

12 Fantasias for Viola da Gamba



Fantasia No. 1 in C Minor, TWV 40:26

- 1 Adagio - Allegro - Adagio - Allegro
- 2 Allegro

Fantasia No. 2 in D Major, TWV 40:27

- 3 Vivace
- 4 Andante
- 5 Vivace (Da Capo)
- 6 Presto

Fantasia No. 3 in E Minor, TWV 40:28

- 7 Largo
- 8 Presto
- 9 Vivace

Fantasia No. 4 in F Major, TWV 40:29

- 10 Largo
- 11 Presto
- 12 Vivace

Fantasia No. 5 in B Major, TWV 40:30

- 13 Allegro
- 14 Largo
- 15 Allegro

Fantasia No. 6 in G Major, TWV 40:31

- 16 Scherzando
- 17 Dolce
- 18 Spirituoso

Fantasia No. 7 in G Minor, TWV 40:32

- 19 Andante
- 20 Vivace
- 21 Allegro

Fantasia No. 8 in A Major, TWV 40:33

- 22 Allegro
- 23 Grave
- 24 Vivace

Fantasia No. 9 in C Major, TWV 40:34

- 25 Presto
- 26 Grave
- 27 Allegro

Fantasia No. 10 in E Major, TWV 40:35

- 28 Presto
- 29 Grave
- 30 Allegro

Fantasia No. 11 in D Minor, TWV 40:36

- 31 Allegro
- 32 Grave
- 33 Allegro

Fantasia No. 12 in E-flat Major, TWV 40:37

- 34 Andante
- 35 Allegro
- 36 Vivace

About the album

My brother doesn't know the first thing about baroque music. He doesn't like the sound of the viola da gamba either. He's an electrical engineer. Pretty good one, too. But he is in high-power electrics, not in anything to do with sound recording. Although he did at one time run a little studio with some friends from his Chicago blues band.

But here he is on a plane to take him to not-too-far-away Munich on a mission for a big company. Working on his iPad, checking and double checking the facts he needs for his meeting there. A sleek young man sits down next to him. Tense. Nervous. Fear of flying. My brother tries to make him feel comfortable by asking him what he does for a living. He appears to be a sound engineer of some sorts. The two start a conversation that will last the entire trip.

A few months later I get a message on my phone. Brendon Heinst from TRPTK asks me if we could get together one time. At that very moment I am working on an album with meditative music, to be recorded in a few weeks' time. So I am not too receptive to a new venture. But after a while, we manage to arrange a meeting and he introduces me to their brand new studio facility in my home town, Utrecht. If I would consider recording my next album on TRPTK.

He tells me he's found out about my playing the viola da gamba through some family member on a plane somewhere. My brother. Who doesn't even like the sound of the instrument.

Man, that is what I call a coincidence. Chance. Serendipity.

This whole album is a result of an unimaginable chain of coincidences.

For starters, who could have guessed that almost two-and-three-quarters of a century after their conception, a German viola da gamba colleague of mine, would locate a copy of the twelve lost fantasias by Georg Philipp Telemann in an Osnabrück library? New music by the prodigious Telemann! The rock star of the 18th century, at the time eclipsing even the great Johann Sebastian Bach.

Then: by pure chance a press release about the find was sent to me by the classical music critic of one of the foremost Dutch newspapers. He stumbled into it and forwarded it to me.

And finally my brother (who doesn't like the sound of the gamba) comforts a young studio engineer with a fear of flying and mentions the fact that his brother (i.e., me) is in classical music, too.

And here we are.

I contacted the Telemann Society immediately after reading about the find and got hold of the first copy of the music, as soon as it became available. Thirty-six small gems. Movements that are labeled by very general tempo indications such as "allegro", "adagio", or "vivace", loosely organized into twelve fantasias. Almost devoid of any dynamic indications, too. This was right, right up my sleeve.

On my first album, *Voix Humaines* (2003), I recorded Telemann's famous D Major

sonata in five movements from Der Getreue Musikmeister. It has been a favorite of the gamba community since the instrument rose from the ashes of oblivion in the second half of the 20th century. I have played it more often than I care to remember.

And now, there are twelve more! And nobody has ever played them since the 18th century! With only some very general remarks about the tempi. This truly is the equivalent of a completely blank canvas for a classical musician.

I swore there and then that I would never ever want to hear them performed by anyone else. I mean: what would be the point? There is no reference here, this is completely new stuff. So I never have. I locked myself in my room and worked on them for some two years, trying them out one by one during small concerts. Learned by heart, too. Sweating on the tricky parts, contemplating tempi, phrasing, and dynamics.

As a hermit I worked on my private Telemann universe. Until a chance meeting of Brendon with my brother opened up this opportunity. I can only hope you appreciate this music as much as I do.

