

= Ferruccio Busoni =

Ferruccio Busoni ( 1 April 1866 ? 27 July 1924 ) ( given names : Ferruccio Dante Michelangiolo Benvenuto ) was an Italian composer , pianist , conductor , editor , writer , and teacher . His international career and reputation meant that he met and had close relations with many of the leading musicians , artists and literary figures of his time , and he was sought @-@ after both as a keyboard instructor and a teacher of composition .

Busoni was born in Empoli , just south of Florence ; he was the son of professional musicians . Initially trained by his father , he later studied at the Vienna Conservatory and then with Wilhelm Mayer and Carl Reinecke . In the ensuing years , after brief periods teaching in Helsinki and Moscow , he devoted himself to composing , teaching , and touring as a virtuoso pianist in Europe and the United States . His writings on music were influential ; they covered not only aesthetics but considerations of microtones and other innovative topics . He was based in Berlin from 1894 but spent much of World War I in Switzerland .

Busoni was an outstanding ( if sometimes controversial ) pianist from an early age . He began composing in his early years in a late romantic style , but after 1907 , when he published his Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music , he developed a more individual style , often with elements of atonality . His visits to America led to interest in North American indigenous tribal melodies which were reflected in some of his works . His compositions include works for piano , including a monumental Piano Concerto , and transcriptions of the works of others , notably Johann Sebastian Bach which appeared in the Bach @-@ Busoni Edition . His other compositions include chamber music , vocal and orchestral works , and also operas , one of which , Doktor Faust , was left unfinished at the time of his death . Busoni died in Berlin at the age of 58 .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early career = = =

Busoni was born in the Tuscan town of Empoli , the only child of two professional musicians , Ferdinando , a clarinetist , and Anna ( née Weiss ) , a pianist . The family shortly afterwards moved to Trieste . A child prodigy , largely taught by his father , he began performing and composing at the age of seven . In an autobiographical note he comments " My father knew little about the pianoforte and was erratic in rhythm , so he made up for these shortcomings with an indescribable combination of energy , severity and pedantry . " Busoni made his public debut as a pianist in a concert with his parents at the Schiller @-@ Verein in Trieste on 24 November 1873 playing the first movement of Mozart 's Sonata in C Major , and pieces by Schumann and Clementi . Commercially promoted by his parents in a series of further concerts , he was later to say " I never had a childhood . " In 1875 he made his concerto début playing Mozart 's Piano Concerto No. 24 .

From the ages of nine to eleven , with the help of a patron , Busoni studied at the Vienna Conservatory . His first performances in Vienna were glowingly received by the critic Eduard Hanslick . In 1877 he heard the playing of Franz Liszt , and was introduced to the composer who admired his performance . In the following year he composed a four @-@ movement concerto for piano and string quartet . Leaving Vienna he had a brief period of study in Graz with Wilhelm Mayer , and conducted a performance of his own composition Stabat Mater , Op. 55 in the composer 's initial numbering sequence , ( BV 119 , now lost ) in 1879 . Other early pieces were published at this time , including settings of Ave Maria ( Opp . 1 and 2 , BV 67 ) and some piano pieces .

Busoni was elected in 1881 to the Accademia Filharmonica of Bologna , the youngest person to receive this honour since Mozart . In the mid 1880s he was based in Vienna where he met with Karl Goldmark and helped to prepare the vocal score for the latter 's 1886 opera , Merlin . He also met Johannes Brahms , to whom he dedicated two sets of piano Etudes , and who recommended him to undertake study in Leipzig with Carl Reinecke . During this period he supported himself by giving recitals , and also by the financial support of a patron , the Baronin von Tedesco . He also continued

to compose , and made his first attempt at an opera , Sigune , which he worked on from 1886 to 1889 before abandoning the project . In a letter he describes how , finding himself penniless in Leipzig , he appealed to the publisher Schwalm to take his compositions . Schwalm demurred but said he would commission a fantasy on Peter Cornelius 's opera The Barber of Baghdad for fifty marks down , and a hundred on completion . The next morning Busoni turned up at Schwalm 's office , and asked for 150 marks , handing over the completed work : " I worked from nine at night to three thirty , without a piano , and not knowing the opera beforehand . "

