



raccona

Guillermo Brachetta
harpsichord

Ciaccona

Works for harpsichord

Guillermo Brachetta *harpsichord*

Harpsichords:

Copy after G.B. Giusti (1681) built by Titus Crijnen (2009)^{1,2 & 6}

Copy after H. Ruckers (1624), grand ravalement (1680), built by Titus Crijnen (2000)^{3-5 & 7-10}

About Guillermo Brachetta & Fantasticus:

'The performances are superlative – consistently energetic, vibrant, communicative and full of stimulating detail. Each of the three musicians is excellent in technique [...] This is, quite simply, a release not to be missed'
Classical Ear on Fantasticus RES10112

'This is an absolutely outstanding recording [...] Throughout the recital, the playing is top notch - the individual musicians are superb and they blend so naturally in consort'
Early Music Review on Fantasticus RES10112

Bernardo Storace (dates unknown, 17th century)

1. **Ciaccona** [6:36]

from *Selva di varie composizioni d'intavolatura per cimballo ed organo* (Venice, 1664)

Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer (1656–1746)

2. **Chaconne** [4:47]

from the 'Euterpe' Suite, *Musicalischer Parnassus*

Jacques Duphly (1715–1789)

3. **Chaconne** [8:01]

from *Troisième Livre of Pièces de clavecin* (pub. 1756)

Jacques Champion de Chambonnieres
(1601/2–1672)

4. **Chaconne** [3:13]

from The Bauyn MS.

John Blow (1648/9–1708)

5. **Chacone** [3:27]

Georg Böhm (1661–1733)

6. **Chaconne** [3:52]

Bernard de Bury (1720–1785)

7. **Chaconne** [7:52]

from *Premier Livre de Pièces de Clavecin* (1736)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

8. **Ciaccona** [12:23]

from *Partita a violino solo BWV 1004*

Johann Joseph Fux (1660–1741)

9. **Ciaccona** [9:10]

Louis Couperin (c. 1626–1661)

10. **Chaconne ou Passacaille** [5:00]

from The Bauyn MS.

Total playing time [64:28]



Guillermo Brachetta
(Photography: Rudi Wells)

Ciaccona

The earliest references to the chaconne are in Spain, notably in the works of two great writers at the start of the seventeenth century: Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) and Lope de Vega (1562–1635), who included this refrain in one of the songs for his play *El amante agrecido* in 1602, declaring that ‘this old thing is La Chacona’

¡Vida bona, vida bona,
esta vieja es la Chacona!

The scholar Curt Sachs wrote in his *World History of the Dance*: ‘The sarabande and the chaconne are truly exotic dances. They originated in the melting pot of Central America, were brought home to Andalusia by the colonists [and] stripped of their cruder suggestions on Spanish soil.’ Sachs’s claims are backed by an impressive body of literary evidence, including two more lines from the same Lope de Vega song:

De las Indias a Sevilla
ha venido por la posta.

Not only did Lope de Vega consider it an ancient dance, but also described it as coming ‘from the Indias to Seville’. The likeliest country in ‘the Indias’ (Central America) for the dance to have originated is Mexico and Simon Agudo, another Spanish writer, wrote as early as 1599 of

an ‘invitation to go to Tampico in Mexico and there dance the chacona’ (quoted in Robert Stevenson’s *Music in Mexico: A Historical Survey*, 1952).

Intriguing as the pre-history may be, it remains speculative, since no chaconnes have survived from the sixteenth century. But what is certain is that the chaconne was firmly established as a popular dance in Spain by the start of the seventeenth century, danced and sung to the accompaniment of guitars and castanets (it has been aptly described by Alexander Silbiger as ‘like a late-Renaissance calypso’). By 1606 the form had spread to Italy, and the earliest appearance in print of a chaconne – at least the bare bones of the chord patterns and rhythmic outline – was for guitar in Girolamo Monteverdi’s *Nuova inventione d’intavolatura* (Florence, 1606). A Florentine manuscript from the same time (c. 1608–1612) written by Lorenzo Allegri is written for lute and it includes a fully notated ‘Ciaccona’ with a bass-line (F–C–D–B flat–C–F and so on) which suggests the kind of repeating pattern that was to become familiar. As yet there were no chaconnes specifically for the keyboard, but that was soon to change – notably with Frescobaldi’s *Partite sopra ciaccona* (1627); the dance-song origins of the form were also explored by some of the greatest Italian masters of the

age in vocal chaconnes, of which the most celebrated is probably Monteverdi's *Zefiro torna*, from his *Scherzi musicali* (1632).

