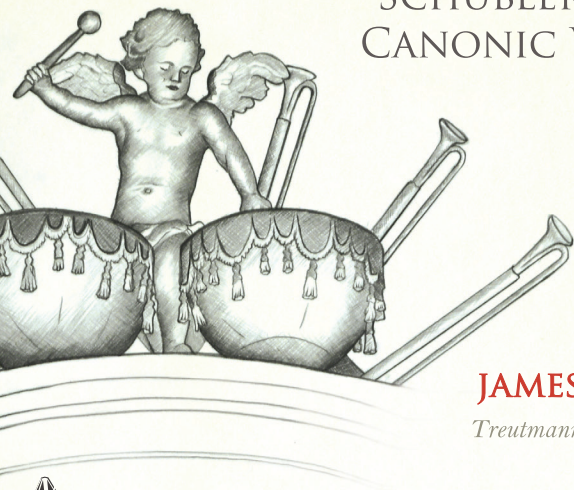


J S BACH

LEIPZIG CHORALES
SCHÜBLER CHORALES
CANONIC VARIATIONS



JAMES JOHNSTONE

Treutmann Organ 1737 Grauhof



JAMES JOHNSTONE
J S BACH

LEIPZIG CHORALES
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*Organ by Christoph Treutmann, 1737
Stiftskirche St.Georg, Grauhof, Germany*

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METRONOME

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DISC 1

LEIPZIG CHORALES BWV 651-668

1	Fantasia super Komm, Heiliger Geist	BWV 651	06:12
2	Komm, Heiliger Geist	BWV 652	08:37
3	An Wasserflüssen Babylon	BWV 653	05:50
4	Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele	BWV 654	07:52
5	Trio super Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend	BWV 655	03:36
6	O Lamm Gottes unschuldig	BWV 656	09:16
7	Nun danket alle Gott	BWV 657	04:46
8	Von Gott will ich nicht lassen	BWV 658	05:07
9	Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland	BWV 659	04:54
10	Trio super Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland	BWV 660	02:46
11	Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland	BWV 661	02:42

DISC 2

1	Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr	BWV 662	07:17
2	Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr	BWV 663	06:04
3	Trio super Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr	BWV 664	05:10
4	Jesus Christus, unser Heiland	BWV 665	04:19
5	Jesus Christus, unser Heiland	BWV 666	03:05
6	Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist	BWV 667	02:25
7	Vor deinen Thron tret' ich	BWV 668	05:28

SCHÜBLER CHORALES BWV 645-650

8	Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme	BWV 645	03:58
9	Wo soll ich fliehen hin (oder) Auf meinen lieben Gott	BWV 646	01:40
10	Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten	BWV 647	04:40
11	Meine Seele erhebt den Herren	BWV 648	03:09
12	Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ	BWV 649	02:39
13	Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel herunter	BWV 650	03:33

CANONIC VARIATIONS ON VOM HIMMEL HOCH BWV 769

14-18	Variations I-V		12:30
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Total RunningTime 127:46 (Disc 1: 61:43 Disc 2: 66:03)

A NOTE ON THE WORKS

The congregational, strophic hymn known as a chorale, sung in the vernacular, has been called the very soul of its creator, Martin Luther. The chorale became a central part of Bach's creative output, be it the great chorale choruses of the passions and cantatas, or the numerous chorale settings for organ. By the latter half of the 17th century the organist's repertoire was replete with chorale keyboard arrangements, and Bach himself, on arrival at Mühlhausen in 1707, had already poured into this stream of creativity a quarter of his own organ chorale output. In him we are witness to an unparalleled development of this genre from those early works to the sophisticated, esoteric pages of Clavier-Übung Part III.

A few years into his Leipzig tenure, following an intense period of cantata composition, Bach turned his attention once more to the keyboard. Work began on the organ Trio Sonatas and Clavier-Übung Parts I and II, and concurrently from the mid-1730s right up to his death, organ chorales proved a constant preoccupation.