= = = Helsingfors , Moscow , America 1888 ? 1894 = = =

In 1888 the musicologist Hugo Riemann recommended Busoni to Martin Wegelius , director of the Institute of Music at Helsingfors ( now Helsinki , Finland , then part of the Russian Empire ) , for the vacant position of advanced piano instructor . This was Busoni 's first permanent post . Amongst his close colleagues and associates there were the conductor and composer Armas Järnefelt , the writer Adolf Paul , and the composer Jean Sibelius , with whom he struck up a continuing friendship . Paul described Busoni at this time as " a small , slender Italian with chestnut beard , grey eyes , young and gay , with ... a small round cap perched proudly on his thick artist 's curls " . Between 1888 and 1890 Busoni gave about thirty piano recitals and chamber concerts in Helsingfors ; amongst his compositions at this period were a set of Finnish folksongs for piano duet Op. 27 . In 1889 , visiting Leipzig , he heard a performance on the organ of JS Bach 's Toccata and Fugue in D minor ( BWV 565 ) , and was persuaded by his pupil Kathi Petri ( the mother of his future pupil Egon Petri , then only 5 years old ) , to transcribe it for piano . Busoni 's biographer Edward Dent writes that " This was not only the beginning of [ his ] transcriptions , but ... the beginning of that style of pianoforte touch and technique which was entirely [ Busoni 's ] creation . " Returning to Helsingfors , in March of the same year Busoni met his future wife , Gerda Sjöstrand , the daughter of the Swedish sculptor Carl Eneas Sjöstrand , and proposed to her within a week . For her he composed Kultaselle ( Finnish : To the beloved ) for cello and piano ( published 1891 without opus number , BV 237 ) .

In 1890 Busoni published his first edition of works of JS Bach ( the two- and three @-@ part Inventions ) . In the same year he won the prize for composition , with his Konzertstück ( " Concert Piece " ) for piano and orchestra Op. 31a ( BV 236 ) , at the first Anton Rubinstein Competition , initiated by Anton Rubinstein himself at the St. Petersburg Conservatory . As a consequence he was invited to visit and teach at the Moscow Conservatoire . Gerda joined him in Moscow where they promptly married . His first concert in Moscow , when he performed Beethoven 's Emperor Concerto , was warmly received . But living in Moscow did not suit the Busonis for both financial and professional reasons ; he felt excluded by his nationalistically @-@ inclined Russian colleagues . So when he received an approach from William Steinway to teach at the Boston New England Conservatory of Music he was happy to take the opportunity , particularly as the conductor at that time of the Boston Symphony Orchestra was Arthur Nikisch , whom he had known since 1876 , when they performed together at a concert in Vienna .

Busoni 's first son , Benvenuto ( known as Benni ) , was born in Boston in 1892 , but Busoni 's experience at the Boston Conservatory proved unsatisfactory . After a year he resigned from the Conservatory and launched himself into a series of recitals across the Eastern USA .

= = = Berlin 1893 ? 1913 : " A new epoch " = = =

In April 1893 Busoni was present at the Berlin premiere of Giuseppe Verdi 's opera Falstaff . The result was to force on him a re @-@ evaluation of the potential of Italian musical traditions which he had so far ignored in favour of the German traditions , and in particular the models of Johannes Brahms and the orchestral techniques of Liszt and Richard Wagner . He immediately began to draft an adulatory letter to Verdi ( which he never summoned the courage to send ) , in which he addressed him as " Italy 's leading composer " and " one of the noblest persons of our time " , and in which he explained that " Falstaff provoked in me such a revolution of spirit that I can ... date the

beginning of a new epoch in my artistic life from that time . "

