But the boos and hisses provoked by the work’s opening section quickly subsided

with the sudden hush of the second, and at the end of the performance the final bars were drowned by a spontaneous explosion of applause which banished all thoughts of earlier disturbances.

As in the case of its elder sibling, each of the four sections of *Pini di Roma* (Pines of Rome) evokes a different venue. In the first, children play at being soldiers in the pine groves of the Villa Borghese, while the second transports us to the coniferous shade of the entrance of an ancient catacomb, from the depths of which comes the sound of mournful psalm singing. With the third, night falls, and in the moonlight piercing the shadows of the pines of the Janiculum, our gramophonic nightingale takes wing. As the day dawns, we find ourselves beneath the pines of the Appian Way, where the composer experiences

a fantastic vision of bygone glories: trumpets sound, and in the brilliance of a newly risen sun, a consular army bursts forth towards the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph to the Capitol.

#### Feste romane

Respighi supplied the final chapter of his Roman trilogy some four years later, in 1928. *Feste romane* (Roman Festivals) proved to be the last and most lavish of his large-scale symphonic canvasses and appears

to have exhausted his preoccupation with cinemascopic spectacles. With this work the Cecil B. De Mille of music hung up his spurs (or sandals?) and turned to the contemplation of smaller forms and forces. It follows the same pattern as its predecessors and its orchestral extravagance has raised more than a few pious eyebrows. To another large percussion section, it adds a harp, a piano (this time manned by two players), an organ – and the humble if indelicate mandolin. In fulfilling his intention

to summon up visions and evocations of Roman festivals by means of the maximum orchestral sonority and colour,

the composer leaves so little to the imagination that further verbal elucidation would seem to be superfluous. Suffice it to say that the titles of the four sections are 'Circenses' (Circuses), 'Il giubileo' (The Jubilee), 'L'ottobrata' (The October Festival), and 'La befana' (The Epiphany). Goblets at the ready? All right then.

© Jeremy Siepmann

Renowned throughout the world thanks to its tours and extraordinary recording legacy, the **Philharmonia Orchestra** is the UK's foremost musical pioneer, leading the field for the quality of its playing and for its innovative approach to audience development,

residencies, music education, and global outreach. Under Esa-Pekka Salonen, its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, and collaborating with the world's most sought-after artists, the Orchestra has secured a place at the heart of British musical life. Committed to presenting the same quality live music making in venues throughout the country as it brings to London and the great concert halls of the world, it has the greatest claim of any orchestra to be the UK's National Orchestra. In 1995 it launched a much admired UK and International Residency Programme and during the 2012/13 season not only performs more than thirty-five concerts at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, but also celebrates its sixteenth year as Resident Orchestra of De Montfort Hall in Leicester and its twelfth year as Orchestra in Partnership at The Anvil in Basingstoke; it also enters the second year of its residencies at the new Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury and the Three Choirs Festival. Under Salonen, the Philharmonia Orchestra gave a Beethoven Cycle at the Bonn Beethovenfest in October 2012, undertook a tour of the US in November, which featured a residency at Berkeley, California and performances at Disney Hall, Los Angeles and Lincoln Center, New York, and in February 2013 toured Japan. [www.philharmonia.co.uk](http://www.philharmonia.co.uk)

A student of Herbert von Karajan, Rudolf Kempe, Hans Swarowsky, and Igor Markevitch, and a major prize winner at the first John Player International Conductors' Competition, the Australian **Geoffrey Simon** is resident in London where he has conducted the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, London Chamber, and English Chamber orchestras. Internationally, he has appeared with orchestras throughout Western Europe, North America, and Australia, as well as in Israel, Russia, China, and Japan, *Die Presse* in Vienna describing him as 'a born conductor, whose every gesture expresses music'. He has served as Music Director of the Albany Symphony Orchestra in New York, Australian Sinfonia in London, Bloomington Symphony Orchestra in Indiana, Orquesta Simfònica de les Illes Balears 'Ciutat de Palma' in Mallorca, and Sacramento Symphony Orchestra in California, and is Music Director Emeritus of the Northwest Mahler Orchestra in Seattle. His virtuoso twenty-cello ensemble The London Cello Sound has performed live for H.M. The Queen and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh and will tour Switzerland and South Korea in mid-2013. He represents Arts Global, a Foundation for Emerging Artists, based in London, Montreux, and New York, as Consultant for Classical Special Projects, and

is a jury member for Young Concert Artists, the Concert Artists Guild, and Australian Music Foundation. Geoffrey Simon has made forty-five recordings for a number of labels, including twelve for Chandos Records, and in 1990 founded his own label, Cala Records, which has attracted interest among instrumentalists worldwide.

