FABIO ANTONIO FALCONE

harpsichord and historical keyboards



« This is art of variation, inspired and in top form »

Sabine Fallenstein

Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik · Bestenliste 2/2023 · Tasteninstrumente II

Recital programmes

2027-2028



About the artist

Fabio Antonio Falcone is a harpsichordist and organist specialising in Renaissance and early Baroque music, with a particular interest in sixteenth-century Italian keyboard and vocal repertoire. His performances draw on the study of historical sources, with particular attention to intabulation and diminution.

He performs as a soloist and continuo player at international festivals and concert venues. His collaborations include Ensemble Elyma, Stile Galante, Genève Baroque, Ensemble Lucidarium and Ensemble Odissee Orchestra.

In 2012, he co-founded Pizzicar Galante with mandolinist Anna Schivazappa, focusing on the galant repertoire for mandolin and basso continuo, and co-directed the ensemble until 2019. In 2015, he established L'Amorosa Caccia in Geneva with recorder player Tímea Nagy. As its artistic director, he devises programmes that explore the relationship between vocal models and their instrumental reworkings.

His recording *The Keyboard School at Gesualdo's Court*, devoted to Giovanni de Macque and his contemporaries (Brilliant Classics, 2014), was nominated for the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik in the Orgel & Cembalo category (Longlist 2/2015). *The Art of Variation*, featuring Sweelinck's secular keyboard cycles (Challenge Classics, 2023), won the award in the *Tasteninstrumente* II category (Bestenliste 2/2023). His recordings have been broadcast by the BBC, RAI, Radio France, BR-Klassik and other international radio stations.

Falcone holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from the University of Geneva. His thesis examined the teaching of keyboard improvisation through pedagogical sources from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. He is a lecturer in music didactics at the University of Geneva and a member of the DAM research group in the didactics of the arts, music and movement.

FESTIVALS & CONCERT HALLS

Festival MiTo Milan-Turin, Les concerts de Midi Sorbonne Paris, Festival de Musiques Anciennes de la Réole, Festival Luths et Théorbes Genève, Festival Embar(o)quement immédiat, Festival Frisson Baroque, Sala Puccini Conservatorio di Milano, Festival baroque de Sézanne, Festival Sinfonia en Périgueux, Fondazione Giorgio Cini Venise, Festival Minimes Bruxelles, Festival baroque du Pays du Mont Blanc, Maison de la Radio France, Chapelle de la Salpêtrière Paris, Festival Off Vevey-Montreux, Concerti di San Torpete Gênes, Summerwinds Festival Münster, Kunsthalle Lingen, Early Music Festival Bad Arolsen, Concerts d'Anacréon Angers, Musik Hochschule Cologne, Les Inédits de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France Paris, The Sypert Summer Concert Series Edinburgh

GUÁRDAME LAS VACAS

Glosas and *diferencias* of the Spanish Renaissance

Antonio and Hernando de Cabezón

The *glosas* of Antonio and Hernando de Cabezón are rooted in the culture of emulation that runs through the Renaissance. In choosing Franco-Flemish chansons and Italian madrigals from among the most widely circulated works of their day, the two musicians engage with a repertoire recognised as authoritative throughout Europe. Their keyboard elaborations reflect this ambition: to preserve a work's individuality while bringing fresh compositional thinking to it.

In Antonio's *diferencias*, the theme can appear already elaborated at the outset, while the variations flow into one another through transitions that blur their boundaries. This conception of variation as a continuous musical flow characterises several of the variation cycles brought together in this programme. The tune of *Guárdame las vacas*, to which Cabezón returns several times, gives the recital its name.

Instrument

Solo harpsichord



"A fine musician, who plays on equally sublime instruments.

— PRIMARILY REVIEWING CLASSICAL MUSIC, 2/2015



“ Falcone is an outstanding player who delivers captivating interpretations.

— MUSICA DEI DONUM, 11/2018

PLUS NE REGRETS

Renaissance frottole and diminutions of chansons

Andrea Antico and Marco Antonio Cavazzoni

In Antico’s *frottole*, words can still guide the performance, even on pages where they are no longer written down. Published in 1517, these keyboard versions draw on pieces by Tromboncino and Cara. Fabio Antonio Falcone returns to the poems behind these pieces to recover their stresses and breathing spaces, even when this means shifting the points of emphasis suggested by the music.

Six years later, Cavazzoni published his *Recerchari, motetti, canzoni* in Venice. His chansons are freely reworked; his ricercari unfold in broad chords and rapid passages that range across the keyboard. Bringing these two books together, the recital moves between the eloquence of the frottole and the momentum of the ricercari.