Ralph Rousseau, Summer 2019

Special thanks to Han Peekel and Lydia de Korte

Instrument: 6-string viola da gamba by Georg Aman (Augsburg, early 18th century)

Bow: Gerhard Landwehr (2005)



Ralph Rousseau

Ralph Rousseau knew very early on that music and science would be dominating factors in his life. Playing the piano and bass guitar at the age of eight he later combined his conservatoire double-bass studies with a university physics degree, graduating 'cum laude' in both.

His professional career started as a double-bass player, where he performed with, among others, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. As a researcher, he worked for Shell and for the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research. He combined this with pop, jazz and rock music.

His first, fortuitous, acquaintance with the viola da gamba made him switch instantly. He studied with Jaap ter Linden and rapidly became the most prominent Netherlands ambassador for the seven-stringed instrument. His many recordings of composers such as Telemann, Bach, and Marais have been internationally praised and his cross-over work has also gained exceptional recognition. Ralph's album *Chansons d'Amour* was awarded the Edison classical audience award, the Netherlands' most prestigious cd award.

Ralph's greatest strength is his interpretation of the works for solo viola da gamba.

The presentation of his concerts is very personal; he introduces the works himself and his commentary creates an intimate atmosphere even in the largest of halls. He is currently working in the theatre as well, performing one-man shows with such directors as Justus van Oel and Han Peekel.

He has been gamba soloist with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Arnhem Symphony Orchestra, the Residentie Orchestra Bach Ensembles, the North-Netherlands Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra, with such conductors as Sir Roger Norrington, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and Ivan Fischer, but also with popular musicians as Lenny Kuhr, Ad Visser, and Eric Vloeimans. Various composers have created new works for him and his solo concerts have brought him to music festivals throughout Europe, the United States, Thailand and China.

Son of a teacher, Rousseau displays a keen interest in education. In 2011 he decided to do the Master of Education, graduating cum laude in the field. He actually worked as a physics teacher in secondary education for some time, before accepting a position as an assistant professor at Utrecht University, where he is currently researching intrinsic motivation, the deepest driving forces of students, learners, and people in general.

Ralph is a macrobiotic cook, an accomplished t'ai chi practitioner, he has been mediating daily for 35 years, and is fascinated by history, astrophysics, and aviation. He obtained his private pilot's licence (PPL) in 2009.

Ralph's unorthodox combination of activities and the lessons learned in the different fields, combined with his professional insights in motivational theory, have made him a popular public speaker in the field of inner driving forces and intrinsic motivation.





Telemann, a cynosure

For the small scene of viola da gamba players, 2015 has been an unforgettable year. The most important discovery in years was revealed: in an archive in the German city of Osnabrück, a full copy surfaced of the long-lost Fantasias for viola da gamba solo by Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767). Each page had one. And that, with Telemann's memorial year coming up, the anniversary where he would finally gain the wide acknowledgement he deserves. In 2017, it would have been 250 years since the Magdeburg-born composer passed away.

The sensation was understandable: where harpsichord players would not even know where to start regarding great repertoire, the number of masterpieces for gamba is significantly more limited. Especially from the period in which Telemann wrote these pieces, 1735, when gamba-like instruments had gotten out of fashion and the bass gamba had given way to the violoncello, that offered more volume and a more striking sound. Now, the gamba player of the 21st century suddenly gained twelve pieces from one of the greatest composers of the Baroque era.

One of the greatest? Yes, he was. It is one of the qualifications that some music lovers might still have to get used to, as musicology has not always been positively predisposed toward Telemann. This has got everything to do with the B-word. Bach. Johann Sebastian Bach.

In his time, Telemann (incidentally, godfather to Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach) was the most successful composer in Europe. During his lifetime, Bach was always an insider tip: a composer who never reached beyond Karlsbad and Lüneburg, a church musician who was, thanks to his keyboard pieces, at most a local hero for an elite audience. The music of Telemann, however, was performed in all corners of the continent. Telemann was a multi-faceted composer who was always able to give any genre or form an original twist.

The image of Telemann shifted in the 19th century. Bach was put on a pedestal and Telemann, victim of the Bach-renaissance, suffered for it. Telemann was unbelievably productive: depending on what you count, you can easily get to 3.000 works. He composed about 200 overtures in the French style and possibly wrote over fifty operas, of which the lion's share got lost. This gave the Telemann-haters the ammunition to put him away as a graphomaniac. Still, music lovers hardly know where to begin with Telemann, his catalogue is so large and so little has been done to highlight his best pieces.

