

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH *The Well-tempered Clavier I*

LUCA GUGLIELMI Harpsichord

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Das Wohltemperirte Clavier Band I / The Well-Tempered Clavier Book I – PRELUDES & FUGUES

No. 1 in C major BWV 846		No. 7 in E flat major BWV 852		No. 13 in F sharp major BWV 858		No. 19 in A major BWV 864	
1 Prelude	02:28	13 Prelude	04:25	25 Prelude	01:44	37 Prelude	01:17
2 Fugue I à 4	02:02	14 Fugue VII à 3	02:01	26 Fugue XIII à 3	01:51	38 Fugue XIV à 3	02:40
No. 2 in C minor BWV 847		No. 8 in E flat minor BWV 853		No. 14 in F sharp minor BWV 859		No. 20 in A minor BWV 865	
3 Prelude [without tempo indication] <i>presto – adagio – allegro</i>	01:43	15 Prelude (<i>lute stop</i>)	03:03	27 Prelude	01:36	39 Prelude	01:17
4 Fugue II à 3	01:51	16 Fugue VIII à 3	04:57	28 Fugue XIV à 4	02:57	40 Fugue XX à 4	05:34
No. 3 in C sharp major BWV 848		No. 9 in E major BWV 854		No. 15 in G major BWV 860		No. 21 in B flat major BWV 866	
5 Prelude	01:44	17 Prelude	01:39	29 Prelude	01:04	41 Prelude	01:26
6 Fugue III à 3	02:41	18 Fugue IX à 3	01:27	30 Fugue XV à 3	03:08	42 Fugue XXI à 3	02:03
No. 4 in C sharp minor BWV 849		No. 10 in E minor BWV 855		No. 16 in G minor BWV 861		No. 22 in B flat minor BWV 867	
7 Prelude	03:01	19 Prelude	02:19	31 Prelude	02:04	43 Prelude	02:41
8 Fugue IV à 5	03:27	20 Fugue X à 2	01:41	32 Fugue XVI à 4	01:57	44 Fugue XXII à 5	02:32
No. 5 in D major BWV 850		No. 11 in F major BWV 856		No. 17 in A flat major BWV 862		No. 23 in B major BWV 868	
9 Prelude	01:31	21 Prelude	01:43	33 Prelude	01:26	45 Prelude	01:19
10 Fugue V à 4	02:00	22 Fugue XI à 3	01:44	34 Fugue XVII à 4	02:32	46 Fugue XXIII à 4	02:15
No. 6 in D minor BWV 851		No. 12 in F minor BWV 857		No. 18 in G sharp minor BWV 863		No. 24 in B minor BWV 869	
11 Prelude	02:32	23 Prelude	02:06	35 Prelude	01:54	47 Prelude <i>Andante</i>	02:27
12 Fugue VI à 3	02:21	24 Fugue XII à 4	04:02	36 Fugue XVIII à 4	02:40	48 Fugue XXIV à 4 <i>Largo</i>	06:29

Total Time

1:55:47





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DAS WOHLTEMPERIERTE CLAVIER

At the first lesson he set his *Inventions* before him.

When he had studied these through to *Bach's* satisfaction, there followed a series of suites, then *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

This latter work *Bach* played altogether three times through for him with his unmatched art, and my father counted these among his happiest hours, when *Bach*, under the pretext of not feeling in the mood to teach, sat himself at one of his splendid instruments and thus turned these hours into minutes.

Ernst Ludwig Gerber about his father's* musical apprenticeship with *Bach*, in 1724

*Heinrich Nicolaus Gerber (1702-1775)

Historisch-Biografisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler [...], Leipzig, 1790 [Bach-Dokumente III, nr. 950]

Das Wohltemperirte Clavier, a collection of preludes and fugues in all major and minor keys completed by Johann Sebastian *Bach* in 1722, was clearly modelled along the lines of *Ariadne Musica* by Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer (1662-1746, *Kapellmeister* in Baden from 1715 to 1746) – an organ music anthology published for the first time in 1702 and probably known by *Bach* in its second 1715 edition. *Bach* took Fischer's original layout of 20 keys and expanded it to a total of 24, thereby creating the first self-contained collection of music written for the entire corpus of existing keys.

Bach, who, on the handwritten title page of the beautiful copy now preserved in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek (Mus. Ms. P 415), signed as *Hochf. Anhalt-Cöthenischen Capel-Meistern und Directore derer Cammer Musiquen*, clearly indicated his purpose in composing this incomparable collection: “for the profit of musical youth desirous of learning, and especially for the pastime of those already skilled in this study.”

