



**Philip Glass (1937)**  
**20 Studi per pianoforte adattati all'organo**

CD1	75' 28"	CD2	72' 09"
1. Studio 1	7' 31"	1. Studio 11	8' 14"
2. Studio 2	7' 51"	2. Studio 12	7' 29"
3. Studio 3	6' 09"	3. Studio 13	4' 59"
4. Studio 4	5' 37"	4. Studio 14	6' 24"
5. Studio 5	9' 23"	5. Studio 15	9' 33"
6. Studio 6	7' 39"	6. Studio 16	7' 01"
7. Studio 7	10' 19"	7. Studio 17	8' 06"
8. Studio 8	6' 34"	8. Studio 18	4' 19"
9. Studio 9	3' 23"	9. Studio 19	6' 27"
10. Studio 10	10' 22"	10. Studio 20	8' 56"

**Philip Glass**      **20 Studi per pianoforte adattati all'organo**  
**Pier Paolo Strona**      **adattamento all'organo e organista**

Organo Porziano Bevilacqua (1992) Parrocchia di San Martino, Mezenile (Torino)  
 Website: <http://pierpaolo-strona.arty.it>  
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**PPS014 / AB**

## **Philip Glass (1937) 20 Piano Studies adapted to the pipe organ**

**Philip Glass**, as he himself tells in his autobiography "Words without music", had a long period of education in prestigious Institutes, the University of Chicago, where he studied mathematics and philosophy, the Juillard School of Music in New York and Nadia Boulanger school in Paris where he studied the languages of western music, tonal and contemporary. Aware of not being able to live with the activity of composer, to remain free to follow his ideas without any compromise, he has always kept himself with other jobs, worker at the steel mills in Baltimore, taxi driver and plumber in New York.

He began his musical education since childhood listening to LPs in his father's record shop in Baltimore and studying violin and flute. So he assimilated much of the musical culture of the past and contemporary not only Western, but also jazz, and Eastern, especially Indian music, through contacts and collaborations with Ravi Shankar, travels and stays in India, Buddhism.

So, in his first 40 years, he developed and built an original, very personal musical language in which rhythmic and harmonic structures from the cultures he knew and studied were found and merged.

His vast production covers almost all genres, music for films, theater and reading of texts, operas, ballets, vocal and instrumental music, and it evolved by starting from minimalist experiences of the 60s and 70s, continuing today and going far beyond the minimalism of which he is anyhow a founding father.

Glass, combining the tensions of tonal music with the contemplative characteristics of Indian music, thus writes a very intense and engaging music, a polyrhythmic music in which the melody is practically absent, capable at times of bringing the listener almost into a hypnotic state,

The rhythmic fantasy, the polyrhythms and the repetitions are the basis of these effects.

In fact, in the rhythms of Western music the time is divided in predetermined ways. Within them the composer is free to create syncopes, accents and so on, but in other cultures (Indian, African, ...) the rhythm has an extra dimension combining different patterns with maximum freedom and creative imagination. Therefore, not only "division" of time but "addition", juxtaposition of different rhythmic schemes. Finally in the polyrhythms these independent rhythmic structures are overlapped.

Of course the repetition of musical phrases unchanged or with small variations is part of the minimalist legacy. Glass also often repeats the musical phrases three times, not twice as usually (for example he does it almost everywhere in Studio 10).

To better understand the effect of Philip Glass's music on listeners, an analogy can be made with the effect of the rough sea on the passengers of a boat: in a rough sea the waves follow one another always the same and always a slightly different from each other. The awareness of the vertical, that is the basis of our balance, is no longer fixed as on the ground but varies continuously: then a sense of malaise, what is called "seasickness". arises in those who are unable to maintain awareness of the vertical in its continuous oscillations.

Similarly Philip Glass by his polyrhythms, where time is no longer divided in a fixed way but varies like the waves continuously, and by the repetition of sentences (waves) always the same and always a little different, creates uncertain atmospheres that lead the listener to

alter his state of consciousness, alterations which fortunately are not so unpleasant than seasickness, indeed!

**In the two CDs** the 20 studies are collected, the first 10 written in the years 1991/1995 and the following 10 written between 1996 and 2012. The 20 Studies cycle is one of Philip Glass's most important works, and he considers them as such, as he explicitly stated in various interviews. Listening to them you can understand his stylistic evolution and his compositional procedures.

They were written for the piano but here they have been adapted and performed on a pipe organ. The musical contents of these so interesting and varied compositions, after the performance and recording on the piano (see CD PPS009), were strong stimuli to rethink them and adapt them to an instrument such as the pipe organ so different from the piano but capable of rendering new aspects of it yet existing in the score.

The piano is a percussion instrument, with great expressive possibilities, while the pipe organ is an air instrument where sounds remain constant over time and with an extraordinary variety of musical timbres. They are both keyboard instruments but when the pianist presses the key the sound is formed instantly while in the organ there is a transient different depending on the size of the pipes selected. The way you touch the key changes the sound in the piano, not in the organ. So, a direct prosthesis of mind of the interpreter, the piano, an orchestra mediated by complex mechanical transmissions, the pipe organ.

Therefore, playing the same composition on a piano or on an organ involves a rethinking of it, an adaptation: the polyrhythmic structures of Glass's compositions, for example, in the organ, cannot be highlighted by touch as in the piano but can still be rendered by the colors of sounds of the available pipes.

Art is the freedom to create and to experiment. Playing the same scores on different instruments allow us to discover new beauties, sometimes unexpected and surprising ones, but all present in those pages. The interpreter's task is to reveal them and offer them to the listeners. With this spirit these recordings were made.

**Recording** made between May and September 2022 at the organ of the parish of San Martino in Mezzenile near Turin. It is a mechanical transmission instrument built by Porziano Bevilacqua, based on a sound project by Maestro Massimo Nosetti, organist and composer of international fame, and inaugurated in 1992. It is a modern organ with tonal characteristics that bring it closer to the instruments of the Baroque era. It is not a romantic organ and nevertheless, the quality and characterization of its sounds give the performer the possibility of having a rich and diversified variety of timbres capable of making the atmospheres of the music of Philip Glass so far from baroque era.

**The photograph** on the cover by Pier Paolo Strona looks almost like an abstract painting, with geometric elements that are repeated in different way and play of light that give energy to the image transmitting it to the viewer. Therefore it wants to graphically evoke some characteristics of the music by Philip Glass. It was taken indoors, photographing a window with the curtains and shutters down, a window facing South on a clear sunny winter day.

**Pier Paolo Strona** civil engineer, researcher in the field of numerical models of structures, photographer and musician, author of books and publications, is active as a pianist and

organist in Italy and abroad with a repertoire that ranges from the most important classical composers to ragtime, to Latin American as well as Asian music.

**Thanks** to Maestro Massimo Caracò, titular organist at the "Chiesa della Misericordia" in Turin, for his advice, observations, constructive criticisms and for his concrete and continuous help during the recording sessions.

This CD could not have been made without the unconditional hospitality and collaboration of the Parish of Mezenile in the persons of the parish priest Don Silvio Ruffino and the titular organist, Maestro Ugo Ala.