Indeed, when you test the music of Telemann to Bach's standards, because Bach is simply your frame of reference, Telemann will always be the lesser of the two. Still, the reverse is also true. Telemann must be judged by its own merits. As opposed to Bach's ever elaborate polyphony, Telemann puts forth warm-blooded, imaginative compositions, often full of effect and always full of lyricism.

Telemann (as opposed to Bach) knew how to play the market of (advanced) amateur musicians, something else the musicologists of the 19th and 20th century had a hard time reconciling with their ideal image of a great autonomous artist. He published his own music, oftentimes in such a way that you could order one or more pieces each time, to slowly complete an entire bundle.

In this way, his Fantasias for (six-string) viola da gamba were published. At that

moment, Telemann resided in Hamburg and was at the peak of both his fame and his abilities. The composer had also published solo Fantasias for keyboards (36), violin (12), and flute (12 - these flute Fantasias are definitely required listening), which were very well received by the aristocracy.

Telemann himself was a humble gamba-player. But how straightforward is this music? What is immediately striking — especially in comparison to the music of a gamba phenomenon such as the French Marin Marais (1656-1728) — is that the player gets ample room to fill in for themselves. Indications of tempo are brief, dynamic markings are nowhere to be found. Telemann leaves a great deal open: virtuosity, in the form of elaborations of chords and embellishments, could be added to taste.

However, opposing these parts where Telemann appeals to the spontaneity of the performer, are passages with strict two-part harmonies. He definitely took amateur players seriously, and more than that. Everything about his work shows that Telemann was aware of the possibilities as well as the challenges — he writes idiomatically, yet he also pushes boundaries in a fanciful manner. Just take a look at the keys of the pieces. E major and C minor are challenging for gamba players, E-flat major is highly unusual.

He offers more than just entertaining and comfortable notes. Much like the pieces for solo instruments by — sorry, the B-word again, we cannot get away from it — Bach, the performer is his own accompanist. However, Telemann leaves much more air in his works, and especially in his fast movements the upper voice prevails. Telemann makes considerable use of the Siciliano dance. Most of the pieces are in concerto form, fast-slow-fast. Yet, before you notice how astutely Telemann flung with forms, he wins himself over to you with his tunefulness. As much as he allows for darkness, the Fantasias mostly form a musical bonfire.

How do they compare to his Sonata in D major for viola da gamba solo (TWV 40:1)? The way of writing is similar, immediately convincing all connoisseurs that they had to be the Telemann Fantasias that were announced in the old newspaper articles. Yet for gamba players the differences with the sonata are vast: where everyone at the conservatory had to study this sonata, here we are cut off from the entire performance history, so there are no endemic traditions that are taken over consciously, or that you have to rebel against as a player. What a wonderful sense of freedom, this must give the players.

And mind you, there is no composer who thrives this well with a generous amount of freedom.

Merlijn Kerkhof, Fall 2019





Geertekerk, Utrecht

In the historical center of Utrecht, on the edge of the Catharijnesingel, you'll find the Geertekerk. This church is characterised by its extraordinary acoustics and rich history.

The first mention of the Geertekerk is found on a manuscript from the 13th century. In this writing, it said that a certain man named Lodewijk, provost in Utrecht, gifted four churches to the chapter of the Dom. The date of this manuscript has to be either 1204 or 1217, because only in these two years has there been mention of a provost in Utrecht by the name of Lodewijk. However, the Geertekerk back then was not the building it is today, but a church outside of the city wall. Presumably, there was a small village there, of which the Geertekerk formed its place of worship. In two donation letters from 1231 and 1247, as well as a deed of purchase from 1248, there is word of a church outside of city limits, but on December 12th 1259, bisshop Hendrik van Vianden transferred the old cemetery of "St.-Gertrude-Beyond-The-Walls" to the German Order "after the old church there was broken down and moved to a more suitable place inside the walls of the city". Because this breaking down and building up again should have taken a number of years, we estimate that the current building dates from between 1255 and 1259.

In the 14th century, the simple Romanesque hall was expanded with a bell tower, and, in Gothic style, the chancel, the transept, and the side aisles. In the next century, the church developed into what it is today. Over the course of the centuries, the church had any annexes, almost all of which were broken down at a later point. In 1715, five homes were built against the south side of the church, however, they were broken down less than a few decades later, when bad upkeep to these homes damaged the church building. There is also mention of a beer cellar underneath the bell tower, and there has possibly been a space under the vestry. In the outer walls of the vestry, there are still traces of a cellar access or cellar windows.

The history of the Geertekerk is quite chequered. It was the first building that became victim to the Great Iconoclasm in 1566. Back then, the damage was still limit. However, in 1581, all statues and altars were radically removed from the church. In the 19th century, the city planned to break down the church, and it almost looked as though these plans were soon executed, when World War II broke out. In 1954, the church was bought by the Remonstrant congregation, who brought it back to full glory.

