

The background of the entire cover is a detailed painting of ancient ruins. On the left, a tall, multi-story brick tower stands prominently, partially covered in ivy. To its right, a series of lower, rectangular stone structures with arched openings, resembling a colonnade or a series of small temples, stretch across the middle ground. The ruins are situated on a grassy hillside. In the far distance, rolling hills and mountains are visible under a soft, hazy sky. The overall color palette is warm, with earthy tones of red, orange, and brown for the ruins, and greens for the vegetation.

PIANO
CLASSICS

Czerny

DER PIANIST IM
KLASSISCHEN STYLE OP.856

48 PRELUDES & FUGUES

Emanuele Delucchi

1853 Pleyel

CARL CZERNY (1791-1857)

DER PIANIST IM KLASSISCHEN STYLE OP.856 (1857) 48 PRELUDES & FUGUES

1. Prelude in C Allegretto	2'31	14. Fugue in E-flat Allegro	2'52	25. Prelude in G-flat		37. Prelude in A	
2. Fugue in C Allegro		15. Prelude in C minor		Allegro con fuoco	1'29	Allegro comodo vivace	1'44
Moderato e maestoso	2'59	Vivace affettuoso	1'33	26. Fugue in G-flat		38. Fugue in A Allegro risoluto	2'17
3. Prelude in A minor		16. Fugue in C minor Andante		Allegro vivace giocoso	2'32	39. Prelude in F-sharp minor	
Allegro animato	1'17	serioso, ma con moto	4'25	27. Prelude in E-flat minor		Allegro	1'27
4. Fugue in A minor		17. Prelude in A-flat Allegretto		Allegro vivace	1'17	40. Fugue in F-sharp minor	
Allegro moderato	4'20	espressivo e cantabile	1'56	28. Fugue in E-flat minor Allegro		Allegro vivace	2'09
5. Prelude in F		18. Fugue in A-flat		moderato ma energico	3'14	41. Prelude in D	
Andante cantabile	2'23	Allegro risoluto	2'33	29. Prelude in B Allegro vivace	1'59	Andante serioso	2'42
6. Fugue in F Allegro	3'01	19. Prelude in F minor		30. Fugue in B		42. Fugue in D	
7. Prelude in D minor		Molto allegro e agitato	1'50	Moderato e maestoso	4'01	Allegro risoluto ed energico	3'22
Allegro agitato	2'07	20. Fugue in F minor Lento		31. Prelude in G-sharp minor		43. Prelude in B minor	
8. Fugue in D minor		moderato ed espressivo	4'42	Adagio melancolico	2'31	Allegretto affettuoso	1'36
Andante con moto	3'30	21. Prelude in D-flat Allegro		32. Fugue in A-flat minor		44. Fugue in B minor Andante	
9. Prelude in B-flat		moderato e tranquillo	2'18	Allegro veloce	3'28	cantabile, poco moto	3'53
Andante tranquillo	2'32	22. Fugue in D-flat		33. Prelude in E Andante		45. Prelude in G Moderato	1'48
10. Fugue in B-flat		Allegro comodo	2'35	sostenuto cantando	1'54	46. Fugue in G Allegro	
Allegro con spirito	3'49	23. Prelude in B-flat minor Andante		34. Fugue in E Molto		commodo ma deciso	3'36
11. Prelude in G minor		sostenuto con espressione	2'53	vivace e con allegrezza	2'39	47. Prelude in E minor	
Allegro serioso	2'00	24. Fugue in B-flat minor		35. Prelude in C-sharp minor		Allegro vivace	2'11
12. Fugue in G minor Moderato	4'33	Andante cantabile, mesto		Allegro vivace affettuoso	2'27	48. Fugue in E minor	
13. Prelude in E-flat		ed espressivo	4'48	36. Fugue in C-sharp minor		Lento espressivo	4'35
Andante moderato	2'13			Andante serioso	4'25		

Emanuele Delucchi *piano*
1853 Pleyel

The interest that **Carl Czerny** (1791-1857) nurtured for the fugue, especially regarding the piano, unquestionably derived from his familiarity with Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, a collection that was widely admired at the time and closely studied by the youthful Carl during the period of his early lessons with his father, himself a pianist and teacher. The importance that Czerny attributed to a genre that was actually beginning to lose favour among audiences also relates to the fact that the *Well-Tempered Clavier* had likewise been fundamental for Beethoven, who was shortly to become Czerny's teacher and in due course also his friend.

