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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

Johann Sebastian Bach

Orgel = Gucklein

BWV 599-644

arrangements for piano 4 hands by Bernhard Friedrich Richter, 1902

Andrea Coen & Chiara Corona

piano

[E. Kaps, 1912]

97430
Black
3: white base

J.S. BACH
Orgel-Buchlein BWV 599-644
Arrangement for piano 4-hands
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**BRIGHT
CLASSICS**
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Andrea Coen & Chiara Corona

J.S. BACH

Orgel-Buchlein BWV 599-644 (1708-1711)

Arrangement for piano 4-hands by Bernhard Friedrich Richter, 1902

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------|
| 1. | Nun komm der Heiden Heiland BWV599 | Allegro non troppo | 0'55 |
| 2. | Gottes Sohn ist kommen BWV600 | Moderato assai | 1'02 |
| 3. | Herr Christ, der einge Gottes Sohn BWV601 | Andante con moto | 1'21 |
| 4. | Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott BWV602 | Andante maestoso | 0'45 |
| 5. | Puer natus in Bethlehem BWV603 | Allegro assai | 0'41 |
| 6. | Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ BWV604 | Andante | 0'53 |
| 7. | Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich BWV605 | Allegro moderato | 1'41 |
| 8. | Vom Himmel hoch da, komm ich her BWV606 | Allegro | 0'37 |
| 9. | Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schaar BWV607 | Allegro | 1'09 |
| 10. | In dulci jubilo BWV608 | Vivace | 1'21 |
| 11. | Lobt Gott, ihr Christen, allzugleich BWV609 | Allegro | 0'31 |
| 12. | Jesu, meine Freude BWV610 | Largo | 2'08 |
| 13. | Christum wir sollen loben schon BWV611 | Adagio | 1'54 |
| 14. | Wir Christenleut BWV612 | Allegro | 1'00 |
| 15. | Helft mir, Gottes Güte preisen BWV613 | Lento assai | 1'34 |
| 16. | Das alte Jahr vergangen ist BWV614 | Adagio | 1'55 |
| 17. | In dir ist Freude BWV615 | Allegro | 2'15 |
| 18. | Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin BWV616 | Adagio | 1'49 |
| 19. | Herr Gott, nun schließ den Himmel auf BWV617 | Allegro assai | 1'27 |
| 20. | O Lamm Gottes unschuldig BWV618 | Adagio | 3'19 |
| 21. | Christe, du Lamm Gottes BWV619 | Allegro tranquillo | 0'29 |
| 22. | Christus, der uns selig macht BWV620 | Andante con moto | 1'31 |
| 23. | Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund BWV621 | Andante | 0'52 |
| 24. | O Mensch, beweine dein Sünde groß BWV622 | Adagio assai | 3'55 |
| 25. | Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ BWV623 | Allegro | 0'43 |
| 26. | Hilf Gott, dass mirs gelinge BWV624 | Andante con moto | 1'07 |
| 27. | Christ lag in Todesbanden BWV625 | Allegro | 1'07 |
| 28. | Jesus Christus, unser Heiland der den Tod überwand BWV626 | Allegro moderato | 0'34 |

Christ ist erstanden BWV627 Allegro assai

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|------|
| 29. | Vers. 1 | 1'00 | |
| 30. | Vers. 2 | 1'03 | |
| 31. | Vers. 3 | 1'13 | |
| 32. | Erstanden ist der heilige Christ BWV628 | Allegro | 0'36 |
| 33. | Erschienen ist der herrlich Tag BWV629 | Allegro assai | 0'46 |
| 34. | Heut triumphieret Gottes Sohn BWV630 | Allegro | 1'01 |
| 35. | Komm, Gott Schöpfer, heiliger Geist BWV631 | Allegro moderato | 0'34 |
| 36. | Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend BWV632 | Allegro moderato | 1'06 |
| 37. | Liebster Jesu wir sind hier BWV633 | Andante cantabile | 2'02 |
| 38. | Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot BWV635 | Allegro non troppo | 1'01 |
| 39. | Vater unser im Himmelreich BWV636 | Andante tranquillo | 0'56 |
| 40. | Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt BWV637 | Lento assai | 2'20 |
| 41. | Es ist das Heil uns kommen her BWV638 | Allegro non troppo | 0'51 |
| 42. | Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ BWV639 | Andante con moto | 2'46 |
| 43. | In dich hab ich gehofft Herr BWV640 | Andante con moto | 0'45 |
| 44. | Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein BWV641 | Adagio | 1'34 |
| 45. | Wer nur den lieben Gott last walten BWV642 | Lento assai | 1'47 |
| 46. | Alle Menschen müssen sterben BWV643 | Andante serio | 1'01 |
| 47. | Ach wie nichtig ach wie flüchtig BWV644 | Allegro non troppo | 0'36 |

Andrea Coen & Chiara Corona

piano

[E. Kaps, 1912]

Recording: 4-6 September 2023, Studio SUONILAB, Rome, Italy
Artistic director, recording engineer and editing: Riccardo Cimino
Piano by Ernst Kaps, Dresden, ca. 1915, restored by Dario Aufero, Fonte Nuova (RM)
A = 440 Hz, temperament: equal

Cover: ...?