Heirloom

Heirloom opens up the most beautiful monuments of Utrecht. Impressive spaces with their own identities and character. Timeless, with attention and an eye for detail. We take care of an unbelievable gathering. Heirloom is committed to the conservation and improvement of Utrecht's heirlooms by first class hospitality. Revenue and profit maximisation are not goals themselves, yet a means to get there. Heirloom is responsible for the exploitation of the Paushuize, the Geertekerk, and Huize Molenaar. Cuisinier Molenaar is part of this company that takes care of hospitality and the culinary framing of all our gatherings.





Producer's notes

As a producer, each and every recording you make, gets a place in your heart where it remains for the rest of your life. And this recording maybe even more so. To think that this album you're listening to wouldn't have been there if not for serendipity. The fact that I would be seated on an airplane next to Ralph Rousseau's brother, for starters. This was before we started the label, so we had no immediate reason to get in touch but for a couple of years later, when we did.

I already had a lot of Ralph's albums at home, and so when we finished the first phase of building our new studio in Utrecht, I wanted to invite him over for a cup of our famous coffee. Not for anything specific, just getting to know each other. Needless to say, when he later told me he wanted to record an album of the Telemann Fantasias with us, I was stoked! Recording "new" work by one of my all-time favorite composers, on my personal favorite instrument, the viola da gamba, what's not to love?

This created the perfect opportunity to make a true no-compromises recording. Because, well, let's face it: unfortunately every recording has compromises as part of the process, however microscopically tiny. You have a limited number of recording days, you have to work with the elements of what's there, and so on and so forth.

But not for this recording. Starting with the location — together with Ralph, we chose the magnificent Geertekerk in our hometown of Utrecht. Built in the 13th century, this church has some of the most incredible acoustics in the country, making it perfect for a period instrument such as the gamba. Of course, we also had to use the best tools for the job, so we reached out to DPA Microphones in Denmark, who were kind enough to supply us with their latest 4006A omnidirectional and 4015A subcardioid microphones. We wanted to record the Geertekerk as it is, in surround, with nothing added or removed from it, making the DPAs the clear choice. Paired with the most high-end microphone cabling in the world, custom-built for us by Furutech, and suspended on their NCF Boosters, we were sure of creating the most accurate reproduction of the sound of Ralph's instrument in the space where we spent two and a half days of intense recording.

And intense it was. As anyone familiar with the recording process would confirm, two and a half days of recording for almost eighty minutes of music, is the very definition of a tight schedule. Especially for these Fantasias, which are not the easiest pieces in the world to perform. Yet for however intense the process was, it's been amazing as well. And now, while writing these notes as I listen to the final masters, what an honor it has been to recreate such a piece of history with an artist such as Ralph, in a space such as the Geertekerk, with the equipment we had at our disposal.

This recording will forever have a special place in my heart, as I hope it will also have for you, dear listener. If you enjoy it even half as much as I did when recording and still do to this day, I'm sure you'll feel the same way.

Brendon Heinst, Fall 2019

Recording data

This album was recorded at the Geertekerk in Utrecht, The Netherlands, from June 27th to 29th 2019.

About TRPTK

TRPTK proudly uses DPA microphones, KEF loudspeakers, Hegel amplification, Merging Technologies AD/DA conversion, Furutech cabling and power conditioning, and JCAT network equipment at their recording and mastering facilities, carefully optimized by Acoustic Matters.

All recordings are done in DXD (352.8 kHz 32 bits) in immersive 5.1-channel surround sound, and all masters are generated from the original DXD Studio Master, without any dynamic compression or limiting of the signal. In both stereo and surround sound, our aim is to truly create an immersive experience.

Equipment

microphones

DPA d:dicate 4006A

DPA d:dicate 4015A

ad/da converters

Merging Technologies HAPI

monitoring

KEF Blade Two loudspeakers

Hegel H30 amplifiers

Meze Empyrean headphones

cabling

Furutech custom microphone cables

Furutech custom loudspeaker cables

Furutech custom power cables

Furutech LineFlux XLR

Furutech NanoFlux NCF

power conditioning

Furutech Daytona 303E

misc.

Furutech NCF Boosters

CAD Ground Control GC1

RTFS Acoustics

JCAT M12 Switch Gold

JCAT NET Card FEMTO



Credits

recording & mastering
Brendon Heinst

assistant engineering
Ben van Leliveld
Bart Koop

editing
Ernst Spycckerelle
Brendon Heinst

liner notes
Ralph Rousseau
Merlijn Kerkhof

cover photography
Filip Naudts

booklet photography,
artwork & design
Brendon Heinst

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