

MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCCO | THE WELL-TEMPERED GUITARS | 24 PRELUDES & FUGUES

SOLO DUO



CD1 PRELUDES & FUGUES I-XII

- I PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SOL MINEUR
1 Prélude. Très fluide
2 Fugue. Très modéré
- II PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN RÉ MAJEUR
3 Prélude. Très soutenu et pompeux
4 Fugue. Assez vif (Tempo di Giga)
- III PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN LA MINEUR
5 Prélude. Andante molto mosso
6 Fugue. Modéré et tranquille
- IV PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN MI MAJEUR
7 Prélude. Andante mosso
8 Fugue. Allegretto giocoso (Tempo di Bourrée)
- V PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SI MINEUR
9 Prélude. Piuttosto mosso e agitato
10 Fugue. Calmo
- VI PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN FA DIÈSE MAJEUR
11 Prélude. Rapide et léger
12 Fugue. Risoluto–alla Marcia
- VII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN DO DIÈSE MINEUR
13 Prélude. Piuttosto Mosso e agitato
14 Fugue. Molto Moderato e malinconico
- VIII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN LA BÉMOL MAJEUR
15 Prélude. Andantino dolce e tranquillo
16 Fugue. Allegretto grazioso
- IX PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN MI BÉMOL MINEUR
17 Prélude. Mesto, funebre
18 Fugue. Moderato e mesto
- X PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SI BÉMOL MAJEUR
19 Prélude. Allegretto scherzando–alla Rumba
20 Fugue. Allegretto burlesco–alla Marcia
- XI PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN FA MINEUR
21 Prélude. Lento, cupo e spettrale
22 Fugue. Molto moderato e triste
- XII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN DO MAJEUR
23 Prélude. Allegramente–quasi Fanfara
24 Fugue (Lo stesso tempo e lo stesso tema, ma più grazioso e un poco meno mosso)

CD2 PRELUDES & FUGUES
XIII-XXIV / FUGA ELEGIACA

- XIII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SOL MAJEUR
1 Prélude. Allegretto-Moderato e grazioso
2 Fugue. Grazioso (Tempo di Minuetto)
- XIV PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN RÉ MINEUR
3 Prélude. Grave-Sostenuto e pomposo (in 2)
4 Fugue (Lo stesso tempo ma in 4:
Mosso e deciso)
- XV PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN LA MAJEUR
I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear
(Walt Whitman, "Leaves of grass")
5 Prélude. Molto animato (in 2)
6 Fugue. Tempo di Gavotta (Allegretto grazioso)
- XVI PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN MI MINEUR
7 Prélude. Agitato e tempestoso
8 Fugue. Molto Moderato (Cupo e mesto)
- XVII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SI MAJEUR
9 Prélude (Badinerie). Molto Mosso
(aussi vite que possible...)
10 Fugue. Tempo di Bourrée
(Gaio e ben ritmato, in 2)
- XVIII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN FA DIÈSE
MINEUR
11 Prélude. Mosso e scorrevole
(e un poco agitato)
12 Fugue. Un poco più lento
(Andantino malinconico)
- XIX PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN DO DIÈSE MAJEUR
13 Prélude. Andantino (Molto Moderato e gentile:
quasi Arietta, in 2)
14 Fugue. Quasi lo stesso tempo (Allegretto, ma in 4)
- XX PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SOL
DIÈSE MINEUR
15 Prélude. Mosso ed energico
16 Fugue. Mosso e deciso (alla Marcia)
- XXI PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN MI
BÉMOL MAJEUR
I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years,
the dear and wished-for years...
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning,
"Sonnets from the Portuguese")
17 Prélude. Allegretto. Mosso e scorrevole
18 Fugue. Andantino Pastorale (Tempo di Siciliana)
- XXII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SI BÉMOL
MINEUR
19 Prélude. Allegretto mefistofelico
20 Fugue. Mosso e deciso (in 2)
- XXIII PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN FA MAJEUR
21 Prélude. Mosso e gaio (Tempo di Furlana)
22 Fugue. Molto tranquillo-Semplice e idilliaco
- XXIV PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN DO MINEUR
23 Prélude. Andante elegiaco (a piacere-
quasi improvvisando)
24 Fugue. Mosso e deciso
- FUGA ELEGIACA (TO THE MEMORY OF
IDA PRESTI)
25 Preludio. Agitato e tremante
26 Fuga. Moderato e mesto