Artist Photo: ...?

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HIP¹: TOWARDS THE FUTURE (AND BEYOND?)

I have been involved in historically informed performances for many years, more than forty to be precise. In Italy, back in the 1970s, merely mentioning period (or ancient, or original) instruments would label you as musicians unable to establish themselves without resorting to philology, which was used to mask the performers' weakness. Those were memorable years during which a war was fought on various fronts: with the audience and critics, with publishers, and with instrument makers. In the end, the 'good' prevailed, and after half a century, we can confidently assert, without fear of contradiction, that period instruments and the performance practices associated with them, in all their infinite facets, have triumphed, much to the chagrin of those who opposed this important cultural and evolutionary process. However, it is important to note that in the long period of peace that followed, a certain stagnation has set in. After working so hard to establish their ideas, many 'philologists' musicians have become complacent, failing to innovate further beyond sporadic experiments in the music of the second half of the 19th century, with occasional forays into the very early 20th century by a few daring individuals.

That said, in my opinion, Bach's music could serve as an excellent starting point for experimenting with some innovations, building upon established findings from several decades of research into historical performance practices to push the boundaries a bit further. This process could involve exploring new and fascinating repertoires: for instance, consider versions with double bass accompaniments of organ works arranged by Domenico Dragonetti or piano accompaniments created by Robert Schumann for the Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin. Endless transcriptions of Bach's music were made in the 19th and 20th centuries and many of them bear the signatures of both well-known and lesser-known composers: among the former, Bruno G. Seidhofer's notable four-hand piano version of "The Art of Fugue" (1937), and Bernhard Friedrich Richter's splendid transcription of the *Orgelbüchlein* featured in this recording (1902). Our work has taken inspiration from this very reflection: we started from a well-established Bach performance practice, filtering it through two specific mediums, the chosen instrument - about which we will speak shortly - and the set of performance indications scrupulously laid down by Richter. These range from the movement indications assigned to each chorale and the numerous yet not too intrusive agogic signs, to the octave doubling often proposed to the soprano and/or bass, depending on the nature of the individual chorales. In the interests of intellectual honesty, it should also be said, quoting what the great Baroque oboist Bruce Haynes wrote regarding the opinions expressed in his book *The End of Early Music*, that "*The opinions written here about matters*

1 Historically informed performance

of style, performance, the communication of emotion, and other ephemera do not always rest on criteria that are provable. They are merely personal reflections". There is indeed a lot of personal involvement in our interpretation of 'this' *Orgelbüchlein*, and it couldn't be otherwise. However, we must add that the chosen instrument has certainly helped us to set off on the right path, since "*Each period has precisely the instrumentarium best suited to its own music. In their imagination, composers hear the instruments of their own time [...]*" (Harnoncourt). Our young technician and restorer, Dario Aufiero, was of immense help to us in the complete recovery of the gorgeous 1912 Kaps piano chosen for this recording and to him we submitted many requests with the precise scope to ensure that the instrument we had chosen was in the best possible condition for our 'journey'. Continuing to quote Haynes: "*Instruments can be seen in terms of Darwinian adaptation. They are constantly changing in small ways to make it easier for musicians to perform the music currently in fashion. There is an immense pressure on instruments to be as well-adapted as possible to the music of their time. Instrument makers are very receptive to the demands of players, and these demands are the immediate cause of mutations*".

© Andrea Coen

ON FOUR HANDS PIANO TRANSCRIPTIONS

Four hands piano transcriptions were widely practiced in salons and private households before the advent of mechanical reproduction, proving to be a suitable and effective tool for both the dissemination and study of music. First evidence of this practice can be found around 1820, throughout the whole 19th century and into the early 20th century there was hardly a salon where waltzes, gallops, marches, quartets, symphonies didn't resound in the two-player keyboard format. Even a transcription for piano duet of Beethoven's 32 sonatas for solo piano had found its place on music stands. The Hofmeister catalog, which regularly appeared during the 19th century, listed approximately nine thousand four-hands piano transcriptions in its third edition of 1844.