In 1894 Busoni settled in Berlin , which he henceforth regarded as his home base , except during the years around World War I. His earlier feelings about the city had been unsympathetic : in an 1889 letter to Gerda he had described it as " this Jewish city that I hate , irritating , idle , arrogant , parvenu " . The city was swiftly growing in population and influence at this period and determined to stake itself as the musical capital of the united Germany ; but as Busoni 's friend the English composer Bernard van Dieren points out " international virtuosi who for practical reasons chose Berlin as their abode were not so much concerned with questions of prestige " , and for Busoni the city 's development as " the centre of the musical industry [ was to ] develop an atmosphere which [ Busoni ] detested more than the deepest pool of stagnant convention " .

Berlin proved an excellent base for European tours . As in the previous two years in the USA Busoni had to depend for his living on exhausting but remunerative tours as a piano virtuoso ; in addition at this period he was remitting substantial amounts to his parents , who continued to depend on his income . As a recitalist Busoni 's programming and style initially raised concerns in some of Europe 's musical centres . His first concerts in London , in 1897 , met with mixed comments . The Musical Times reported that he " commenced in a manner to irritate the genuine amateurs [ i.e. music lovers ] by playing a ridiculous travesty of one of Bach 's masterly Organ Preludes and Fugues , but he made amends by an interpretation of Chopin 's Studies ( Op. 25 ) which was of course unequal but , on the whole , interesting " . In Paris the critic Arthur Dandelot commented " this artist has certainly great qualities of technique and charm " , but strongly objected to his addition of chromatic passages to parts of Liszt 's St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots .

Busoni 's international reputation swiftly rose and he frequently concertized in Berlin , the other European capitals and in European regional centres ( including Manchester , Birmingham , Marseilles , Florence , and many German and Austrian cities ) throughout this period , as well as returning to America for four visits between 1904 and 1915 : his wandering life led van Dieren to call him " a musical Ishmael " ( after the Biblical wanderer ) . The musicologist Anthony Beaumont considers Busoni 's six Liszt recitals in Berlin of 1911 as " the climax of Busoni 's pre @-@ war career as a pianist " .

Busoni 's performing commitments somewhat stifled his creative capacity during this period ; in 1896 he wrote " I have great success as a pianist , the composer I conceal for the present . " His monumental Piano Concerto ( which , in five movements , lasts over an hour and includes in its last movement an offstage male chorus ) was written between 1901 and 1904 . In 1904 and 1905 Busoni wrote his Turandot Suite as incidental music for Carlo Gozzi 's play Turandot . A major project undertaken at this time was the opera Die Brautwahl , based on a tale by E. T. A. Hoffmann , first performed ( to a lukewarm reception ) in Berlin in 1912 . Busoni also began to produce the solo piano works in which his maturer style was clearly revealed , including the Elegies ( BV 249 , 1907 ) , the suite An die Jugend ( BV 252 , 1909 ) and the first two piano sonatinas ( BV 257 , 1910 and BV 259 , 1912 ) .

In a series of orchestral concerts in Berlin between 1902 and 1909 , both as pianist and conductor , Busoni particularly promoted contemporary music from outside Germany ( though he avoided contemporary music , except for his own , in his solo recitals ) . The series , which was held at the Beethovensaal ( Beethoven Hall ) , included German premieres of music by Edward Elgar , Sibelius , César Franck , Claude Debussy , Vincent D 'Indy , Carl Nielsen and Béla Bartók . The concerts also included premieres of some of Busoni 's own works of the period , amongst them , in 1904 , the Piano Concerto , in which he was the soloist and the conductor was Karl Muck , in 1905 his Turandot Suite , and in 1907 his Comedy Overture . Music of older masters was included , but sometimes with an unexpected twist ? for example Beethoven 's Third Piano Concerto with the eccentric first movement cadenza by Charles @-@ Valentin Alkan ( which includes references to Beethoven 's Fifth Symphony ) . The concerts aroused much publicity but generated aggressive comments from critics . Couling suggests the programming of the concerts was " generally regarded as a provocation " .