Given that we are in the presence of a “beautiful manuscript copy”, we can calmly state that the interpreter has privilege of access to an absolutely “definitive” version, and that the scholar is also freed from having to deal with the quandary of several different musicological exegeses. Nonetheless, the entire creative process through which *Bach* achieved this masterpiece can be clearly reconstructed: he adapted, revised, and expanded several of his previous works (the preludes in C, c, d, D, e, E, F, C#, c#, eb, f, contained, for example, in *frühere Fassungen* in the *Clavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann*, from 1720). Furthermore, although we regard this autograph manuscript in its last form dated 1722 as “definitive”, *Bach* himself did not see it that way. He kept it – literally – as an “open manuscript” on the rack of his harpsichord up to his death, using it as a “textbook” for the lessons he gave to his students and/or boarders, never ceasing to insert a series of corrections, reworkings, improvements, small variants, ornaments here and there, even performance instructions! [cf. the illustration from BWV 852]. The latest source studies have uncovered four different strata, ranging over a period from 1722 to 1750, the year of *Bach's* death. More than two centuries prior to Umberto Eco's concept of the “open work” and two centuries after Michelangelo's “unfinished” approach to art, *Bach's* hands-on approach to his work in progress proves just who modern he actually was and remains.

The perennial (and, if one so will, futile) question regarding which “temperament” *Bach* envisaged for performing these pieces (while a certain branch of musicology continues to affirm that they are to be exclusively performed in equal temperament) has been resolved, and remains at the same time unresolved. In view of the (fortunately!) human impossibility of achieving equal temperament without the aid of an electronic tuning instrument (meanwhile, a number of professional organ and piano tuners continue to assert that more “equable temperaments” are possible, while most highly regarding whatever tuning variant they have invented themselves...!), we can calmly certify that “*Wohltemperirt*” (well-tempered)

stands for any variety of subtly unequal temperament of the kind postulated in Bach's time by theoreticians such as Werckmeister and Neidhart (who had Bach's full esteem, since the composer recommended that the Naumburg organ, built by Zacharias Hildebrandt in 1746 and tested by him, should be tuned "following Neidhart"). The crux of the matter is whether today's performers, scholars and listeners (who, in any case, have spent decades listening to the *Wohltemperirtes Clavier* on the modern piano tuned with equal temperament) can accept the fact that in Bach's day several keys were considered to belong to a special "palette" of sound: like colors in a painting, they could be graded by a series of subtle nuances, variations, and hues. The *Affektenlehre* (theory of affects) in music was closely connected with the particular character ascribed to each key, the attributes of which still caused a great deal of disagreement among theoreticians.

In this sense, even an "extreme" proposal of temperament such as Bradley Lehman's interpretation of the ornament featured on the frontispiece can find its *raison-d'être* if it is viewed as a valid alternative to the various unequal temperaments applied until now in the performance of Bach's music.

A truly "holistic vision" of the musical phenomenon *per se* is precluded by those who adopt an exclusively "materialistic" approach to musical art, based on calculation, on measurement, and on "scientific" method. It keeps us from embracing artistic parameters we could otherwise inherit from our 18th-century forbears; a profound, venerable legacy might thus unfortunately remain lost to modern, "technological" human beings (and artists).

Despite the infinite ocean of existing studies on a subject as vast and fascinating as the *Wohltemperirtes Clavier*, I would allow myself one last observation regarding the performance

of fugues. Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1720-1783, a pupil of Bach's in the years 1739-41) remarked in the learned preface to his collection *Recueil d'Airs de danse Caractéristiques* (1777) that fugues were all composed on the basis of well-determined dance rhythms and figures. In the harshest of terms, he deplored the total ignorance and disinterest he observed regarding that subject: "Above all, it is impossible to compose or to perform a fugue well if one does not know every type of rhythm, and therefore, because this study is neglected today, music has fallen from its ancient dignity and fugues are not appreciated as they once were, because through miserable performance which does not know how to differentiate the variety of phrases and semiphrases, or more or less accented beats, can only generate nothing else than a mere chaos of notes". We have therefore attempted to do justice to Kirnberger's reflections on fugues by applying, as much as possible, the step or rhetorical gesture of the corresponding dance.

The result is undoubtedly fascinating, since it achieves an objectivity of rhythmic accentuation that enriches our perception of the ancient *tactus* on which every form of composition and performance was based. The usual subjectivity of the performer is thereby reduced – but this can only be beneficial, since readings of Bach otherwise tend to be either arid and insipid on the one hand, or whimsical and too exalted on the other.

