

Thomas Fortmann was born in Switzerland and became a successful songwriter during the 70s, while also engaging in an international golfing career. He wrote his first hit at the age of 16, which was followed by over a hundred titles released in more than 27 countries. Famous German rock stars such as Udo Lindenberg, Love Generation, Jürgen Drews and others, as well as British artists, e.g. Alexis Korner and Italian singer Daniela Davoli have recorded his songs. He composed the music for the musical Tell, which created a scandal in Switzerland.

At the age of 26, Thomas abandoned his career as a rock musician and dedicated himself to further studies in composition and instrumentation. This period formed the foundation for many chamber works, Lieder, two Symphonies, Concerti, an Oratorio etc. He received scholarships and commissions from the towns of Zurich and Bern, Swiss Federal Office for Culture, European Union, Opera of Zurich, Open Opera St. Gallen, Espace Nuithonie, Murten Classics, Gaia Festival, Connaissez-vous Basel, Mozart Festival Trento, Salerno Pianofestival, University of Houston, Carnegie Hall NY, etc. In the mid-80s Thomas and his family moved to Tuscany where he founded the Accademia Amiata and its Festival Toscana delle Culture and 2016 the International ClaZZ Festival.

The music of Thomas Fortmann does not subscribe to any particular school of thought. He studied the various composition techniques, but maintained a critical point of view towards them. This led to the development of a notably personal style, often uniting different, sometimes even contrary impulses of the modern. Formalistic concepts seem to serve him mainly as a tool and play-ground, resulting in very original ideas. It is, however, always important to him, despite the frequent use of complex structures, to directly communicate with the listener and make an emotional impact.

The title **Gimme Twelve** refers to every composition on this recording, because I use the 12 notes of the chromatic scale in all of them.

Keeping the balance between constructive thinking and sensuous feeling is similar to the image of the girl balancing the elephant on this album's cover. With her naivety, this seems easy for her — with mine, it is easy for me too. During this process I use both traditional dodecaphonic methods as well as new ones of my own. I would call these 'complementary' methods, e.g. a theme consisting of a certain number of tones is supplemented, completed or juxtaposed with a second theme which includes the complementary notes to the twelve.

However, I always consider such methods only as creative games without doctrinal adherence. They can formally determine a whole composition or only parts of it. I often intend to bring particularly constructive moments into a tonal context, because I doubt a general, acoustic atonality. Not so much because of Hindemith's argument that the overtones intersect somewhere and thus always create a tonal point, but because the terms 'tonal' and 'atonal' refer to the eye to analyze and classify a linear - formal process, whereas the ear reacts much faster and can immediately determine a vertical tonal context in a musical progression.

Having illustrated the formal handcraft, I would now like to add a few remarks about its content:

- ➤ Grafeneck 1940 I composed for the commemoration of the 10654 mentally and physically handicapped people, who were murdered by the Nazi regime, in the first gas chamber at Castle Grafeneck in Germany in 1940. The entire concert (with music by Helmut Lipsky and me) pays homage to these victims. Grafeneck 1940 is the last piece, reflecting the journey of a single person, leaving the mental institution on those grey buses (electric violin), travelling to the castle, their arrival and their death. The tempo in sixty is marked at the end with a metronome. Each beat stands for a victim and it would last about 3 hours to illustrate the amount of 10654!
- The Murder of a Buttercup is a short story by Alfred Döblin. The story deals with the inadvertent psychological development of a businessman who believes himself to be haunted by a buttercup he murdered during a stroll in the forest. Döblin's short story is considered one of the seminal prose texts of expressionism. The music follows the storyline with clear indications in the score.
- ➤ In the three movements of the **Concertino Gregoriano** all Gregorian scales appear with their typical idioms in often rapid succession and are partially complemented to a totality of twelve tones. Despite the rhythmic jazzy expression, the first movement is a **Ciaccona**, and the last movement is a **Giga**.

- ➤ The Intermezzo Estatico and the Postlude are two short instrumental pieces from my chamber opera Vaudeville for Leontine.
- ➤ **Gimme Twelve** pays homage to three composers: the first theme is formed from the names Messiaen and Bach, and the second from the name of Arnold Schoenberg.
- ➤ I was sitting under the oak trees at our home in Tuscany my favorite place to compose while my grandchildren were playing catch, running back and forth, laughing. The joyful energy of their play inspired me to write the **Burla for Elena and Greta**.