The first fugue to feature in the extensive catalogue of Czerny's works was the finale of the *Piano Sonata No.1* Op.7 (1822), which was followed by a small number of remarkable individual fugues that became part of the repertoire for the composer's relatively short-lived experience as a concert pianist. Through to 1857, he produced a collection of exercises and studies whose sheer number has more recently attracted the epithet "industrial output". These pieces reveal the composer's almost obsessive approach, with the appearance of opus numbers ending in "00" applied to specialized sectors. Op.200 (1829) is devoted to the art of "*Fantasieren*", or improvisation in various styles, including a brief encounter with the serious art of the fugue.

Conceived as the second part of Op.200, Op.300 (1833) bears the title *Die Kunst der Praeludieren* (The Art of the Prelude). In 1836 Czerny had the nerve to publish a *Schule des Fugenspiels* (School of Fugue Playing) Op.400, dedicated to Mendelssohn. It comprises 12 Preludes and Fugues that represent the first attempt to update what was considered an outmoded genre. It wasn't the form or the practice of counterpoint as such that were deemed obsolete, since both were used by the musicians of the first Viennese school as a way of embracing a sort of superior cosmic order (Haydn, Mozart), or exacerbating expressive content (Beethoven in much

of the "late period"). It was simply that no one during those years spent time writing collections of Prelude and Fugues, except for teaching or experimental purposes. Granted, in 1837 Mendelssohn certainly published a new collection of 6 Preludes and Fugues, but these were an innovative mixture of the early "serious style" and the expressive intent of a new creative era. What's more, Mendelssohn's contribution was part of a much wider effort aimed at the recovery of Baroque music and the works of Bach in particular. Indeed, it is no coincidence that Czerny also published his revised edition of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* in 1837.

Several years were to pass before he returned to the subject, however. The Op.603 and 607 *Organ Preludes and Fugues* were later followed by the *Esercizio fugato* Op.768 published by Ricordi in 1845 during Czerny's stay in Lombardy, and by an *Impromptu fugué* Op.765. But it was with the *Nouveau Gradus ad Parnassum* (1853), a collection of 46 studies and fugues that clearly owed its title to Clementi's earlier publication, and the 24 preludes and fugues contained in the anthology *Der Pianist im klassischen Style* of 1857, published only in Germany and dedicated to Liszt, that Czerny expounded his definitive take on a genre that had long lingered in the background. Granted, prior to 1857 there had been numerous and varied efforts pointing in the same general direction, including Liszt's non classical approach to the fugue in his *Sonata in B minor* (1853), which was more radical than Beethoven's handling of the genre in his late works. The Fugue had become a sort of mysterious dialogue between Faust and Mephistopheles on the great themes of human existence.

We know very little about the genesis of the collection of *Preludes and Fugues* Op.856. The frontispiece of the printed edition mentions in the subtitle that the works should be considered "a preparatory study for the complete interpretation of all the most important compositions", which

smacks more of a sales pitch on the publisher's part than an indication that Czerny truly thought of them as teaching tools. The range of interests and approaches they embrace is so wide that they would be cramped within the confines of anything less than pure creativity. Likewise for a long time the *Well-Tempered Clavier* suffered the constraints of being considered a teaching tool, albeit an excellent one, before finally gaining recognition as part of the repertoire deemed worthy of recordings and concert performances.