For this recording we have had the fortune and great joy to be able to use an original harpsichord by *Christian Zell Hamburg 1737* in optimal condition, with beautiful inner resonance. The instrument is preserved in the *Museu de la Musica* in Barcelona, which also hosted the present recording: this is one of three surviving Christian Zell instruments to be found anywhere in the world. The renowned German builder's name leads us to remember the late Gustav Leonhardt, the spiritual father of all harpsichordists, who, himself, made his most well-known recordings on a Zell harpsichord (the one preserved in the *Hamburg Museum für*

Kunst und Gewerbe). He loved the instrument so much that he regularly took time to play it, not only with the purpose of “keeping it in shape”, but for his own personal “honest entertainment”. This recording of Vol. I of *Das Wohltemperirte Clavier* is dedicated to his memory.

Luca Guglielmi

ARTISTIC REMARKS ON THE INDIVIDUAL WORKS

1. BWV 846 [C major]

Prelude: this piece was already present in the *Clavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann* (1720) as well as in the *Clavierbüchlein für Anna Magdalena* (1725): in the first case, in a shorter version (BWV 846a, 27 bars, compared to 35 bars in the final version) in which only the first six bars were written out, and the rest notated in “shorthand”: half notes in five parts. In spite of the way the prelude is notated in the final version, this proves that the initial bars should also be played leaving all the notes sounding.

Fugue: in four parts, the Fugue in C Major is constructed according to the principle of the organ verset: it is clearly divided into two main sections (bars 1-14 and bars 14-27), the second of which contains an abundance of sophisticated strettos. Bar 15 is of particular interest: Bach rewrote the bass line at least three times until he was satisfied. The last time, in the so-called “A4” version, the chosen solution is quite bold because it somewhat “deforms” the fugue subject for purposes of voice-leading.

2. BWV 847 [C minor]

Prelude: in the style of a *Toccatà* due to its persistent sixteenth-note figures, the Prelude in C Minor almost seems to evoke the expression of divine wrath. This is one of the pieces containing the greatest amount of tempo markings in the entire cycle. The first version, found in the *Clavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann* (1720), jumped directly from Bar 25 to Bar 35, only to finish on a bar in C major (thus 27 bars in total). The entirely “egalitarian” treatment of all five fingers is noteworthy, along with “hidden” four-part polyphony despite the apparent simplicity of two-part texture – a characteristic that gradually became a standard procedure in Bach’s compositional approach.

Fugue: in three parts and in the rhythm of a gavotte, the Fugue in C Minor is probably one of the works most frequently commented upon in Bach’s entire output for harpsichord. With

their melodious character, the episodes hark back to the Italian style of Legrenzi, Marcello, and Vivaldi. On the other hand, the use of triple counterpoint – applied not as a technical artifice, but as a modern means of expression – further enriches the Vivaldian principle of *invention*, in which all the material in a fugue, including countersubjects, is derived from the subject.

3. BWV 848 [C Sharp major]

Prelude: this is probably the first piece in music history to have been written in the key of C Sharp Major. A closer look reveals that it went through a series of rewritings before it reached its definitive version. In the character of a brilliant *étude*, the Prelude in C Sharp Major distributes the running sixteenth-note figures among the two hands; the same applies to the wide interval leaps, which actually conceal a melodic line fulfilling the function of a “bass of harmony”. Bach inserted bars 63-98 in a second stage in order to expand what would otherwise have been a mere study for the fingers, thereby transforming it into a true concert piece, while likewise exploiting the tension of harmonies that build up over a long-held pedal note on the dominant.

Fugue: in three parts and in the rhythm of a *bourrée*, the Fugue in C Sharp Major is mellifluous and brimming with sunlight, despite the tension one would normally expect from such an uncommon key. Here we have one of the first examples of a synthesis that harmoniously combines the genre of fugue with the form of a “*da capo*” concerto movement. In Bar 13, the bass part arrives on the diminished-seventh chord, applied as a rhetorical device to generate a tension that leads, in turn, to further development and to implicit tonic and dominant pedal notes in bars 35-41, followed by a jubilant reprise.

4. BWV 849 [C Sharp minor]

Prelude: The Prelude in C Sharp Minor is a quasi-aria in a tranquil *siciliano* rhythm (6/4), reminiscent of the most delicate moods in François Couperin’s *Ordres*. Its melodiousness and

delicate lyricism contrast with continually restless harmonic exploration and the expressive density of *stile antico*. Bars 35-38, a late addition, notably increase the poetic impact of a piece which, prior to their insertion, was already perfectly accomplished.