1 Recorded by Riccardo Cavalieri - August 2017- Teatro degli Unanimi, Arcidosso, Italy

2 Recorded by Gerald Hahnefeld - May 2018- Klösterli Oberhofen, Switzerland

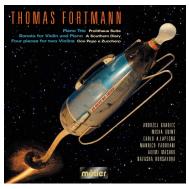
3 Recorded by Krzysztof Gawlas - June 2019- Conservatory Hall, Habsburg Palace Cieszyn, Poland

4 & 9 Recorded by Valter Neri, Murten Classics - August 2018- Murten, Switzerland

5 & 6 & 7 Recorded by Valter Neri -July 2015- Teatro degli Unanimi, Arcidosso, Italy

8 Recorded by Valter Neri -September 2019- Chiesa di Sant'Ermete, Forte dei Marmi, Italy Mastering: Georg Gabler @ Gab Music Factory, Austria

Cover: Painting from 'Robi the Dog' (Street Art), courtesy of Prolitheus Pfenninger Graphic design: Pia Loertscher



Métier MSV 28534

IN DUST WE TRUST

Thomas Fortmann is revealed here as a skillful and intuitive chamber music composer.

The Piano Trio 'Prolitheus Suite', is a well constructed work...

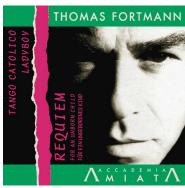
Fortmann displays a notable range of dramatic effect, resulting in a fine contemporary example of the classic piano trio...

It is clever, elegant, and compelling, which is a good general description of Fortmann's work in general.

Peter Burwasser -Fanfare-

Fortmann has achieved a distinctly personal style. I greatly admire the energy, both musical and intellectual, that Fortmann has put into his music.

Gary Higginson - MusicWeb-



Divine Art DDA 25047

Tango Catolico Ladyboy Requiem for an Unborn Child

Tango Catolico only hints at the tango. The rhythms are all shot to pieces, which makes the work all the more interesting. Ladyboy is a sharply atonal work of cogent phrasing and distinct sonic colors, none of them predictable, all of them interesting.

Within his first few opening bars one is aware that the music possesses an integral sense of direction, sure compositional integrity, and a degree of emotional content that immediately engages the attention. Howard Smith -Sound & Vision-



Métier MSV 28512

SAX Music

This album 'SAX Music' gathers together for the first time all of his works composed for the saxophone, and show Fortmann's development as a key composer for the instrument.

John Pitt -New Classic-

Fortmann is no stuffed shirt, no long-hair merchant, and no purveyor of tone rows...

His work for saxophone quartet is interesting - genial and tuneful - and engaging it is too.

Jonathan Woolf -MusicWeb-



Etruria

The second symphony Etruria is based on Pythagorean ideas and is characteristic of Fortmann's eclectic style.

An original and very personal synthesis of different musical roots ... - all in all a light-flowing yet structural very dense music, varied and exciting to play and listen to.

Walter Kläy -Swiss Music Journal-

His compositions somehow overcome the problematic in contemporary music and aim at a post-modern, without, however, denying what happened to music in this century. Il Tirenno, Italy

'A real treat for the open eared.' Chris Spector -MidWest Record-

1 Grafeneck 1940

21:52

MSV 28598

ACCADEMIA AMIATA Helmut Lipsky (VI) Federico Poli (Perc) Carlo A. Lapegna (Pno)

2 Burla for Elena & Greta

8:56

GAIA FESTIVAL Christoffer Sundqvist (Cl)

Gina Maria Mc Guinness & Pil Kyun Paul Kim (VI) Lars Anders Tomter & Vladimir Mendelssohn (Vla) Dóra Kokas & Natalie Clein (Vcl) Cédric Pescia (Pno)

3 The Murder of a Buttercup 10:56

CAMERATA IMPULS Conductor: Malgorzata Kaniowska Soloist: Grażyna Jursza (Fl)

4 Intermezzo Estatico

3.32

ENSEMBLE PAUL KLEE Kaspar Zehnder (Fl) Barnabás Völgyesi (Cl) Philippe Talec (Vl), Matthias Schranz (Vcl)

Ivan Nestic (DB)

Daniel Brylewski (Pno)

Christoph Vogt (Dms & Perc)

Concertino Gregoriano

12:40

Interharmony Arcidosso

5 Ciaccona6 Gregoriano

5:31

7 Giga

3:30

James Ryon (Ob/Ob. d'Am) Antonio Galella (Cl)

Lun-Yun Chang (Bn) Miroslav Hristov (VI)

Yuri Gandelsman (Vla)

Misha Quint (Vcl) Irina Nuzova (Pno)

Irina Nuzova (Pno

8 Gimme Twelve

Ettore Candela, organ

10:58

9 Postlude

3:42

Ensemble Paul Klee

TOTAL 73:18



