



## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

(1685-1750)

### Toccatina in D minor, BWV 913

1 Introduction	3:16
2 Fuga — Presto	3:26
3 Adagio	3:07
4 Fuga	3:59

### Prelude and Fugue no 5 in D major, BWV 850 from Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1

5 Praeludium	1:17
6 Fuga	1:58

### Partita for Keyboard no 2 in C minor, BWV 826

7 Sinfonia	4:12
8 Allemande	4:08
9 Courante	2:05
10 Sarabande	2:38
11 Rondeau	1:33
12 Capriccio	3:35

### Toccatina in E minor, BWV 914

13 Introduction	:55
14 Un poco allegro	1:41
15 Adagio	2:47
16 Fuga (a 3 voci)	2:51

### Prelude and Fugue no 13 in F sharp major, BWV 858 from Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1

17 Praeludium	1:37
18 Fuga	2:16

### French Suite no 5 in G major, BWV 816

19 Allemande	3:00
20 Courante	1:58
21 Sarabande	4:52
22 Gavotte	1:12
23 Bourée	1:34
24 Loure	1:55
25 Gigue	3:41

Playing Time 65:33

Recorded June 16 & 17, 2010 in the Concert Hall of the Performing Arts Center, Purchase College, State University of New York.

Produced and Engineered by Steven Epstein  
Recorded at 24bit/88.2kHz resolution utilizing the Sequoia Digital Audio Workstation

Microphones: DPA 4006 TL  
Executive Producers: Eric Feidner, Jon Feidner  
Art Direction: Oberlander Group  
Piano Technician: Ed Court  
Piano: Steinway Model D, 1980 (New York)

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He continues, “I heard the improvisations in my head, so I’d play some and then write what I was doing on the page. I was always careful to be sure I didn’t take away from the original material, so I put on my J.S. Bach hat and said, ‘Okay, I’m going to make believe that I’m Bach and make the repeats sound fresh and improvisatory, as if he was playing them.’”

“What I learned in the process is that you can’t embellish something all the time,” says Biegel, “because then it sounds like you are trying to recompose the piece. If I had something going on in one measure, then I’d leave it out for a measure or two, especially in a fast piece. I can always take things out because it’s easier to take out than to add.”

“The bottom line is that improvisation must always flow from what’s written on the page”, Biegel adds. “My teacher Adele Marcus used to say, ‘Don’t do something to the music, let the music do something to you.’ I think that says it all. So when I went through the process of adding, I let the music lead me rather than saying, ‘What can I do here?’ That was my response to the music—always being careful not to move away from that principle. It’s based on musical response, not musical effect. Hopefully, it gives a fresh voice to music we all know and love.”

—Craig Zeichner

## JEFFREY BIEGEL

Jeffrey Biegel’s recent recordings include Leroy Anderson’s *Concerto in C* conducted by Leonard Slatkin, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich’s *Millennium Fantasy*, and Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*, all for the Naxos label. He has also recorded the complete Mozart piano sonatas for E1 Entertainment, as well as the holiday favorite, Classical Carols. In 2010, Mr. Biegel performs two world premieres with the Pacific Symphony Orchestra: Richard Danielpour’s *Mirrors* for Piano and Orchestra and William Bolcom’s *Prometheus* for Piano, Orchestra, and Chorus. He has premiered new works and arrangements with the Boston Pops, New York Pops, the American Symphony Orchestra, the Eastern Music Festival Orchestra, as well as the symphony orchestras of Minnesota, Indianapolis, and Harrisburg, among others. Mr. Biegel is currently on the piano faculty at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Fugue No. 13 in F sharp major (BWV 858) opens with a gorgeous melody and concludes with a thorny three-voice fugue.

The French Suites, composed between 1722 and 1725, are based on the traditional dances that were fairly typical of Bach's day and showcase his ability to elevate Baroque dance forms to their highest level. While there is nothing especially French about the Bach suites, they are some of his most popular keyboard works, particularly the Fifth Suite in G major (BWV 816).

Dance forms also shape the six partitas that are found in the first volume (1731) of the *Clavierübung* (roughly translated as "Keyboard Practice"). In its earliest form, *partita* was another word for variation, but by Bach's time it became a synonym for suite. The Partita No. 2 in c minor (BWV 826) is comprised of an opening *Sinfonia* and a series of ornamented dance movements.

ORNAMENTATION

AND

IMPROVISATION

It was not uncommon in the Baroque period for composers to write music with sections that were repeated, sometimes several times. These sections offered an opportunity for the performer to improvise embellishments (called ornamentation) on these repeats.