Fugue: in five parts with three subjects, the Fugue in C Sharp Minor is in the solemn rhythm of a Pavane, almost like a *ricercar in stile antico*. This is one of the most mystical and dramatic pieces in the entire cycle, a sublime apogee that blends the sacred aura of early polyphony with modern, expressive harmonies. The subject’s rhythm and the tritone it features in Bar 2 have led many commentators to imagine this as a kind of meditation on the *via crucis*, an extended path *per aspera ad astra* through all sorts of trials and tribulations to which Man is subjected in this “valley of tears” (Harry Halbreich).

5. BWV 850 [D Major]

Prelude: in its brief form in the *Clavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann*, this piece was placed immediately after the D Minor Prelude (see below): in terms of technique, this is a study for the right hand with a number of displacements, using the thumb as a pivot. The reprise on the subdominant (bars 20-26) and the cadenza with a concerto finale (bars 30-34) were added at the moment when Bach revised all the pieces to create a cycle of twenty-four preludes and fugues.

Fugue: in four parts and in an *alla francese* style, the Fugue in D Major has a pompous, Handelian touch. For performers it has always been a brain-teaser due to the difficulty of simultaneously playing the dotted rhythm either with the thirty-second notes of the main subject, or with the descending sixteenth-notes in the episodes. On this recording I have opted for the same “elasticity” with which Quantz and other treatise authors handled the problem of dotted rhythm in 12/8 giges, or in common time with triplets, by adapting the sixteenth-notes of the dotted rhythm to one or the other figure, respectively. Here, this approach serves to underscore the contrast between the subject’s rather martial character and the more tender *catbasis* descents.

6. BWV 851 [D minor]

Prelude: at first glance, the Prelude in D Minor is another étude for the right hand, this time in thirds, over a figured bass in the left; a closer look reveals a profound meditation in arpeggios, first in four-part texture (bars 1-15), then in five parts (16-23), with a wistful chromatic cadenza and a finale on arpeggiated chords that wanders through a series of formulas reminiscent of the *Fantasia Chromatica* BWV 903. The “hidden” polyphonic lines brought out by means of over-legato (i.e. prolonging notes of a harmony, even when not accordingly notated), find more adequate expression if one opts for a ponderous mood akin to that of Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata*, instead of contenting oneself with a quick, superficial, inattentive reading.

Fugue: in three parts, with a rhythm of a slow Polonaise, the Fugue in D Minor is clearly divided into two sections. At bar 12, immediately after the exposition, the subject starts appearing in its inverted form; then, in the second section, it is featured both in its *rectus* and *inversus* forms, skillfully combined in strettos. The stretto in the second-to-last measure manages to present both forms simultaneously, each one in parallel thirds, thereby expanding the layout to deploy a conclusion in six-part texture. Bach’s articulation instructions for the subject are noteworthy: a slur ties the four sixteenth-notes together, followed by a staccato dot on an isolated quarter note. Here Bach invariably indicates the exact type of ornament he desires: *tr* (a trill without resolution), *cadence* (gruppetto), or *trillo u. mordant* (a trill with resolution): therefore, instead of generically applying a measured trill with resolution, he wants these precise signs to be obeyed in each case ...!

7. BWV 852 [E Flat major]

Prelude: in the form of a *Praeludium* or *Toccata*, the Prelude in E Flat Major is a thoroughly articulate and elaborate continuation of the style North German masters, first and foremost Buxtehude. A brief, 9-bar *preambulum* introduces an amply scored, four-part double fugato

that combines a solemn first subject in long-held note values (half-notes and quarter-notes) with a second one in sixteenth-note “arabesques”. A performance instruction placed in the autograph manuscript at Bar 10 is highly noteworthy as the only one of its kind in Bach’s entire output. At the moment when the subject in long-held notes makes its appearance, we read: “*nicht Allabremäßig sondern wie der Iste Tact gewesen, fortgespielt*”, in other words: the subject should be played in the same tempo as the first measure, and the performer should not be detracted by the apparent notation in *alla breve* time, which would have suggested a faster tempo (but which would invalidate the *tactus* and the proportions governing its relation with the beginning of the second subject). Many consider that the handwritten note is not in Bach’s hand; I would regard it as authentic but added around 1740. A certain similarity can indeed be observed with the indication added close to that date by the copyist in *Art of Fugue*, indicating the doubling of rhythm values in *Contrapunctus 8 à 3*.

Fugue: in three parts and in *bourrée* rhythm, the Fugue in E Flat Major is almost Mozartian in terms of graceful lightness and modernity (Harry Halbreich). The modulating subject obliges the composer to adopt a simplified harmonic plan; hence the listener’s attention is drawn to the piece’s *concertante* character and the way the upper parts move and interweave over a “walking bass”.

