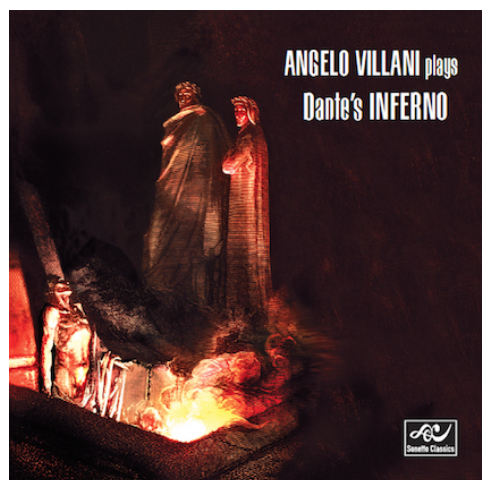


**Angelo Villani's launches his debut recording
– *Dante's Inferno* –
to mark the poet's 750th anniversary**



Dante's Inferno: CD track listings

1. Franz Liszt

**Après une Lecture du Dante:
Fantasia quasi Sonata ('Dante
Sonata')**

from *Années de Pèlerinage II*, S.161
(18:39)

2. Henry Purcell Dido's Lament

from the opera *Dido and Aeneas* (arr.
by A. Villani)

(Premiere Recording) (3:59)

**3. Hans von Bülow-Franz Liszt
Dante's Sonnet "Tanto gentile e
tanto onesta"**

S.479 (arr. by A. Villani) (8:23)

4. Franz Liszt

**Sunt Lacrimae Rerum (En Mode
Hongrois)**

from *Années de Pèlerinage III*, S.163
(9:03)

**5. Richard Wagner-Hans von
Bülow-Franz Liszt-Angelo
Villani Tristan Fantasy**

Concert etude paraphrase on the
opera *Tristan und Isolde* (Premiere
Recording) (14:03)

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To mark Dante Alighieri's 750th anniversary in 2016, Australian pianist Angelo Villani released his debut album on 4 February during a concert at the home of Sir Vernon Ellis. Villani's disc, available for download and on CD through Amazon, is themed around the legendary figures of doomed love - Dido and Aeneas (from Dante's *Divine Comedy* inspired by Virgil's Roman classic *The Aeneid*), Tristan and Isolde, Paolo and Francesca da Rimini and Dante's own love for his muse. Both *Dido's Lament* and the *Tristan Fantasy* are world première recordings and were performed exclusively by Angelo Villani on 4 February.

A former child prodigy, Angelo Villani was heading for a promising career as he entered the world's hardest piano competition – the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition. Like many aspiring young talents, his hopes were dashed by a muscular injury, which prevented Villani from playing in public for nearly 20 years. In October 2012, Villani made a thrilling comeback concert at St James' Piccadilly,

followed by St John Smith Square, at which he gave a masterful performance of Liszt's tumultuous *Dante Sonata*. It is not surprising that Villani's first album would be themed around this piano masterpiece.

Starting with Liszt's *Sonata Après une Lecture du Dante*, with its giddy descent into the vortex of hell, Angelo Villani has chosen an album that connects Liszt to fellow composers - Hans von Bülow and Richard Wagner (who would become first and second husbands to the Hungarian composer's daughter). Villani has created his own arrangement of the Liebestod from Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, itself inspired by earlier paraphrases by Liszt and von Bülow. He has coupled this with another arrangement of Liszt/von Bülow's *Dante's Sonnet "Tanto gentile e tanto onesta."* The latter is inspired by Dante's poem about his secret love for his muse Beatrice.

Villani's third arrangement is of *Dido's Lament* from Purcell's opera. He has also chosen to include Liszt's *Sunt Lacrimae Rerum (There are tears for things)*, again a reference to Dido's sorrow, from the third book of Liszt's travels to Italy and Switzerland "L'Année de Pèlerinage Book III".

Angelo Villani

Angelo Villani began his career as a child prodigy in his native Australia, where the outstanding teenager enjoyed acclaim performing major works including the Rachmaninov 2nd and Tchaikovsky 1st piano concertos. His teachers included Alexander Semetsky, Stephen McIntyre and June Ralfe (the latter having studied with Ignaz Friedman and had a pivotal influence on Villani's romantic style). On the eve of participating in the 1990 Moscow International Tchaikovsky Competition, Villani was suddenly stricken with what appeared to be a trapped nerve, causing loss of sensation in his right hand. This injury kept the pianist away from the public stage for the next two decades. Villani moved to London in 1991 in search of treatment, in the meantime earning a living teaching as well as working in Tower Records Kensington's classical department.



During this period Villani played very rarely but, as improvements slowly emerged, he began to perform short selections of works in private gatherings (such as the Liszt Society annual meeting), where his mesmerizing performances always received enthusiastic responses. Word about his playing spread amongst critics, piano enthusiasts and professional musicians. Improvements in his condition since 2010 allowed Villani to contemplate a return to performing in public.

In 2012, Villani made a much anticipated comeback recital at St. James's in Piccadilly, London, where his accounts of core romantic repertoire – alternating drama and beauty – astonished the audience.

A further recital at St John's, Smith Square in 2013 – which was preceded by an interview and performances on BBC Radio 3's 'In Tune' – consolidated Villani's reputation as an intensely individual, original voice with entirely his own sound at the instrument.

Future plans include recitals in Florence and Japan.

"Encountering a really distinctive, idiosyncratic 'new voice' is perhaps rarer than ever. Such a genuine article, appearing as if out of the blue - mercifully without the depressingly standardised credentials - is Angelo Villani who, in spite of his absence from the stage, sounds like a seasoned artist - someone with the charisma, uniqueness, nerve and talent to truly command attention."

Concert pianist Daniel-Ben Pienaar

Watch Angelo Villani's comeback concert in October:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaLAjnWObZI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlZwdV-t3Cc>

<http://www.angelovillani.com/>

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