The Austrian musicologist Otto Biba, a consummate expert in the music of Czerny, has suggested that Czerny dedicated his Op.856 to Liszt on account of their mutual admiration as teachers. In actual fact, however, Czerny's outstanding pupil, who was then at the height of his fame, devoted considerable time and attention to counterpoint and J.S. Bach during the 1850s. Liszt's grand *Fantasy and Fugue* for organ on the chorale *Ad nos, ad salutarem undam* from Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* was composed in 1850, followed in 1852 by the piano transcriptions of six of Bach's twelve grand Preludes and Fugues for the organ, and in 1855 by the first version of the Prelude and Fugue on the name B.A.C.H. These were works that launched a genre widely adopted by the foremost composer-pianists of the 19th century and beyond. It's truly a pity that no written evidence has come down to us of Liszt's reaction to the dedication to him of the Op.856 on the part of his beloved childhood teacher.

We also know nothing about how the critics reacted to the publication of Czerny's Op.856, though Robert Schumann was certainly dismissive of the earlier Op.400, accusing Czerny of insisting on an obsolete genre without renewing in any way the classic models established by Bach. He even found fault with Czerny's creativity, with the way he avoided the formal procedures that make the fugue interesting: transformations of the subject

through augmentation, diminution, inversion, crab canons and layering two or more themes or using subject and countersubject in the Handel fashion. The Op.400 fugues don't come out too well in Schumann's critical appraisal, also because he did not approve of repeating passages with the same figuration at different pitches. The same complaints could also be applied, at least in part, to Op.856, though here Czerny had perhaps taken heed of Schumann's criticism, making more of an effort to avoid comparisons with the counterpoint of Bach and Handel and integrating the early scholarly style with the "galant" style that preceded the Biedermeier period and the great revolutionary upheavals of 1848.

The 24 fugues of Op.856 reveal that Czerny often adopted some of the classical counterpoint devices, especially diminution and augmentation of the theme. Another salient feature in two of them is the inclusion of a short counterpoint intermezzo that is independent of the basic thematic material: in the *Fugue No.14* in E flat major, one of the loveliest of the collection, and in the *Fugue No.22* in D flat major. This is a contrivance that Beethoven had also used in the Op.106 Sonata, where he introduced a new idea just before the end of the great 3-voice Fugue, at the end of a particularly arduous counterpoint development. Homages to Bach and Handel are also frequent: for instance, in the theme of *Fugue No.30*, which resembles in some respects Bach's *Fugue in E major* from the second book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*; and in *No.12 in G minor* and *No.48 in E minor*, both of which feature fugues reminiscent of Handel, with subject and countersubject.

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Translation by Kate Singleton

EMANUELE DELUCCHI

Emanuele Delucchi (1987) lives and works in Milan. He studied with Canzio Bucciarelli (Genoa), Riccardo Risaliti (Imola) and Davide Cabassi (Bolzano), graduating in piano and composition. He gives solo recitals and sings with orchestras and in chamber music ensembles in Italy (MiTo festival, GOG season, Sagra Malatestiana etc) and abroad. He also composes and lectures on the history of music. Acclaimed by Italian (Chierici, Ciammarughi, Foletto) and foreign critics (Nicholas, Distler), he has recorded for the following labels: Toccata (Alkan/Vianna da Motta, with Vincenzo Maltempo), Piano Classics (Godowsky and D'Albert) and Dynamic (Beethoven/Drouet, with Fabio De Rosa). His complete recordings of the *Studien* by Leopold Godowsky were received with enthusiasm by the specialized press (Disc of the month ClassicVoice, Gramophone, Piano news etc). He was the first Italian to perform and record the Piano Concerto by Ch.-V. Alkan (Lecce, 2009) and he gave the first performance in modern times of the Op.856 by Czerny (Milan, 2017). He teaches piano and music history at the Cluster music school in Milan. In February 2020 in Padua he was awarded the Arrigo Boito Prize for his musical achievements. His compositions are published by Map (Milan) and by Da Vinci Publishing (Osaka).



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