8. BWV 853 [E Flat minor / D Sharp minor]

Prelude: this was Richard Wagner’s favorite: he often asked Liszt, his father-in-law, to play it for him (obviously along with the fugue). In the form of a bipartite aria with coda, here we are dealing with a true duet accompanied by a continuo that arpeggiates in one hand or the other. The atmosphere is nocturnal, contemplative, almost mystical. On this recording it is performed with the help of the *Lautenwerck* register on the marvelous 1737 Zell harpsichord, a sonority that enables us to appreciate the implied sound of a lute or a harp.

Fugue: in three parts almost like a *ricercar in stile antico*, this is one of the most “learned” and

densely packed fugues in the entire cycle. It is the only one to feature the technique of augmentation usually reserved to instances of strict counterpoint, and thus we are instantly transported into a religious atmosphere reminiscent of organ fantasias on a *cantus firmus*. The subject, with its palpable, expressive beauty, further ennobles a piece which, in itself, is already of outstanding musical value. The fugue's chosen key of D Sharp Minor is noteworthy: it is the enharmonic equivalent of E Flat Minor (in which the preceding prelude was notated). In Part II, both prelude and fugue shall be written in D Sharp.

9. BWV 854 [E major]

Prelude: in *siciliano* style and in a gentle pastoral rhythm, the Prelude in E Major was originally conceived as the introductory piece for the 6th French Suite BWV 817. After the agitated trials evoked in the preceding fugue, this luminous, idyllic three-part invention (*Sinfonia*) paints a little corner of paradise. It is noteworthy to point out the long pedal notes on the first, second, fourth, and fifth harmonic degrees, over which the upper part deploys the kind of melodious curlicues that are a well-loved staple of the Pastoral style.

Fugue: in three parts and in a light gavotte rhythm, the Fugue in E Major features a concise subject alternating with a highly effective "question motif" on the dominant (featuring a musical gesture that combines short-long with upbeat-downbeat), immediately answered by a confident figure that brings us back to the tonic. This is a joyous number, full of spirit, an admirable synthesis of *stile antico* and *stile moderno* in the same vein as Frescobaldi's fugue-versets (for instance, the *Canzon dopo l'Epistola* from the Mass to the Madonna in his collection *Fiori Musicali*) and as the fugues in Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer's collection *Ariadne Musica*.

10. BWV 855 [E minor]

Prelude: this piece is one of the most convincing demonstrations of Bach's extraordinary ability

as a composer: he manages to transform a simple exercise for the left hand, accompanied by plain chords in the right, into an eminently poetical, poignantly lyrical aria (over a basso ostinato), followed by an impetuous Presto in two/three parts. The melody is languidly adorned with Corelli-flavored figures, enriched by the addition of extended trills in *mesa di voce* mode that culminate in a French-style *point d'arrêt*.

Fugue: the Fugue in E Minor only has two "parts" or voices – an extremely rare occurrence in Bach's output, despite the fact that Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, describing his father's teaching methods, stated that two-part texture was the best way to start studying fugue. With its subject full of pathos and chromaticism, its Vivaldian lyricism, and several unisons in *concertato* style, this piece is often dispatched as if it was a trivial tongue-twister for the fingers at breakneck speed. Performers who opt for such execution are nevertheless precluding the melancholy character of the key of E Minor and foregoing the theme's languid chromatic descent, alternating with a pedal point on the highest melody note.

11. BWV 856 [F major]

Prelude: the Prelude in F Major is a two-part invention. Although many commentators take it to be an Allegro, the harmonic rhythm of only two different chords per measure (increasing to four in the second section) and the 12/8 meter (corrected to 24/16) indicate that the piece's character is actually more akin to a *Siciliano*, varying upon the style of the Pastoral genre, as also suggested by the key (subsequently used for the same purposes by Beethoven among all others!). Beginning on the upper as well as on the lower note, the long trills (*doppelt-cadence*) are a tough nut to crack if the performer strives to achieve perfect uniformity and complete autonomy of musical discourse.

Fugue: in three parts and in a tranquil *passépied* rhythm (or that of a fluid minuet), the Fugue in F Major clearly treats its subject in the manner of Fischer's *Ariadne Musica*, following

the fugue-verset tradition yet applying it to a modern blending of strict form with dance form, without foregoing the continuous flow of an Italian sonata in Scarlatti style.