"My goal in all of this was to accomplish two things: to be true to the style while recreating the music on a modern instrument, with a Baroque sense of improvisation that's similar to what Bach would have done. What we have on the printed page from composers who were great improvisers are blueprints, and I'm sure Bach was a great improviser because I've looked at several editions of his music and he put different ornamentations in each. That immediately tells me that he didn't play things the same way twice."

*Bach on a Steinway* marks the first release on the new recording label of Steinway & Sons. This collection of keyboard masterpieces has been recorded on another: a Steinway Model D, handcrafted in 1980 and specially selected by pianist Jeffrey Biegel out of several in Purchase, New York for its "warmth and wide dynamic range, but also the brightness and bite I was after for Bach."

Biegel's Bach is further brightened by his own considered ornamentation, giving this distinguished repertoire a fresh approach. The sound, coloration and subtle shading to each revisited phrase are realized in all their richness through superb production and engineering.

The Steinway & Sons label will offer a fresh look at discographies from distinguished Steinway artists of the past and a venue for new recordings by distinguished Steinway artists of today.

Ben Finane  
Editor in Chief,  
*Listen: Life With Classical Music*

BACH  
ON A  
STEINWAY

*“Each will draw from the instrument a different kind of tone, and also give to these tones a greater or lesser degree of distinctiveness.”*

**“Bach the Clavier Player” from *On Johann Sebastian Bach’s Life, Genius and Works*  
—Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818)**

The music on this recording features some of Johann Sebastian Bach’s most challenging and enduring pieces, cornerstones of the keyboard repertoire. But for what keyboard did Bach intend them? When he wrote this music (roughly between 1703 and 1730), he had a number of keyboard instruments at his disposal, most notably the clavichord, harpsichord and organ. The pianoforte was in its very early stages of development. In fact, when Bach was presented with an early version of a pianoforte by organ and clavichord maker Gottfried Silbermann, the composer was mostly unimpressed. “Too weak in the high register and too hard to play,” Bach said.

Silbermann took the criticism to heart, studied some of the designs of the Italian maker Bartolomeo Cristofori, went back to the drawing board and built new instruments that he presented to Bach in the mid 1740s. Bach approved of the new pianofortes, and played one of Silbermann’s at the court of King Friederich II of Prussia in 1747 (the king approved too, because he bought all the instruments Silbermann had made).

On what instrument does a 21st century keyboardist play Bach? “If Bach were around today and had the opportunity to compose his music using a nine-foot Steinway piano, a world of color and musical opportunity may have opened doors to his compositional technique,” says pianist Jeffrey Biegel. “He would have enjoyed the Steinway because it agrees with his compositional style; it complements the polyphonic vocal lines and the tremendous range of emotion in his music.”

And when it comes to performing, “Steinway is renowned for being one of the finest instruments in the world because it has a full range of sound and is responsive to the touch. The Bach piano has to be able to give you a lush, warm quality, but also has to have a biting quality without harshness,” Biegel says.

But of course, Bach never composed for, or even heard, a modern piano. “Using a Steinway or any modern instrument to imitate or replicate the sound of an instrument of Bach’s day is futile,” Biegel continues, “because what you are doing then is trying to create music from the outside-in, trying to turn a cat into a dog. You can’t do it, and you are not utilizing the full tonal and physical characteristics of the instrument as it’s intended to be. I would not try to play Bach on a piano and make it sound like a harpsichord, anymore than I would play Chopin on a harpsichord and make it sound like a piano.”

Says Biegel, “Too often we see the bust of Bach sitting on a pedestal and we think of him as a museum piece. We revere him and can’t fathom that a human being could have written music like this. But he was a human being and we have to ask how he would have played this music on a modern instrument.”

THE  
KEYBOARD MUSIC  
OF BACH

The two *Toccatas* (in D minor, BWV 913, and E minor, BWV 914) were written somewhere between 1708 and 1710 and are the earliest music on the program. While they include the rapid runs and arpeggios characteristic of all toccatas, they are mostly cherished for their fugal passages. The D minor includes two complex double fugues, while the E minor features double fugues for three and four voices.

The first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, (24 preludes and fugues in all keys) dates from approximately 1722 and is a milestone in the development of a well-tempered tuning system in which all keys sound in tune. Bach takes what could potentially be pedagogical drudgery and transforms it into one of the masterpieces of Western music. The Prelude and Fugue No. 5 in D major (BWV 850) harkens back to the older toccata style, with its rapid passages that set the stage for the four-voice fugue. The Prelude and