During the period Busoni undertook teaching at masterclasses at Weimar , Vienna and Basel . In

1900 he was invited by Duke Karl @-@ Alexander of Weimar to lead a masterclass for fifteen young virtuosi . This concept was more amenable to Busoni than teaching formally in a Conservatory : the twice @-@ weekly seminars were successful and were repeated in the following year . Pupils included Maud Allan , who later became famous as a dancer and remained a friend . His experience in Vienna in 1907 was less satisfactory , although amongst his more rewarding pupils were Ignaz Friedman , Leo Sirota , Louis Gruenberg , Józef Turczyński and Louis Closson ; the latter four were dedicatees of pieces in Busoni 's 1909 piano album *An die Jugend* . But arguments with the Directorate of the Vienna Conservatoire , under whose auspices the classes were held , soured the atmosphere . In the autumn of 1910 Busoni gave masterclasses and also carried out a series of recitals in Basel .

In the years before World War I , Busoni steadily extended his contacts in the art world in general as well as amongst musicians . Arnold Schoenberg , with whom Busoni had been in correspondence since 1903 , settled in Berlin in 1911 partially as a consequence of Busoni lobbying on his behalf . In 1913 Busoni arranged at his own apartment a private performance of Schoenberg 's *Pierrot Lunaire* which was attended by , amongst others , Willem Mengelberg , Edgard Varèse , and Artur Schnabel . In Paris in 1912 Busoni had meetings with Gabriele D 'Annunzio who proposed collaboration in a ballet or opera . He also met with the Futurist artists Filippo Marinetti and Umberto Boccioni .

= = = Before and after World War I ( 1913 ? 1920 ) = = =

Following a series of concerts in Northern Italy in Spring 1913 , Busoni was offered the directorship of the Liceo Rossini in Bologna . He had recently moved to an apartment in Viktoria @-@ Luise @-@ Platz in Schöneberg , Berlin , but took up the offer , intending to spend his summers in Berlin . The posting proved not to be a success . Bologna was a cultural backwater , despite occasional visits from celebrities such as Isadora Duncan . Busoni 's piano pupils were untalented , and he had constant arguments with the local authorities . After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 , he asked for a year of absence to play an American tour ; in fact he was never to return . Virtually his sole permanent achievement at the school was to have modernized its sanitary facilities . He had however during this time composed another concertante work for piano and orchestra , the *Indian Fantasy* . The piece is based on melodies and rhythms from various American Indian tribes ; Busoni derived them from a book he had received from his former pupil , the ethnomusicologist Natalie Curtis Burlin during his 1910 tour of the USA . The work was premiered with Busoni as soloist in March 1914 in Berlin .

From June 1914 to January 1915 Busoni was in Berlin : as the native of a neutral country ( Italy ) living in Germany , the outbreak of war did not at first greatly concern him . During this period he began to work seriously on the libretto for his proposed opera *Doktor Faust* . In January 1915 he left for a concert tour of the USA , which was to be his last visit there . During this time he continued work on his Bach edition , including his version of the *Goldberg Variations* . On his return to Europe Italy had entered the War , and he therefore chose to base himself from 1915 in Switzerland . Here in Zürich he found local supporters in Volkmar Andreae , conductor of the Tonhalle Orchestra , and Philipp Jarnach . His friend José Vianna da Motta also taught piano at Geneva at this time . Andreae arranged for Busoni to give concerts with his orchestra . Jarnach , who was 23 when he met Busoni in 1915 , became Busoni 's indispensable assistant , among other things preparing piano scores of his operas ? Busoni referred to him as his " famulus " . While in America Busoni had already carried out further work on *Doktor Faust* and had written the libretto of his one @-@ act opera *Arlecchino* ? He completed *Arlecchino* in Zürich and , to provide a full evening at the theatre , reworked his earlier *Turandot* into a one @-@ act piece . The two were premiered together in Zürich in May 1917 .