12. BWV 857 [F minor]

Prelude: the Prelude in F Minor is a dignified, stately Lamento with the moderate flowing of an Allemande. Moreover, we are dealing here with a study in over-legato, which, as we have seen, forms the basis of harpsichord technique. Bars 16 1/2 to 21 1/2 are a later addition: featuring a long pedal note on the dominant, they confirm the character of a lament. Their steadfastness provides an admirable counterweight to the general tendency toward melodic exploration, on the one hand, and, on the other, to a sense of uneasy disquiet that is palpable from the onset. **Fugue:** in four parts and in a solemn Pavane rhythm, the Fugue in F Minor is almost like a *ricercar*. It pairs a chromatic subject with two countersubjects: the first one sports a willpower firm as granite, whereas the second is more appeasing. Here we thus have an admirable instance of fourfold counterpoint applied to keyboard, combined with the striking expression of tragic pathos.

13. BWV 858 [F Sharp major]

Prelude: in this two-part invention, the broken chords trace many instances of “hidden” polyphony. It may seem surprising that Bach is employing the key of F Sharp Major to convey the graceful, idyllic character of a Pastoral; Beethoven, nevertheless, made a similar choice in his *Piano Sonata, Op. 78*. The 12/8 meter, originally indicated, was subsequently changed to 12/16. Whatever opinion one may have of this, the message is clear: one should certainly not perform this piece too slowly. Neither should the 12/16 time be played like a precipitated *gigue*, as we are reminded by the rhythm’s origin in 12/8 meter.

Fugue: in three parts and in a bouncy *gavotte* rhythm, the Fugue in F Sharp Major is a luminous,

joyful page. The subject, clearly derived from the first inversion of the tonic chord, has a strong cadential tendency that exerts a notable influence on the entire development which ensues and which, although apparently conventional, is actually constructed with a considerable amount of learned rhetoric.

14. BWV 859 [F Sharp minor]

Prelude: playing on the ambiguity of polyphony – sometimes in two parts, at others in three parts – this piece, with its veiled melancholy, only finds its *raison d’être* if the interpreter is aware of all the “hidden” harmonies and voice-leading in the ascending four-note slurs in the right hand, which create an imaginary *altus* part while the left hand assumes the role of *bassus*. **Fugue:** with its “liquid”, lamenting countersubject featuring notes tied in pairs, this is a piece full of profound sadness and expression. Despite the writing in four parts, the actual polyphony is often only in three, thereby resulting in an uncommon transparency and lightness of texture. In Bar 20, the inverted subject is ingeniously combined with its original version.

15. BWV 860 [G major]

Prelude: a true two-part invention that evenly distributes the virtuoso triplets among the two hands, the Prelude in G Major is one of Bach’s most brilliant *gigues*. In the final version, he makes two masterful insertions of additional music (Bars 7 1/2 to 8 1/2; Bars. 14 to 17 1/2): these additions are a clear improvement on the original structure.

Fugue: in three parts and in another kind of *gigue* rhythm (similar to that of the suite BWV 996 *aufs Lautenwerck*), the Fugue in G Major exploits the principles and musical gestures of Vivaldian concerto. Soon after this fugue-concerto has started to deploy its narrative, the inverted form of the subject appears. Bach proves that several different musical elements and techniques can be successfully combined with the intellectual rigor of fugue by skillfully

playing with contrary motion, and by concluding the work on a robust pedal point after having ingeniously reharmonized the subject's preceding entry one third higher.

16. BWV 861 [G minor]

Prelude: a delicate piece with gentle lyricism, the Prelude in G Minor resembles an Adagio of a sonata *all'italiana*. Long trills are prominently featured on four occasions (two in each hand), thereby assuming the expressive value of a true and thoroughly dynamic *mesa di voce*. The initial thematic material is forsworn in Bar 12 in favor of an ornamental elaboration upon the *terce coul  en montant* and *en descendant* that had been introduced in bars 2 and 6.

Fugue: in four parts and in gavotte rhythm, the Fugue in G Minor derives its theme from the Fugue in E Flat Major in Fischer's *Ariadne Musica*: a subject clearly divided into two sections which, superposed upon themselves, manage to provide all the thematic material in the piece. With a crossing of parts and a final peroration that expands the texture to five parts, the last stretto produces an impressive effect.

17. BWV 862 [A Flat major]

Prelude: in the style of a proud Polonaise, the Prelude in A Flat Major almost resembles a concerto allegro, although in terms of structure it comes close to a sonata movement in the form of an instrumental ritornello of an aria. Complex *bariolage* figures, in the right hand as well as in the left, produce an accompaniment style "in perpetual motion".