This collection traces the evolution of the chaconne from the rather bawdy dance-song of its origins to a variation form that became one of the noblest single-movement structures of European Baroque instrumental music. Among Frescobaldi's successors, **Bernardo Storace** (dates unknown; mid-17th century) is known from just one publication: the *Selva di varie compositioni d'intavolatura per cimbalò ed organo*, published in Venice in 1664. The title page describes this as a collection of 'Capricci e Partite [...] Toccate, Canzoni e Recercari, Correnti, Gagliarde, Balletti, Ciaccone, Passagagli [...] and it identifies Storace as working in Sicily at the time, describing him as 'Vice Maestro di Capella dell'ill[ustrissi]mo Senato della nobile ed esemplare Città di Messina'. The 'Ciaccona' from *Selva di varie compositioni* is a fine early example of the chaconne – a set of variations over a repeating four-bar ground bass.

As a keyboard form, the chaconne spread quickly across Europe. The south German composer **Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer** (1656–1746) worked as Kappellmeister to Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm of Baden-Baden, and later for his widow Sybil of

Saxe-Lauenberg in Rastatt, Baden-Württemberg. Fischer's *Musicalischer Parnassus* is a set of keyboard suites named after the Greek Muses composed in a style that owes more to French than German traditions. The Chaconne in F major is the final movement from the 'Euterpe' Suite. It's a fine demonstration of Fischer's ingenuity as a composer of variations on a ground, varying the keyboard textures to impressive effect. It's comes as no surprise that Johann Nikolaus Forkel, Bach's great biographer, reportedly considered Fischer to be one of the finest keyboard composers of his time.

Georg Böhm (1661–1733) was born into a musical family in Thuringia. His father was an organist at Hohenkirchen near Ohrdruf, and he later moved to Hamburg before securing a post as organist of the Johanniskirche in Lüneburg in 1697, remaining there for the rest of his life. C.P.E. Bach made a passing remark to Forkel that his father had greatly admired Böhm as a young man – an entirely plausible suggestion given that Bach sung as a choirboy in another of Lüneburg's churches (the Michaeliskirche) from 1700 to 1702. The Chaconne in G major appears in the Appendix of his complete keyboard works, noting that it is found in a Berlin manuscript containing Böhm's *Präludium, Fuge und Postludium* in G minor – suggesting that it may well be a work by Böhm.

The final movement of **Johann Sebastian Bach's** D minor Partita BWV 1004 for solo violin is probably the most famous and is surely the most magnificent of instrumental chaconnes from the high Baroque. Bach (1685–1750) probably composed the work in Cöthen around 1720. As an indefatigable transcriber and arranger of his own music, it comes as something of a surprise that there is no surviving keyboard arrangement of the Ciaccona by Bach himself, though later composers to arrange it for piano included Busoni, Raff and Brahms (for the left hand), while both Mendelssohn and Schumann created piano accompaniments for the original violin version. The keyboard transcription on the present disc – transposed into A minor – is an amalgam of the arrangements by Lars Ulrik Mortensen and Gustav Leonhardt.

Jacques Duphly (1715–1789) was born in Rouen and in 1734 he was appointed organist of the church of Saint-Eloi – the church where he had been baptized (incidentally, the new job at Saint-Eloi got off to a bad start when Duphly's predecessor locked him out of the organ loft). In 1742 Duphly made the decision to move to Paris, and to specialize in the harpsichord rather than the organ. He quickly became a sought-after teacher to the aristocracy (reflected in the titles and dedications of

some of his pieces), and his own compositions included four books of *Pièces de clavecin*, much influenced by the harpsichord music of Jean-Philippe Rameau. The Chaconne comes from the Troisième Livre, first published by the composer in 1756, in a handsome edition engraved by Mlle. Vendôme. This extended movement is conceived on a grand scale, with outer sections in F major contrasting with a central passage in F minor.

Johann Joseph Fux (1660–1741) was born in humble circumstances in Southern Austria but he enrolled at the Jesuit universities of Graz and Ingolstadt (where he was registered as a 'Styrian from Hirtenfeld, student of logic, pauper'). He studied languages, logic and music, and by the 1690s he was working in Vienna, becoming an official court composer in 1698, promoted to the senior position of Hofkapellmeister in 1715. His most important contribution to musical history is undoubtedly *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725), described in New Grove (2nd edition) as 'the most influential composition treatise in European music from the 18th century onwards.' Fux was also a gifted composer, and his keyboard music reflects his cosmopolitan tastes, drawing from French, German and Italian styles. The highly ornamented Ciaccona in D major was composed as a single movement and it is a substantial structure, running to 261 bars and demonstrating the



Copy after G.B. Giusti (1681) built by Titus Crijnen (2009)

resourcefulness of Fux in handling the form – with carefully planned changes in register, texture and figuration, and a brief excursion near the end into the tonic minor before a brief restatement of the opening phrase.