In 1916 whilst visiting Italy , Busoni met again with the artist Boccioni , who painted his portrait ; Busoni was deeply affected when a few months later Boccioni was killed ( in a riding accident ) whilst on military training , and published a strongly anti @-@ war article . An expanded re @-@ issue of Busoni 's 1907 work *A New Esthetic of Music* led to a virulent counter @-@ attack from the German composer Hans Pfitzner and an extended war of words . Busoni continued to experiment

with microtones ; in America he had obtained some harmonium reeds tuned in third @-@ tones , and he claimed that he " had worked out the theory of a system of thirds of tones in two rows , each separated from each other by a semitone " .

Although Busoni met with many other artistic personalities who were also basing themselves in Switzerland during the war ( including Stephan Zweig and James Joyce ? the former noting Busoni 's extensive drinking ) he soon found his circumstances limiting . After the end of the war , he again undertook concert tours in England , Paris and Italy . In London he met with the composer Kaikhosru Sorabji who played to him his Second Piano Sonata ( which he dedicated to Busoni ) ; Busoni was sufficiently impressed to write for Sorabji a letter of recommendation . When Busoni 's former pupil Leo Kestenberg , now an official at the Ministry of Culture in the German Weimar Republic , invited him to return to Germany , with the promise of a teaching post and productions of his operas , he was very glad to take the opportunity .

= = = Last years ( 1920 ? 1924 ) = = =

In 1920 Busoni returned to the Berlin apartment at Viktoria @-@ Luise @-@ Platz 11 , Berlin @-@ Schöneberg , which he had left in 1915 . He was now in a state of declining health . Although he continued to give concerts his main concern was to complete Doktor Faust , the libretto of which had been published in Germany in 1918 . In 1921 he wrote " Like a subterranean river , heard but not seen , the music for Faust roars and flows continually in the depths of my aspirations " .

In Berlin Busoni was at the heart of the musical world of the Weimar Republic . His works , including his operas , were regularly programmed . He continued to perform whilst his health allowed it ; problems of hyperinflation in Germany meant that he needed to undertake tours to England . His last appearance as a pianist was in Berlin in May 1922 , playing Beethoven 's Emperor Concerto . Amongst his composition pupils in Berlin were Kurt Weill , Wladimir Vogel and Robert Blum , and he also during these last years had contact with Edgard Varèse , Igor Stravinsky , Hermann Scherchen and others .

Busoni died in Berlin on 7 July 1924 , officially from heart failure , although inflamed kidneys and overwork also contributed to his death . Doktor Faust remained unfinished at his death and was premiered posthumously in Berlin in 1925 in a completion made by Jarnach . Busoni 's Berlin apartment was destroyed in an air @-@ raid in 1943 , and many of his possessions and papers were lost or looted . A plaque at the site commemorates his residence . Busoni 's wife Gerda died in Sweden in 1956 . Their son Benni , who despite his American nationality had lived in Berlin throughout World War II , died there in 1976 . Their second son Lello , an illustrator , died in New York in 1962 .

= = Music = =

= = = Pianist = = =

The pianist Alfred Brendel opines that " Busoni 's piano @-@ playing signifies the victory of reflection over bravura " after the more flamboyant era of Liszt . He cites Busoni himself : " Music is so constituted that every context is a new context and should be treated as an ' exception ' . The solution of a problem , once found , cannot be reapplied to a different context . Our art is a theatre of surprise and invention , and of the seemingly unprepared . The spirit of music arises from the depths of our humanity and is returned to the high regions whence it has descended on mankind . "

Sir Henry Wood was surprised to hear Busoni playing passages in a Mozart concerto , written as single notes , with two hands in double octaves ; at which Donald Tovey proclaimed Busoni " to be an absolute purist in not confining himself strictly to Mozart 's written text " , that is , that Mozart himself could have taken similar liberties . The musicologist Percy Scholes wrote that " Busoni , from his perfect command over every means of expression and his complete consideration of every phrase in a composition to every other phrase and to the whole , was the truest artist of all the

pianists [ I ] had ever heard . "

= = = Works = = =

Busoni 's works include compositions , adaptations , writings and recordings .