**Yan Pascal Tortelier** enjoys a distinguished career as a guest conductor of prestigious orchestras throughout Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia. Having begun his musical career as a violinist and pursued general musical studies with Nadia Boulanger, he studied conducting with Franco Ferrara. From 1974 to 1983 he was Associate Conductor of the Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse. Subsequent positions have included Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Ulster Orchestra (1989–92), Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic (1992–2003), Principal Guest Conductor of the Pittsburgh

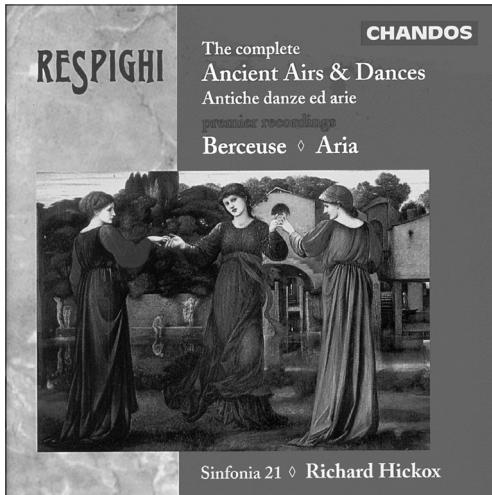
Symphony Orchestra (2005–08), and Principal Conductor of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (2009–11). He is also Principal Guest Conductor at the Royal Academy of Music in London. His long association with Chandos Records has resulted in an extensive catalogue of recordings, notably with the Ulster Orchestra and BBC Philharmonic, which includes award-winning cycles of orchestral works by Debussy, Ravel (featuring his own orchestration of Ravel's Piano Trio), Franck, Roussel, and Dutilleux. He has also conducted critically acclaimed recordings of repertoire by composers ranging from Hindemith and Kodály to Lutosławski and Karłowicz. Most recently Yan Pascal Tortelier has recorded Ravel's Piano Concertos coupled with Debussy's *Fantaisie* with the pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and a disc of works by Florent Schmitt with the soprano Susan Bullock and the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra and Choir.

Jonathan Rose



**Geoffrey Simon**

Also available



**Respighi**  
Ancient Airs and Dances • Berceuse • Aria  
CHAN 9415

Also available



**Respighi**  
La Boutique fantasque • La pentola magica • Prelude and Fugue  
CHAN 10081

Also available



Respighi  
Preludio, corale e fuga • Burlesca • Rossiniana • Five Études-tableaux  
CHAN 10388

Also available



Violin Sonatas  
Strauss | Respighi

Tasmin Little violin  
Piers Lane piano

Strauss • Respighi  
Violin Sonatas  
CHAN 10749

You can now purchase Chandos CDs or download MP3s online at our website: [www.chandos.net](http://www.chandos.net)

For requests to license tracks from this CD or any other Chandos discs please find application forms on the Chandos website or contact the Finance Director, Chandos Records Ltd, direct at the address below or via e-mail at [srevill@chandos.net](mailto:srevill@chandos.net).

Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, UK.  
E-mail: [enquiries@chandos.net](mailto:enquiries@chandos.net) Telephone: + 44 (0)1206 225 200 Fax: + 44 (0)1206 225 201



[www.facebook.com/chandosrecords](http://www.facebook.com/chandosrecords)



[www.twitter.com/chandosrecords](http://www.twitter.com/chandosrecords)

Steinway Model D concert grand piano provided and maintained by Steinway & Sons, London  
(Roman trilogy)

**Recording producer** Brian Couzens

**Sound engineer** Ralph Couzens

**Assistant engineers** Bill Todd (*Vetrare di chiesa, Impressioni brasiliane*), Philip Couzens  
(*Metamorphoseon modi XII*, Suite from *Belkis, regina di Saba*), and Ben Connellan (Roman trilogy)

**Editors** Brian Couzens (*Vetrare di chiesa, Impressioni brasiliane*), Ralph Couzens

(*Metamorphoseon modi XII*, Suite from *Belkis, regina di Saba*), and Ben Connellan (Roman trilogy)