Instruments

Virginal, clavicytherium and ottavino; harpsichord optional

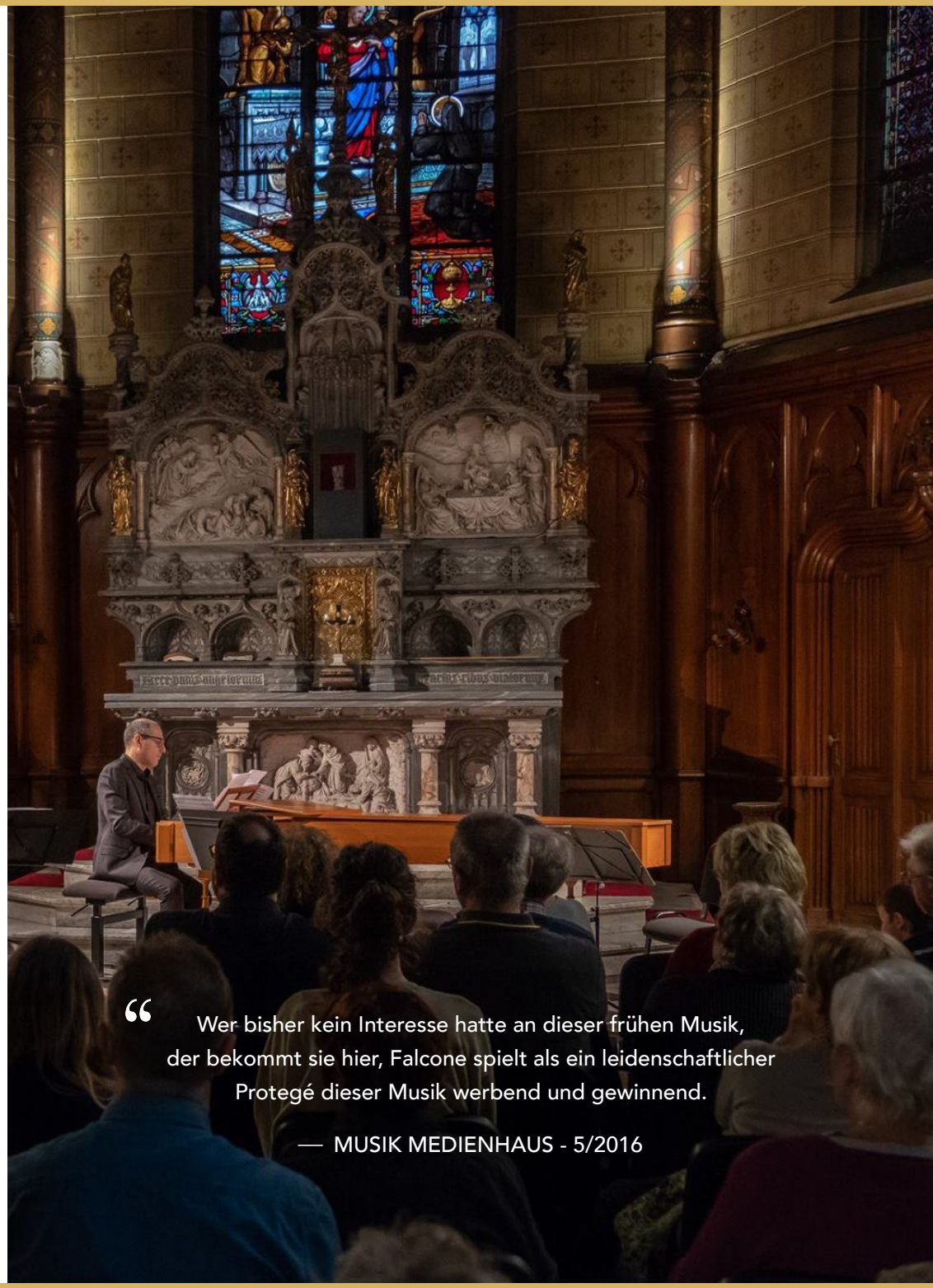
THE QUEENES ALMAN

Keyboard music in the time of Elizabeth I

William Byrd and Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

In Elizabeth I's England, the music of the virginalists flourishes alongside Shakespeare's theatre. The queen herself plays the virginal, and this recital pays tribute to the musical world of her reign. William Byrd's pavans, galliards and variations take centre stage.
The programme pairs them with works by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, whose variations on familiar tunes bear witness to close links with the English tradition. The presence of several of his pieces in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book is a reminder of how this music circulated between England and the Netherlands.

Instruments
Virginal and harpsichord



"Wer bisher kein Interesse hatte an dieser frühen Musik, der bekommt sie hier, Falcone spielt als ein leidenschaftlicher Protegé dieser Musik werbend und gewinnend.

— MUSIK MEDIENHAUS - 5/2016



“ [...] un jeu plein de finesse et de libre lyrisme.