Fugue: in four parts and almost like a *ricercar*, the Fugue in A Flat Major derives its lapidary subject in eighth notes from the broken chord of the tonic triad, thereby suggesting the sound of a solemn bell peal, answered, in turn, by a linear, melodious countersubject in sixteenth notes. The subject's last entry, in the descant, is thoroughly rhetorical in character: accompaniment is provided by energetic chords over "promenading" sixteenth-notes in the bass, a free evocation of the countersubject.

18. BWV 863 [G Sharp minor]

Prelude: a three-part invention (*Sinfonia*) with some license, the Prelude in G Sharp Minor has the tranquil flowing of a *siciliano*, although its melody apparently lacks the typical dotted rhythm (actually hidden in the sixteenth-note sextuplets). With its "concentrated, austere, and sorrowful" expression (Harry Halbreich), it has often been associated with the traversal of a "metaphysical, transcendent" path (Hugo Riemann).

Fugue: in four parts and in solemn gavotte rhythm, the Fugue in G Sharp Minor exploits the cadential design of the subject's last notes to create homophonic interludes harmonized by robust chords. These take the lead and masterfully guide the musical discourse from beginning to end, quasi-obsessively, with singular expressive power.

19. BWV 864 [A major]

Prelude: in gavotte rhythm, this is a polyphonic *tour de force* sporting three different subjects in rigorous triple counterpoint with one another. Their characters are formed by three contrasting elements: a stately, "plodding" motion in quarter notes (making no attempt to avoid the pathos of descending chromaticism), a "sighing" theme in syncopated eighth notes, and a whimsical "strolling" gait in sixteenth notes, entirely unpredictable in its changes of direction.

Fugue: in three parts and in a "gigue" 9/8 rhythm, the Fugue in A Major treats two subjects freely: one full of leaps, the other timidly subservient and modest, as if afraid to break ranks. The opening eloquent rest *alla* Buxtehude and the subsequent leaps on the interval of the fourth strongly characterize the fugue's first section (bars 1-22) up to the entry of the second subject in sixteenth notes. From then on, until Bar 42, we have a continuous succession of sixteenth notes flowing back and forth between parts – up to two final episodes that summarize the first section (where the first subject appeared) and the second one (which had combined the first subject with the second).

20. BWV 865 [A minor]

Prelude: here we have another possible “embodiment” of 9/8 time, the meter just featured in the previous piece. Often criticized for being too brief and out of proportion with the subsequent “monster fugue”, this prelude is actually perfectly balanced in terms of 18th-century aesthetics. Its insistent, pertinacious character, combined with the figured short-short-long anapest rhythm on the downbeat (whereas the fugue shall feature such a figuration on the upbeat) makes the Prelude in A Minor a perfect complementary element within a diptych that displays extraordinary willpower.

Fugue: in four parts, the Fugue in A Minor is practically a permutation fugue in the style of Reincken. Of enormous proportions and of decisively archaic taste, this work is certainly among those written by Bach at a young age. It is substantially based on imitation at the unison (or at the octave), at the fourth, or at the fifth, of the subject and of its inversion, introducing strettos relatively early and finishing, after a fermata (preceded by a Neapolitan sixth), with a glorious expansion to five parts and even to six parts including the pedal; this conclusion is impossible to play with the hands alone; it is necessarily conceived for the pedals of the organ or the clavichord.

21. BWV 866 [B Flat major]

Prelude: in the arpeggiated style of Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer (cf. his *Praeludium V in D* contained in *Pieces de clavessin*, 1696), this is one of the most well-known pieces in Bach’s entire collection. Of its two sections, the first has a more capricious character (bars 1-10), inspired, as mentioned above, by Fischer and by 17th-century technique, whereas the more solemn second section (bars 11-20), introduced by the indication “Adagio” in some sources, makes use of the more modern technique of scales performed with one hand (in contrast with the earlier *passaggio* technique that alternated the hands to play any sort of running figure).

Fugue: in three parts, in moderate Polonaise rhythm and featuring a gallant style, the Fugue in B Flat Major has the typical da capo structure – Bach’s favorite – with a reprise on the subdominant and a subsequent final entry on the tonic, followed by a brief coda.

22. BWV 867 [B Flat minor]

Prelude: in this case as well, we are faced with the expansion and elaboration of a form previously found in Fischer’s *Ariadne Musica* collection. Here the genre of *Toccata* (or *Tastada*, or *Arpeggiata*) enables Bach to introduce richly dense, five-part polyphony (thus preparing us for the texture of the following fugue), and to create a species of double-choir dialogue between the outer parts and the inner parts, viz. between descant/tenor and altus/bass. The rhythm evokes the old Pavane; the finale is reached with a fermata on a nine-part (!) chord that allows for a brief but intense *congedo*, followed by a closing pedal note in the descant.

