

Roma Eterna

A journey back in time

Claudio Dall'Albero (living)

Pregghiera senza confini

from *Sonata Mare Nostrum* for guitar (Rome, 2020)

Ennio Morricone (1928-2020)

Poverty* – from *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984)

Passacaglia* – from *La storia vera della signora dalle camelie* (1981)

Alfredo Casella (1883-1947)

Minuetto*

Siciliana*

from *11 pezzi infantili*, op. 35 for piano (Rome, 1920)

Lorenzo Perosi (1872-1956)

Introito

from *Introito, offertorio, comunio a 4 voci per la festa di Pentecoste* (Milan, 1966)

Amerigo Marino (?-?)

Nina sì voi dormite*

Roman popular song with lyrics by Romolo Leonardi (Rome, 1901)

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832)

Andante malinconico*

from *Gradus ad Parnassum*, op. 44, vol. 2 (London, 1819)

Giovanni Zamboni (1664-1721)

Sonata X – from *Sonate d'intavolatura di lauto* (Rome, 1718)

Alemanda

Current

Sarabanda

Burre

Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652)

Miserere mei, Deus

Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Capp. Sist. 205-206

Hieronimus Kapsberger (1580-1615)

Corrente I

from *Libro primo d'intavolatura di lauto* (Rome, 1610)

Lorenzino Tracetti (1550-1598)

Fantasia – from *Thesaurus harmonicus* (Köln 1603)

Romanesca – Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Mus. ms. 40032

Fantasie – from *Varietie of lute lessons* (London 1610)
Galliarda – from *Thesaurus harmonicus* (Köln 1603)
Anchor che col partire – *Thesaurus harmonicus* (Köln 1603)

Anonymous (16th century)

Branle

Pesaro, Villa Imperiale, Ms. Oratio Albani 6-42

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)

Manus tuae

Paucitas dierum, secunda pars, from *Mottetorum quinque vocibus, Liber Quintus* (Rome, 1584)

Simone Vallerotonda — lute

8 course renaissance lute

Total Time 1 h

Program notes

A Universal Embrace

Simone Vallerotonda

It all started with a simple observation: that any Roman making their daily ride around the Castel Sant'Angelo on a scooter (or if less fortunate, in a car!) is bound to cross entrance to the Via della Conciliazione, a broad avenue branching off perpendicularly. Well, I can guarantee that 100% of those travellers, even in a hurry, will never resist the temptation to glance to the right, even just for a few seconds, and look straight to the end of the street, towards “er Cuppolone” (the Big Dome) as Roman citizens like to call it; or in other words, the basilica of St Peter's. Just a fleeting glimpse, perhaps: an attempt to “capture a brief instant of the sublime” to carry within oneself. If, on the other hand, they should perform the ritual in a more complete way and actually proceed down to the great piazza standing before the church, paved since early times with the typical blocks of leucite (aptly named “sanpietrini”) drawn from the volcanic areas north of the capital, they would get the sensation of being drawn into – and at the same time welcomed to – a space that is unique in the world. The universal embrace of the square – a gesture assured by Bernini's grand colonnade – is vast and all-encompassing, enveloping even those who aren't believers!

This is where I first got the idea of translating this embrace into music and devoting myself to the centuries-long “Roman school” – a category comprising all the composers who were born or who lived in the eternal city; who worked in its theatres and churches, or on the streets; and who looked up to the city as a source of inspiration for their works. The only way, I thought, was to start from the present, with a living Roman composer, Claudio Dall'Albero, and then, step by step, go backwards in time, covering five centuries of Roman-ness, and return to the “princeps musicae” Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. It

is a journey back in time that starts from Earth, with a prayer for all men (“without boundaries”, as stated in the title) that is Kantian in its universality, and ends with the image of the “hands of God” that made Man. It naturally all takes place in different styles and forms.

Right from the start this musical voyage posed certain difficulties. Half of the programme consists of music written for other instruments and voices, so the task of arranging and transcribing for the lute was indeed a challenge, both technically and in terms of performance. A further objective of mine was to offer a picture that, as far as possible, comprehended all the myriad souls encompassed by the city. That meant including both sacred and profane Rome, the ancient and the modern; the bantering Rome of the street songs or stornelli; Romantic Rome, the Galant Rome of the drawing rooms and the Baroque Rome of the noble palaces; and of course the Renaissance city in which the “Roman school” was born and dictated its stylistic features. A pure, absolute music that uses the voice of the lute to celebrate a Rome that has always been an open-air museum, a mingling of traditions and a stratification of eras. It acclaims not only the spiritual Rome of today in its 27th Jubilee Year, but also the secular Rome that interprets this spirituality in its own way, through the art that – more than any other – knows how to be universal: that of Music.

Biography

Born in Rome in 1983, **Simone Vallerotonda** started studying the classical guitar. At age 18, deeply in love with early music, he bought a lute without any idea on how to play it. Then he had lute tuition from Andrea Damiani at the "Santa Cecilia" Conservatory in Rome, where he graduated with the highest marks. He subsequently obtained a Master's Degree in theorbo and Baroque Guitar at the "Staatliche Hochschule für Musik" in Trossingen (Germany) under the guidance of Rolf Lislevand, also with the highest marks.

Once again with full honours, he graduated in Philosophy at the "Tor Vergata" University of Rome, submitting a PhD dissertation about the relationships between 18th-century music and the French *Philosophes*.

In 2011, he ranked first in the soloists' class of the International Lute Competition "Maurizio Pratola", also obtaining the highest prize in the chamber music section from REMA (Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne).

He appeared at outstanding theatres and concert venues in the USA, Australia, South America, Far East, Europe, such as: New York's Carnegie Hall, the Sydney Conservatorium, Teatro de la Ciudad in Mexico City, Teatro Municipal in Santiago de Chile, the Singapore Lyric Opera, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, London's Wigmore Hall, Theater an der Wien, Theatre de Champs Élysées in Paris, Oporto's Casa da Música, the Liszt Academy of Budapest, Berliner Philharmonie, the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Roma, Teatro alla Scala in Milano.

He has recorded for major radio and television broadcasters such as RAI, ABC, BBC, Mezzo, France Musique, Radio4, Art, Polskie Radio, Kulturradio, RSI, Radio Classica, Vatican Radio, as well as for the labels Naïve, Sony, Erato, EMI, Decca, Amadeus, Brilliant, Aparté, E Lucevan Le Stelle Records, Arcana/ Outhere Music.

In addition to his soloist's activity, he takes part as a continuo player in various ensembles including: Modo Antiquo, Rinaldo Alessandrini & Concerto Italiano, Imaginarium Ensemble, Cantar Lontano, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Ottavio Dantone & Accademia Bizantina.

Open to experimentation and contamination, he has played with Vinicio Capossela... but that's another good story!

He is professor of Lute at the Conservatory "A. Pedrollo" in Vicenza (IT)

In 2014 he founded "I Bassifondi", his own proprietary ensemble offering a 17th-18th century repertoire for guitar, theorbo and lute with continuo.

The concert and recording activity of Simone Vallerotonda and his ensemble I Bassifondi is supported by CIDIM - Comitato Nazionale Italiano Musica.

www.simonevallerotonda.com
www.ibassifondi.com