MARIO CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO (1895-1968)
LES GUITARES BIEN TEMPÉRÉES OP. 199
24 PRÉLUDES ET FUGUES POUR DEUX GUITARES (1962)
POUR IDA PRESTI ET ALEXANDRE LAGOYA

When he signed the last of his twenty-four preludes and fugues on 3 June 1962, probably Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco was unaware that he had completed the longest and most important cycle of work for two guitars ever composed; that “les guitares bien tempérées” (as he had ironically entitled the text) would enjoy uninterrupted and growing success in the decades to come; that also, five years later, precisely a prelude and fugue – apart from the four incomplete books of the “Apuntis” – would be his last work for the guitar, the instrument that perhaps he loved and cultivated more than any other for thirty-five years of his life.

“The Well-Tempered Guitars” began to take shape at the beginning of March 1962, when the performances of the

French guitar duo formed by Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya aroused great enthusiasm in the Californian musical community. The preludes and fugues were the most admirable result of an intense and concentrated period of composition to which the “Sonatina Canonica” Op. 196 (1961) and the “Concerto” Op. 201 (1962) also belong. The speed of the composer in the creation was prodigious: less than three months of disciplined work for more than two hundred pages of score. The first of the four books into which the cycle is subdivided was completed between 8 and 27 March; Castelnuovo-Tedesco worked on the second between 23 and 11 May, after a pause of more than three weeks; the third book bears the dates of 14 and 26 May, and the last, begun on the 22 May, was completed on 3 June 1962.



Similarly to the two books of the Bach model of reference (“The Well-Tempered Clavier”), the twenty-four preludes and fugues of the “guitares bien tempérées” are written in all the major and minor keys. For an instrument that rarely and reluctantly departs from the close context of the usual keys, it was an ambitious challenge, taken up by the composer who in his youth, as an enthusiastic composition student of Ildebrando Pizzetti, had set himself the task of writing three hundred and sixty-five fugues in a year – one a day – with the purpose of perfecting his command of counterpoint. The series of keys moves forward in ascending fifth intervals, starting from G minor and alternating rigorously between preludes and fugues in a minor key and preludes and fugues in a major key: a different and original solution from the “Well-Tempered

Clavier” (in which the progression of the keys takes place by ascending semitones) and texts like the 24 Preludes Op. 28 by Chopin or the 24 Preludes and Fugues Op. 87 by Shostakovich, where the major keys – starting from that of C – are certainly organised according to the cycle of ascending fifths, but always coupled with their respective minor key.

The construction of the two pairs of books is perfectly symmetrical, with an inversion between the minor and the major key at the beginning of the third book: the first cycle of twelve preludes and fugues (Cahiers I and II) opens in G minor and closes on a triumphant C major, the second cycle of twelve (Cahiers III and IV) starts from a graceful G major and concludes in C minor, according to the following scheme:



BOOKS I AND II:
G MINOR TO C MAJOR

- I G minor
- II D major
- III A minor
- IV E major
- V B minor
- VI F sharp major
- VII C sharp minor
- VIII A flat major
- IX E flat minor
- X B flat major
- XI F minor
- XII C major

BOOKS III AND IV:
G MAJOR TO C MINOR

- XIII G major
- XIV D minor
- XV A major
- XVI E minor
- XVII B major
- XVIII F sharp minor
- XIX C sharp major
- XX G sharp minor
- XXI E flat major
- XXII B flat minor
- XXIII F major
- XXIV C minor



From the formal point of view, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's preludes and fugues are diptychs with a light and flexible structure, used from time to time as containers of ideas and melodic-rhythmic gestures, as a vehicle for musical homages, as a starting point for elegant assumptions of style. They echo with heterogeneous musical references (from Beethoven to Smetana to Pizzetti's "Rapsodia di settembre"), and refined literary allusions (the homage to Walt Whitman in Prelude XV, with the quotation of "I hear America singing" from "Leaves of Grass", or the double literary citation "embedded" in Browning's epigraph, with a "Tempo di Siciliana" which celebrates the Siceliot poet Theocritus in Prelude XXI); and also we find there is room for onomatopoeic games ("le coucou" and "le roiseau" in Fugue XXI), self-citations (allusion to a minute fragment of "Romancero Gitano" in Fugue VI), internal references (in Fugue XVI

there is an anticipation of the idea which will be the cornerstone of Prelude XVII).