**Mastering** Jonathan Cooper

**Recording venue** All Saints' Church, Tooting, London; 17 and 18 January 1984 (*Vetrare di chiesa, Impressioni brasiliane*), 21 and 22 January 1985 (*Metamorphoseon modi XII*, Suite from *Belkis, regina di Saba*), & 15 and 16 April 1991 (Roman trilogy)

**Front cover** Stained glass window (c. 1287–88), Siena Cathedral, designed by Duccio di Buoninsegna (c. 1255 / 60 – c. 1318 / 19) and Cimabue (Benvenuto di Giuseppe, c. 1240 – 1302), showing the death, assumption, and coronation of the Virgin, photograph © Peter Zelei/iStockphoto

**Back cover** Photograph of Geoffrey Simon by Jonathan Rose

**Design and typesetting** Cassidy Rayne Creative ([www.cassidyrayne.co.uk](http://www.cassidyrayne.co.uk))

**Booklet editor** Finn S. Gundersen

**Publishers** G. Ricordi SpA (Roman trilogy)

© 1984, 1985, and 1991 Chandos Records Ltd

This compilation © 2013 Chandos Records Ltd

Digital remastering © 2013 Chandos Records Ltd

© 2013 Chandos Records Ltd

Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England

Country of origin UK

# OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879–1936)

## COMPACT DISC ONE

- |          |  |       |
|----------|--|-------|
| [1]-[4]  | VETRATE DI CHIESA, P 150 (1925–26)*†<br>(CHURCH WINDOWS) | 26:46 |
| [5]-[7]  | METAMORFOSEON MODI XII, P 169 (1930)*‡                   | 25:37 |
| [8]-[10] | FESTE ROMANE, P 157 (1928)§                              | 24:24 |

TT 77:12

© 1984, 1985, and 1991 Chandos Records Ltd

This compilation © 2013 Chandos Records Ltd

Digital remastering © 2013 Chandos Records Ltd

© 2013 Chandos Records Ltd  
Chandos Records Ltd  
Colchester • Essex • England

## COMPACT DISC TWO

- |           |   |       |
|-----------|---|-------|
| [1]-[4]   | FONTANE DI ROMA, P 106 (1915–16)§                                   | 16:40 |
| [5]-[8]   | PINI DI ROMA, P 141 (1923–24)§                                      | 21:48 |
| [9]-[12]  | BELKIS, REGINA DI SABA, P 177 (1934) *‡<br>(BELKIS, QUEEN OF SHEBA) | 22:31 |
| [13]-[15] | IMPRESSIONI BRASILIANE, P 153 (1928)*†<br>(BRAZILIAN IMPRESSIONS)   | 18:46 |

TT 80:14

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

RAYMOND OVENST† • CHRISTOPHER WARREN-GREEN‡ LEADERS  
LESLIE PEARSON ORGAN §

GEOFFREY SIMON\*

YAN PASCAL TORTELIER§



## OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879 – 1936)

## COMPACT DISC ONE

- |         |  |       |
|---------|--|-------|
| 1 - 4   | VETRATE DI CHIESA, P 150 (1925 – 26)*†<br>(CHURCH WINDOWS) | 26:17 |
| 5 - 12  | METAMORFOSEON MODI XII, P 169 (1930)*‡                     | 25:36 |
| 13 - 21 | FESTE ROMANE, P 157 (1928)§                                | 24:20 |

TT 76:13

## COMPACT DISC TWO

- |         |  |       |
|---------|--|-------|
| 1 - 4   | FONTANE DI ROMA, P 106 (1915 – 16)§                                | 16:38 |
| 5 - 8   | PINI DI ROMA, P 141 (1923 – 24) §                                  | 21:46 |
| 9 - 12  | BELKIS, REGINA DI SABA, P 177 (1934)*‡<br>(BELKIS, QUEEN OF SHEBA) | 22:30 |
| 13 - 15 | IMPRESSIONI BRASILIANE, P 153 (1928)*†<br>(BRAZILIAN IMPRESSIONS)  | 18:30 |

TT 79:24



© 1984, 1985, and 1991 Chandos Records Ltd

This compilation © 2013 Chandos Records Ltd

Digital remastering © 2013 Chandos Records Ltd

© 2013 Chandos Records Ltd  
 Chandos Records Ltd  
 Colchester • Essex • England

## PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

RAYMOND OVENS† • CHRISTOPHER WARREN-GREEN‡ LEADERS  
 LESLIE PEARSON ORGAN§

GEOFFREY SIMON\*

YAN PASCAL TORTELIER§