The chorale-based works contained in the manuscript known from its shelf call number as **P271** (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Mus.ms.

Bach P271) are the focus of this recording. Into this source Bach copied not only the so-called 'Leipzig' chorales BWV 651-668 and the Canonic Variations on *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her* BWV 769a, but also the Trio Sonatas BWV 525-530.

Shortly after the publication of Clavier-Übung Part III at the Leipzig trade fair of 1739, Bach turned to chorale settings from his Weimar period with a view to revision and possible publication. He transcribed his revised versions of the first thirteen chorales (up to and including BWV 663) relatively quickly; then, after a gap of several years, BWV 664 and 665. The following two chorale settings, BWV 666 and 667, appear to be in the handwriting of Bach's former student and son-in-law, J C Altnickol, returning to Bach's handwriting in the Canonic Variations, followed finally by a twenty-five-and-a-half bar fragment of the chorale *Vor deinen Thron tret' ich* BWV 668, in an unidentified hand.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come...suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind...And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire...And they were all filled with the Holy

Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”.

The Bible, Acts 2, 1-4:

With this image in mind Bach began the collection with **Komm, Heiliger Geist BWV 651** — a chorale fantasia of immense scale. Unusually for a Bach chorale where the pedal carries the cantus firmus, the pedals begin and end with free material — the opening flourishes in the manuals sit over a tonic pedal for seven bars which then rises by step to the first note of the chorale. The unceasing, whirling semi-quaver arpeggio figures carry us from first note to last.

At just shy of 200 bars in length, Bach's longest organ chorale, **Komm, Heiliger Geist BWV 652**, combines a highly ornamented cantus firmus à la française with a chorale motet (where each line of the hymn is treated fugally with figures derived from the cantus firmus), over a sarabande metre. The chorale melody bears a close relation to another lengthy work by Bach — the subject of the violin fugue in C major BWV 1005.

The first seventeen chorales all bear witness to revisions — some small, some large. Perhaps most radical of all is that of **An Wasserflüssen Babylon BWV 653**. Here Bach dispensed with the somewhat antiquated five-voice writing with double-

pedal of BWV 653a in favour of more transparent textures to accompany the chorale. Bach famously improvised a chorale fantasia on *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* for over an hour in Johann Adam Reincken's church in Hamburg, prompting the remark from the older organist: *'I thought that this art [of improvisation] was dead, but I see that it still lives in you'*. In BWV 653 Bach combines numerous elements — sarabande, cantus firmus en taille, increasing chromaticism — to produce a suitable affect for this lament by the exiled Jews in Babylon.

Mendelssohn's fondness for the setting of **Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele BWV 654** is well-documented and it featured in a number of his recital programmes. In 1840, following one such recital in Leipzig, his friend and fellow composer Schumann remarked in his review that the work was *'as priceless, deep and full of soul as any piece of music that ever sprang from a true artist's imagination'*. BWV 654 once more evokes the sarabande, but this time with a lighter step and a literally 'adorned' (schmücke) cantus firmus, resulting in a serene lyricism.

Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend BWV 655 and **Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr BWV 664** are cut from the same cloth: Italianate trio sonatas driven by lively chorale-derived

figuration, which both become cantus firmus chorales in their final pages. In the case of BWV 655 the chorale is heard complete in the pedal before closing with a brief return to the trio material.

Bach's biographer Philipp Spitta could hardly be accused of hyperbole in his reaction to **O Lamm Gottes unschuldig BWV 656** — '*a marvel of profoundly religious art*'. In this setting of the Passion hymn *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig* the chorale melody is taken by a lower voice in each successive verse. The work's spiritual journey, effectively a 'Life of Christ', with its exquisitely expressive play on flattened leading notes, exuberant dance-like figuration over the chorale in the pedal and vivid chromatic word-painting (*'all sin you have borne'*), ends in heavenly triumph with joyfully flowing scales over a firmly grounded pedal point.