= = = = Opus numbers = = = =

Busoni gave many ( but not all ) of his works opus numbers ; some numbers apply to more than one work ( after the composer dropped some of his earlier works from his acknowledged corpus ) . Nor are the composer 's numbers all in temporal order . The musicologist Jürgen Kindermann has prepared a thematic catalogue of his works and transcriptions which is also used , in the form of the letters BV ( for Busoni Verzeichnis , German : Busoni Index : sometimes the letters KiV for Kindermann Verzeichnis are used ) followed by an identifier , to identify his compositions and transcriptions . The identifier B ( for Bearbeitung , German : arrangement ) is used for Busoni 's transcriptions and cadenzas ? e.g. BV B 1 refers to Busoni 's cadenzas for Beethoven 's Piano Concerto No. 4 .

= = = = Early compositions = = = =

In 1917 Hugo Leichtentritt suggested that the Second Violin Sonata Op. 36a ( BV 244 ) , completed in 1900 , " stands on the border @-@ line between the first and second epochs of Busoni " , although Van Dieren asserts that in conversation Busoni " made no such claims for any work written before 1910 . This means that he dated his work as an independent composer from the piano pieces *An die Jugend ...* and the *Berceuse* in its original version for piano . " ( These works were actually written in 1909 ) . The Kindermann Busoni Verzeichnis lists over 200 compositions in the period to 1900 , which are met with very rarely in the contemporary repertoire or in recording , mostly featuring piano , either as solo instrument or accompanying others , but also including some works for chamber ensemble and some for orchestra , amongst them two large @-@ scale suites and a violin concerto .

Antony Beaumont comments that Busoni wrote virtually no chamber music after 1898 and no songs between 1886 and 1918 , commenting that this was " part of the process of freeing himself from his Leipzig background ... [ evoking ] worlds of middle @-@ class respectability in which he was not at home , and [ in which ] the shadows of Schumann , Brahms and Wolf loomed too large . " The first decade of the 20th century is described by Brendel as being for Busoni " a creative pause " after which he " finally gained an artistic profile of his own " as opposed to the " easy routine which had kept his entire earlier production on the tracks of eclecticism " . During this period appeared his Piano Concerto , Op. 39 , one of the largest such works ever written both in terms of duration and of resources . Dent comments " In construction [ the Concerto ] is difficult to analyse ... on account of the way in which themes are transferred from movement to another . The work has to be considered as a whole , and Busoni always desired it to be played straight through without interruption . " The press reaction to the premiere of the Concerto was largely outraged : the *Tägliche Rundschau* complained of " Noise , more noise , eccentricity and licentiousness " ; another journal opined that " the composer would have done better to stay within more modest boundaries " . The other major work during this " creative pause " was the *Turandot Suite* . Busoni employed motifs from Chinese and other oriental music in the suite , though , as Leichtentritt points out , the Suite is " in fact the product of an Occidental mind , for whom the exact imitation of the real Chinese model would always be unnatural and unattainable ... the appearance is more artistic than the real thing would be . " The Suite was first performed as a purely musical item in 1905 ; it was used in a production of the play in 1911 , and was eventually transformed into a two @-@ act opera in 1917 .