As for the repertoire, one can observe a shift over time due to changing musical tastes. In the Hofmeister catalog, beside Beethoven and Haydn, there were lesser-known composers like Franz Xaver Chwatal and Johann Peter Pixis. However, in the catalogs of Universal-Edition of Vienna around 1910, one can find music by Brahms, Bruckner, Chopin, and others. Regarding J.S. Bach, it must be acknowledged that he was not among the most frequently transcribed composers, perhaps because his style was less in line with the musical trends of the time. Nevertheless, transcriptions of his works were featured, including the *Orgelbüchlein* by Bernhard Friedrich Richter, the Art of Fugue by Bruno G. Seidhofer and the Brandenburg Concertos n.1 and n. 3 by Max Schneider.

The reasons for the widespread popularity of piano four-hands transcriptions can be attributed to a variety of qualities and applications. Firstly, they were designed for the piano, an instrument that Richard Wagner himself described as the “essential mediator between music and the audience” and that was increasingly present in bourgeois salons, becoming a status symbol. It was universally acknowledged that a young lady of good family should be able to play the piano. While piano solo transcriptions also existed, they often were too difficult to play and omitted significant musical material. On the other hand, compared to quartet or other small ensemble transcriptions, piano duets had the advantage of requiring only two performers.

Secondly, these transcriptions served as an excellent medium for enjoying compositions outside of concert halls, contributing to their broader dissemination. In this context, they played a role in democratizing music, a role that would later be fulfilled by phonographs and radios, letting people know musical pieces that could otherwise only be heard in live performances. In fact, it often happened that a listener’s first exposure to a piece was through a piano duet performance. Additionally, it was common practice to test works in salons through preliminary versions for four or even eight hands before orchestral performances. Thus, piano duo transcriptions facilitated the enjoyment of music in two ways: at a preliminary stage, they ensured that listeners arrived at the concert already prepared from home listening, enabling a deeper appreciation of the live performance. At a later stage, they allowed to re-hear already heard material, facilitating a more detailed study of its intricacies. It’s undeniable that more than just listening, performance and private study led to an even greater appropriation and internalization of the music.

This consideration leads us to highlight another significant purpose of piano four-hands music: education. In European and American conservatories and academies, piano duet transcriptions became a pivotal part of music education, in some cases, even a mandatory one, as at the Royal Academy of Music. Marmontel, the renowned French piano pedagogue, justified the compulsory study of these transcriptions by stating that they helped to acquire a “nobility of style and grandeur of execution that original music for the instrument, often geared towards virtuosity alone, could not always offer”; in addition, they enlarged the usual repertoire. Furthermore, by sight-reading or studying the transcriptions with their teacher, young pianists learned not only to be on time but also dynamics, voice balance, phrasing, and expression.

In a historical period where the issue of the mechanical reproducibility of a work of art had not yet arisen, piano four-hands transcriptions proved to be a fundamental tool for the dissemination and study of music, becoming the most perfect form of Hausmusik (Hanslick).

© Chiara Corona

ERNST KAPS’ PIANO

This upright instrument [serial number. 36115, assumed year 1915] has come to the present day in perfect original condition and during its restoration it was possible to achieve a philological and correct reconstruction of every single mechanical and sound parts. The strings and the hammerhead are originals, which is essential to obtain the sound required for this recording. The other mechanical parts have been reconstructed with the highest quality materials, such as leather, wool and felts. Finally, an optimal adjustment has been made to offer optimal sound and mechanical performance.

Ernst Kaps Piano Fabrik was an important German piano factory founded in 1858 in Dresden, Germany. Ernst Kaps obtained a number of patents on various interesting inventions that characterized his instruments. Among the most important ones there are:

- **System of double over-stringing** (1865): this design employed three bridges, Bass, Tenor and Treble. This allowed even instruments of smaller length to have greater sound power.
- The **Resonator**, it consisted of an additional sound-box with small sound ports(holes) drilled through the top. These were fixed just below the tenor and treble bridges along the bridges profile. The idea of these were that this would create a larger vibrational mass and additional coincident partials (harmonics), a complex endeavour to achieve a fuller and more colourful sound.
- **Panzer System**, a solid and very robust construction system between the cast iron frame and pinblock. This allowed a great solidity of construction and an excellent tension hold of the strings, evoking the great strength of the German tanks.

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Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750

Orgel-Buchlein BWV 599-644 (1708-1711)

Arrangement for piano 4-hands by Bernhard Friedrich Richter, 1902

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piano

[E. Kaps, 1912]

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Total time: 63'27

Recording: 4-6 September 2023, Studio SUONILAB, Rome, Italy

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Back

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