John Blow (1648/9–1708) was born in Nottinghamshire where his talents as a boy chorister led to him being conscripted into the choir of the Chapel Royal. In 1668 he was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey, and soon became one of the leading church musicians in London, holding positions at the Chapel Royal and, later, in Wren's new St Paul's Cathedral, and composing music for the coronations of James II in 1685 and William and Mary in 1689. A gifted composer of secular as well as sacred vocal works, his instrumental music is less well known but includes several suites for harpsichord and a number of individual pieces including the present Chacone in G minor/major (not to be confused with his grander G major Chaconne for strings, published for harpsichord in F major). As Purcell's most inventive English contemporary, it's no surprise to find Blow responding with imagination to the challenge of writing a chaconne which moves from minor to major at the work's midpoint, and shows a composer who understands the importance of textual variety in a chaconne.

Bernard de Bury (1720–1785) enjoyed some success as a composer of operas and ballets performed at the court of Versailles in the second half of the eighteenth century. He was born in Versailles where his father was a musician at the royal court, and as a teenager, he made a considerable name for himself as a harpsichordist. In 1736 Boivin and Leclerc published his *Premier Livre de Pièces de Clavecin* – an optimistic title as it turned out, since it was also his only collection of harpsichord pieces – which are a remarkable achievement for a fifteen-year-old composer. The volume contains four suites, and the Chaconne is the final movement of the fourth suite, in E major. It is the longest and most fully-developed movement in the whole collection, with a substantial minor-key section as a contrast.

The Bauyn Manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale de France is a magnificent collection of French seventeenth-century keyboard music: a manuscript anthology of some 400 pages, by the leading harpsichord composers of the day, among them **Jacques Champion de Chambonnières** (1601/2–1672), who is represented by 130 pieces. These include several chaconnes, of which the present example is a short and serious piece in F major, much of the writing in the instrument's lower register.



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The Bayun Manuscript is also the source for the last work of the programme: the Chaconne ou Passacaille (the two words quickly became interchangeable) in G minor by **Louis Couperin** (c. 1626–1661). He was a friend and colleague of Chambonnières, and the first important musician in the Couperin dynasty, organists of Saint-Gervais in Paris for two centuries. The music of Louis Couperin's Chaconne has a gravity and expressive power (enhanced by the chromatic character of the theme and the harmonies) that mark it out as one of the earliest great chaconnes. It was a pioneering example of the form at its most serious, starting a tradition that was developed by Purcell's G minor Chacony for strings, Bach's D minor Chaconne, and much later examples such as the finale of Brahms's Fourth Symphony and the 'Chacony' (written in homage to Purcell) that ends Britten's Second String Quartet.

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Chaconne de Phaeton

Chaconne de Phaeton
pour un homme
non Dancée a l'opera.

Chaconne from Raoul Auger Feuillet's *Recueil de Dances* (1704)

Guillermo Brachetta

Guillermo Brachetta began piano studies at an early age in his native Argentina, but immediately after discovering the voice of the Baroque he turned his devotion to the harpsichord.

Having arrived in The Netherlands in 1995, he studied at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague with Jacques Ogg and at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam with Menno van Delft.

Guillermo also followed classes with Gustav Leonhardt, Bob van Asperen, Christophe Rousset and Lucy van Dael amongst others.

He performs regularly with Emmy Verhey, Amsterdam Bach Solisten, The New Dutch Academy, BandArt, the Catherine the Great Baroque Orchestra, Residentie Orkest, Orkest van het Oosten, Holland Symfonia, and others.

Together with Menno van Delft he is founder of the 'Collegium Wilhelm Friedemann Bach', devoted to the rediscovery of the work of the unjustly neglected Wilhelm Friedemann Bach.

Guillermo is very active as a music editor and

researcher and works in close cooperation with Cambridge University Press and other

international institutions, having edited numerous works from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries for first time publication.

He is a co-founder and the harpsichordist of the critically acclaimed trio Fantasticus.

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Recorded in Zuidervermaning, Westzaan, The Netherlands on 20-22 August 2013

Producer, Engineer and Editor: Adam Binks

Recorded at 24-bit / 96kHz resolution

Cover image: from a portrait of James Hamilton by Daniël Mitjens

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