= = = = Busoni and Bach = = = =

1894 saw the publication in Berlin of the first part of Busoni 's edition of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach for the piano ; the first book of The Well @-@ Tempered Clavier . This was equipped with substantial appendices , including one " On the Transcription of Bach 's Organ Works for the Pianoforte " . This was eventually to form a volume of the Bach @-@ Busoni Edition , an undertaking which was to extend over thirty years . Seven volumes were edited by Busoni himself ; these included the 1890 edition of the Two- and Three @-@ Part Inventions . Busoni also began to publish his concert piano transcriptions of Bach 's music , which he often included in his own recitals . These included some of Bach 's chorale preludes for organ , the organ Toccata and Fugue in D minor , and the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue . These transcriptions go beyond literal reproduction of the music for piano and often involve substantial recreation , although never straying from the original rhythmic outlines , melody notes and harmony . This is in line with Busoni 's own concept that the performing artist should be free to intuit and communicate his divination of the composer 's intentions . Busoni adds tempo markings , articulation and phrase markings , dynamics and metronome markings to the originals , as well as extensive performance suggestions . In his edition of Bach 's Goldberg Variations ( BV B 35 ) , for example , he suggests cutting eight of the variations for a " concert performance " , as well as substantially rewriting many sections . Kenneth Hamilton comments that " the last four variations are rewritten as a free fantasy in a pianistic style which owes far more to Busoni than to Bach . "

On the death of his father in 1909 , Busoni wrote in his memory a Fantasia after J. S. Bach ( BV 253 ) ; and in the following year came his extended fantasy based on Bach , the Fantasia Contrappuntistica .

== == Writings == ==

Busoni wrote a number of essays on music . The Entwurf einer neue Ästhetike der Tonkunst ( Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music ) , first published in 1907 , set out the principles underlying his performances and his mature compositions . A collection of reflections which are " the outcome of convictions long held and slowly matured " , the Sketch asserts that " The spirit of an artwork ... remains [ s ] unchanged in value through changing years " but its form , manner of expression , and the conventions of the era when it was created , " are transient and age rapidly " . The Sketch includes the maxim that " Music was born free ; and to win freedom is its destiny " . It therefore takes issue with conventional wisdom on music , caricatured by Busoni as the constricting rules of the " lawgivers " . It praises the music of Beethoven and JS Bach as the essence of the spirit of music ( " Ur @-@ Musik " ) and says that their art should " be conceived as a beginning , and not as an unsurpassable finality . " Busoni asserts the right of the interpreter vis @-@ à @-@ vis the purism of the " lawgivers " . " The performance of music , its emotional interpretation , derives from those free heights whence descended Art itself ... What the composer 's inspiration necessarily loses through notation , his interpreter should restore by his own . " He envisages a future music that will include the division of the octave into more than the traditional 12 semitones . However , he asserted the importance of musical form and structure : His idea of a ' Young Classicism ' " aimed to incorporate experimental features in " firm , rounded forms " ... motivated each time by musical necessity . " ( Brendel ) .

Another collection of Busoni 's essays was published in 1922 as Von der Einheit der Musik , later republished as Wesen und Einheit der Musik , and in 1957 translated as The Essence of Music . Busoni also wrote the librettos of his four operas .

== == Mature compositions == ==

Writing in 1917 , Hugo Leichtentritt described Busoni 's mature style as having elements in common with those of Sibelius , Claude Debussy , Alexander Scriabin , and Arnold Schoenberg , noting in particular his movement away from traditional major and minor scales towards atonality .

The first landmarks of this mature style are the group of piano works published in 1907 ? 1912 ( the Elegies , the suite An die Jugend and the first two piano sonatinas ) and Busoni 's first completed

opera , Die Brautwahl ; together with the rather different Bach homage , the 1910 Fantasia contrappuntistica , Busoni 's largest work for solo piano . About half an hour in length , it is essentially an extended fantasy on the final incomplete fugue from Bach 's The Art of Fugue . It uses several melodic figures found in Bach 's work , most notably the BACH motif . Busoni revised the work a number of times and arranged it for two pianos .

Busoni also drew inspiration from North American indigenous tribal melodies drawn from the studies of Natalie Curtis , which informed his Indian Fantasy for piano and orchestra of 1913 and two books of solo piano sketches , Indian Diary .