— CLICMAG, Sélection du mois, 05/2018

NON NA EL SO AMANTE

The Italian Trecento at the keyboard

Works from *Codex Faenza*

The *Codex Faenza* preserves intabulations of madrigals and *ballate* by Landini, Jacopo da Bologna and Bartolino da Padova. Their virtuosic writing often treats the original vocal melodies with considerable freedom. Fragments of the song emerge among new melodic figures, then recede once more. Compiled in the early fifteenth century, this collection is among the rare surviving written records of a flourishing instrumental practice. This recital explores the manuscript’s Italian repertoire on clavicytherium and clavicymbalum with hammer action.

Instruments

Clavicytherium and clavicymbalum with hammer action

IL BALLO DEL GRANDUCA

VARIATIONS ON SONGS AND DANCES

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

One evening at his home in Amsterdam, Sweelinck plays for friends and does not stop until midnight. Willem Baudaert, who was there, recalls familiar tunes varied at the harpsichord in at least twenty-five different ways.
This spirit of play runs through the secular variation cycles, revealing Sweelinck's mischievous side. A dance from the Medici festivities in Florence, the *Ballo del Granduca*, sits alongside the Pavana Lachrimae, borrowed from Dowland, and the solemnity of *Mein junges Leben* hat ein End. These melodies from across Europe inspire music that moves with ease from the energy of dance to quiet reflection.
Fabio Antonio Falcone's album *The Art of Variation* (Challenge Classics, 2023) is devoted to this repertoire. It was recorded on the historic 1632 Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Neuchâtel.

Instruments
Virginal et clavecin



"En dit doet Falcone zeer elegant. Met oog voor kleur en contrast blaast hij Sweelincks seculiere variaties nieuw leven in. En het timbre van het gekozen Johannes Ruckers instrument weet Falcone daarbij volledig naar zijn hand te zetten.

— KLASSIEK-CENTRAAL, 1/2023

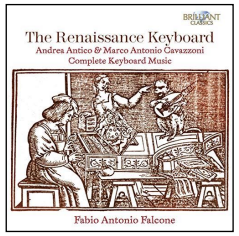
Selected discography

Solo recordings



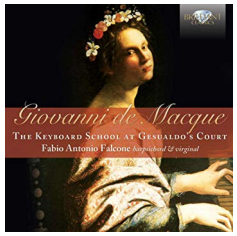
Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck
The Art of Variation - Secular Cycles
Challenge Records 2023

“ Falcone’s sinewy technique highlights the robust rhythms of Sweelinck’s many dance-inspired pieces, notably the stately allemande Esce mars, the Pavana Hispanica and the Ballo di Gran Duca – a showcase of athletic passagework and figurations. Throughout, the playing is poised, gracious and rhetorically phrased
— BBC Music Magazine, 02/2023



Andrea Antico & Marco Antonio Cavazzoni
The Renaissance Keyboard
Brilliant Classics 2015

“ Der mit dieser Musik hörbar bestens vertraute Fabio Antonio Falcone weiß dies alles so musikantisch und ausdrucksvoll darzustellen, dass sich Befürchtungen etwaig aufkommender Langeweile angesichts dieses «einseitig» anmutenden Repertoires rasch zerstreuten und man gerne auch über längere Strecken hinweg zuhört.
— Journal für die Orgel, 3/2015



Giovanni de Macque
The Keyboard School at Gesualdo's Court
Brilliant Classics, 2014

“ Fabio Antonio Falcone spielt alles auf zwei wunderbar klingenden und sehr gut aufgenommenen Kopien zweier italienischer Instrumente jener Zeit, hat eine lebendige, präzise und sehr für sich einnehmende Art, die Musik zu vermitteln.
— Prospero, Forum für alte Musik, 2/2015

With L’Amorosa Caccia

Antonio and Hernando de Cabezón ▪ Guardame las vacas (Glaux Records 2026)
Faenza, an Imaginary Codex (Challenge Classics CC720006 · 2025)
Antonio Valente ▪ Intavolatura de cimbalo (Brilliant Classics 2018)

Historical keyboards

All the instruments presented here were built by Roberto Livi after fifteenth- and sixteenth-century models.

Neapolitan harpsichord

R.L., 2017, after an anonymous instrument dating from c. 1550, preserved at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Disposition: 1 × 8′, 1 × 4′.

Italian polygonal virginal

R.L., 1999, after an instrument by Domenico da Pesaro dating from c. 1550, preserved in Berlin.

Clavicymbalum with hammer action

R.L., 2020, after Arnault de Zwolle's drawing of c. 1450.

Clavicytherium

R.L., 2016, after an anonymous instrument dating from c. 1480, preserved at the Royal College of Music, London.

Ottavino

R.L., 2020, after an anonymous instrument dating from c. 1550, preserved at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Contact

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