Fugue: in five parts and in the solemn rhythm of a Pavane, almost like a *ricercar in stile antico*, the Fugue in B Flat Minor contains the most extraordinary *stretto magistrale* (bars 67-72), with five complete entries and statements of the subject: Bach calls attention to this compositional feat by highlighting it with appropriate voice-leading. This is the perfect musical consequence of the prelude, from which it derives its countersubject’s rhythm. The expressive leap of a minor ninth, following the “declaration of intent” of the descending fourth, sets the tone for the entire piece, one of those within the entire cycle which is the most vocal in character.

23. BWV 868 [B major]

Prelude: exquisitely and delicately conceived, quasi in the style of François Couperin, this is a brief, light three-part invention (*Sinfonia*), brimming with serenity and luminosity. Its intimate, angelic character, along with that of the fugue, forms a placid interlude between the asperity of the preceding prelude-fugue diptych and the following one.

Fugue: in four parts, featuring a subject derived by augmentation from the prelude's main motif, the Fugue in B Major prolongs the prelude's delicate, luminous character, while expanding the tendency to use scale material (both ascending and descending), thereby creating a euphony of rare peacefulness, made up of sixths and thirds.

24. BWV 869 [B minor]

Prelude: in bipartite form and in the style of a Corelli trio sonata, the Prelude in B Minor features two upper parts in the *durezza e ligature* style over a "walking bass". Along with the preceding fugue, this is one of the few pieces to feature a tempo indication. "Andante", in this case, clearly refers to the continuous progression in eighth notes in the bass, which, in the role of a *basso continuo* (figured bass), melodically and harmonically determine everything that goes on in the upper parts.

Fugue: in four parts and resembling a *ricercar*, the Fugue in B Minor sports a practically "dodecaphonic" subject: this is the last piece in this first part of the *Wohltemperirtes Clavier*, and Bach uses the occasion to demonstrate his capacity to create a musical Ariadne's thread that uninterruptedly meanders through a playful labyrinth of modulations. The "Largo" indication is more illustrative and imaginative than strictly metronomic. The texture remains clear and transparent throughout, also due to the fact that one of the parts is always silent. The countersubject's "tail" is put to highly dramatic use in the finale, thereby creating a conclusion that is all the more decisive.

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LUCA GUGLIELMI HARPSICHORD

Luca Guglielmi (*Turin, Italy, 1977) is a conductor, composer, soloist of keyboard instruments (harpsichord, organ, clavichord, fortepiano, modern piano) and musicologist, renowned for his historically informed interpretations of music of all periods, his wide repertoire from Gesualdo to Stravinsky, and his strong commitment into the study and application of phenomenology of music.

Recently, he has been appointed assistant conductor to Jordi Savall (with whom he collaborated since more than twenty years) in his long-term project of complete performance and recording of Beethoven's 9 Symphonies with Le Concert des Nations. Moreover, in November 2019 he made his debut with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in a concert featuring Mozart's Ballet from Idomeneo and Symphony Nr. 41 Jupiter. Honourable Mention at the XII International Organ Competition in Bruges, he studied harpsichord with Ton Koopman and Patrizia Marisaldi, organ with Vittorio Bonotto, piano with Eros Cassardo, composition with Alessandro Ruo Rui, renaissance counterpoint and historic composition with Sergio Pasteris. He has collaborated with artists such as Cecilia Bartoli, Sara Mingardo, Barbara Bonney, Philippe Jarrousky, Giuliano Carmignola, Paolo Pandolfo, Ottavio Dantone, Gabriele Cassone, Paul O'Dette, Katia and Marielle Labèque and ensembles like Il Giardino Armonico, Ricercar Consort, Ensemble La Fenice, The Rare Fruits Council, Freiburger Barockorchester, RAI Turin Orchestra (under Jeffrey Tate, Roberto Abbado, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos).

Luca Guglielmi has a wide discography of more than 50 CDs, among them 18 solo titles devoted to a repertoire from Frescobaldi to Mozart, for such labels as: Accent, cpo, Vivat, Hänssler Classics, Stradivarius and Elegia. His recordings of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and Pasquini's *Sonate da gravecembalo* have been awarded with the Diapason d'or; his last organ recording Bach in Montecassino, for the English label Vivat, received an Editor's Choice from the Gramophone magazine. Luca Guglielmi is professor of harpsichord, fortepiano and chamber music at ESMUC (Escola Superior de Musica de Catalunya) in Barcelona.

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