The preludes are formally free, of varying lengths, sometimes linked to dance tempi and movements (like Prelude X in B flat major, "alla rumba", and the furlana of Prelude XXIII in F major). They can sometimes be built on a single idea, as in the case of Prelude XXI in E flat major or Prelude XIX in C sharp major, or – as happens more frequently – they can present a more complex internal division, with juxtaposition and interaction of several themes, changes of tempo, cadences (as in Prelude XI in F minor and Prelude XXIV in C minor) and very distant tone modulations (in this connection, listen to Prelude IX in E flat minor).

The fugues can develop a thematic idea already proposed in the prelude (as in V, VII,

VIII, XIV, XIX, XX, XXII, XXIII and XXIV), or can be inspired by a completely autonomous and original idea. While some of the subjects, owing to their very incisive rhythmic and melodic characteristics, are immediately impressed on the memory of the listener, others – perhaps less immediate – lend themselves to more abstract and audacious musical constructions, in particular those in which the chromatic progress favours a greater ambiguity of tone and a continual play of modulations (as for example Fugue VI in F sharp major, Fugue IX in E flat minor and Fugue XI in F minor). There is then the relatively large group of fugues constructed on a dance movement: gigue (Fugue II in D major), bourrée (Fugue IV in E major and Fugue XVII in B major), minuet (Fugue XIII in G major) and gavotte (Fugue XV in A major). In his inventions Castelnuovo-Tedesco demonstrates “ancient” eru-

dition and rigour, while also succeeding in dressing his counterpoints with ever-modern musical content.

On 24 April 1967 Ida Presti unexpectedly passed away, at the age of only 43 years and at the peak of an extraordinary artistic career. Castelnuovo-Tedesco, profoundly moved by the news, took up his pen to write one last piece, again a prelude and fugue: and so “Fuga Elegiaca – to the Memory of Ida Presti” was born. The key chosen was G minor, like in the opening piece of the “guitares bien tempérées”: the cycle of the fifths had thus returned to its starting point. The composer would die unexpectedly less than a year afterwards, in Los Angeles, on 17 March 1968.

Lorenzo Micheli



ABOUT SOLODUO

As SoloDuo, Matteo Mela and Lorenzo Micheli have performed throughout Europe, Asia, the USA, Canada and Latin America, and have been acclaimed everywhere—from New York’s Carnegie Hall to Seoul’s Sejong Chamber Hall and Vienna’s Konzerthaus—as one of the best ensembles ever heard. About one of their performances, The Washington Post wrote: “the duo’s playing was nothing less than rapturous—profound and unforgettable musicianship of the highest order.”

In addition to classic, romantic and modern repertoire, Matteo and Lorenzo—joined by lutenist Massimo Lonardi—enjoy exploring the early literature for baroque guitar and theorbo. Together, Matteo and Lorenzo have recorded François de Fossa’s Three Quartets, op. 19 (Stradivarius 2004), an anthology of 20th century masterpieces for two guitars

(“Solaria”, Pomegranate 2007), the Duos Concertants by Antoine De Lhoyer (Naxos 2007), a collection of chamber works by Mauro Giuliani (Amadeus 2008), a CD of 17th century Italian music for baroque guitar, archlute and theorbo (“La Suave Melodia”, Stradivarius 2008), a selection of 19th century pieces for two guitars (“Noesis”, Pomegranate 2009), and the Sonatas of Ferdinand Rebay (Stradivarius 2010), as well as a dozen solo recordings on the labels Naxos, Brilliant, Kookaburra, and Stradivarius.

Matteo resides in Geneva, Switzerland, where he teaches at the Conservatoire Populaire.

Lorenzo, who lives in Milan, teaches at the CSI in Lugano, Switzerland, and the Conservatory of Aosta, Italy.



For further information, please visit

www.soloduo.it

www.matteomela.it

www.lorenzomicheli.com

RECORDING

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RECORDING ENGINEERS

Mario Bertodo | Renato Campajola

DIGITAL EDITING

Mario Bertodo

MASTERING

Renato Campajola

SOLARIA LOGO DESIGN

Giulio Micheli

www.michelidesign.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY

Arsineh Khachikian | ARKreative

www.arkreative.com

GUITARS

Roberto de Miranda MILAN, 2004 | MILAN, 2005

Manuel Ramirez MADRID, CA. 1918

Miguel Simplicio BARCELONA, 1934

Jacques Vincenti GENEVE, 2007

STRINGS

Matteo Mela and Lorenzo Micheli
use Galli strings