In 1917 Busoni wrote the one @-@ act opera Arlecchino ( 1917 ) as a companion piece for his revision of Turandot as an opera . He began serious work on his opera Doktor Faust in 1916 , leaving it incomplete at his death . It was then finished by his student Philipp Jarnach , who worked with Busoni 's sketches as he knew of them . In the 1980s Antony Beaumont created an expanded and improved completion by drawing on material to which Jarnach did not have access ; Joseph Horowitz has described the Beaumont completion as " longer , more adventurous and perhaps less good . "

In the last seven years of his life Busoni worked sporadically on his Klavierübung , a compilation of exercises , transcriptions , and original compositions of his own , with which he hoped to pass on his accumulated knowledge of keyboard technique . It was issued in five parts between 1918 and 1922

=== Editions , transcriptions and arrangements ===

Apart from his work on the music of Bach , Busoni edited and transcribed works by other composers . He edited three volumes of the 34 @-@ volume Franz Liszt Foundation 's edition of Liszt 's works , including most of the etudes , and the Grandes études de Paganini . Other Liszt transcriptions include his piano arrangement of Liszt 's organ Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale " Ad nos , ad salutarem undam " ( BV B 59 ) ( based on a theme from Giacomo Meyerbeer 's opera Les Huguenots ) and concert versions of two of the Hungarian Rhapsodies .

Busoni also made keyboard transcriptions of works by Mozart , Franz Schubert , Niels Gade and others in the period 1886 ? 1891 for the publisher Breitkopf und Härtel . Later , during his earliest contacts with Arnold Schoenberg in 1909 , he made a ' concert interpretation ' of the latter 's atonal Piano Piece , Op. 11 , No. 2 ( BV B 97 ) ( which greatly annoyed Schoenberg himself ) .

Busoni 's own works sometimes feature incorporated elements of other composers ' music . The fourth movement of An die Jugend ( 1909 ) , for instance , uses two of Niccolò Paganini 's Caprices for solo violin ( numbers 11 and 15 ) , while the 1920 piece Piano Sonatina No. 6 ( Fantasia da camera super Carmen ) is based on themes from Georges Bizet 's opera Carmen .

=== Audio recordings ===

Busoni 's recorded output on gramophone record was very limited , and many of the original recordings were destroyed when the Columbia factory burnt down . Busoni mentions recording the Gounod @-@ Liszt Faust Waltz in a letter to his wife in 1919 . This recording was never released . He never recorded any of his own works .

=== Piano rolls ===

Busoni made a considerable number of piano rolls , and a small number of these have been re @-@ recorded onto vinyl record or CD . These include a 1950 recording by Columbia Records sourced from piano rolls made by Welte @-@ Mignon including music of Chopin and transcriptions by Liszt . The value of these recordings in ascertaining Busoni 's performance style is a matter of some dispute . Many of his colleagues and students expressed disappointment with the recordings and felt they did not truly represent Busoni 's pianism . Egon Petri was horrified by the piano roll recordings when they first appeared on vinyl and said that they were a travesty of Busoni 's playing . Similarly , Petri 's student Gunnar Johansen who had heard Busoni play on several occasions ,



remarked , " Of Busoni 's piano rolls and recordings , only Feux follets ( no . 5 of Liszt 's Transcendental Études ) is really something unique . The rest is curiously unconvincing . The recordings , especially of Chopin , are a plain misalliance " .

= = Legacy = =

Busoni 's impact on music was perhaps more through those who studied piano and composition with him , and through his writings on music , than through his compositions themselves , of whose style there are no direct successors . Alfred Brendel has opined : " Compositions like the monstrously overwritten Piano Concerto ... obstruct our view of his superlative late piano music . How topical still ? and undiscovered ? are the first two sonatinas ... and the Toccata of 1921 ... Doktor Faust , now as ever , towers over the musical theatre of its time . " Helmut Wirth has written that Busoni 's " ambivalent nature , striving to reconcile tradition with innovation , his gifts as a composer and the profundity of his theoretical writings make [ him ] one of the most interesting figures in the history of 20th @-@ century music . "

The Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition was initiated in Busoni 's honour in 1949 , to commemorate the 25th anniversary of his death .