Nowhere is Pachelbel's influence more strongly felt than in **Nun danket alle Gott BWV 657**. The Central German composer innovated and excelled in cantus firmus chorales where the unadorned cantus firmus in the soprano voice is laid over a busy, motivically rich accompaniment. In BWV 657 the accompanying semi-quaver figures give an impression of continuous abundant joy.

The Advent chorale **Von Gott will ich nicht lassen BWV 658**, in the remote tonality of F minor, employs expressive accompaniment figuration which, in Spitta's words, '*wind around and above the chorale tune like a luxurious garland of amaranth*'. The closing bars bear a striking resemblance to those of the manual setting of *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir* BWV 687 in *Clavier-Übung Part III* — an extended pedal note beneath harmony struggling to find final resolution.

The three settings of the Advent chorale **Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland** use vastly different means to convey Christ's Incarnation. In **BWV 659** a steadfast quaver bass line underscores a richly argued left-hand accompaniment, crowned by a melismatic, arabesque-like derivation of the chorale in the soprano. Justly lauded and disseminated partly thanks to Busoni's piano transcription from around 1900, Bach is indebted to Scheidemann and Buxtehude — the latter's own setting surely acting as model.

In the **Trio super Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland BWV 660** two well-matched bass parts (both registered at 8' pitch to emphasise that equality), perhaps evoking a scoring of cello and viola da gamba — the latter born out by the use of arpeggiated final chords — fold over each other canonically, creating

'cross-like' motifs. The chorale melody is more modestly embellished than in BWV 659, with a deliberate twisted awkwardness heralding Christ's suffering at Golgotha.

The third setting, **Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland BWV 661**, eschews cantus firmus ornamentation in favour of plain pedal steps against an independent superstructure in the manuals. Its very emancipation from superfluous ornamentation and the rubric In Organo Pleno lends the work a massive and terrifying atmosphere.

The Advent trilogy is followed by one on the German Gloria, **Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr. In BWV 662** the beautiful, florid elaborations of the cantus firmus never obscure the chorale, while the middle voices, often in thirds or sixths, and the continuo bass are reminiscent of both *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* BWV 654 and *Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland* BWV 659.

Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr BWV 663 combines elements of tierce en taille and Italianate trio sonata. A constant rolling chorale-derived quaver figuration pervades the accompaniment, interrupted only by a cadential flourish at the words *ohn Unterlass*, settling on a final pedal point on the words *ein Ende*.

Entered into P271 after a gap of several years, the Italianate **Trio super Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr BWV 664** uses chorale-derived figuration for all three voices from the outset, long episodes and demanding virtuosity akin to that found in the Trio Sonatas. Twice the music pauses on a pedal note, allowing a joyous unfurling of manual arpeggio figures before we are carried on our way with a cycle-of-fifths sequence.

Jesus Christus, unser Heiland BWV 665 is the last of the 'Leipzig Chorales' to be entered by Bach himself. Marked 'sub Comunione' this eucharistic chorale abounds with the explicit word-painting of the first stanza: the descending chromatic scale (*'durch das bitter Leiden sein'*) and the rapid upward scales (*half er uns aus der Höllen Pein*) at the third and fourth lines respectively.

Excepting a concluding tonic pedal note, **Jesus Christus, unser Heiland BWV 666** is the solitary manuals-only work of the 'Eighteen'. It is perhaps the earliest composition in the collection, its verses connected by free figuration that recall the interline interludes of Bach's Arnstadt hymn accompaniments, of which a small number of examples survive.

In **Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist BWV 667** Bach took verbatim his

Orgelbüchlein setting BWV 631 of this Pentecostal hymn and, in line with the scale of his later chorale settings, added a further 18 bars. Where BWV 631 ends, Bach provides a bridging passage of continuous swirling semiquaver figures reaching the top of the keyboard, vividly conjuring up the arrival of the Holy Ghost before the chorale enters in plain steps in the pedal.

Copied into P271 at this point are the **Canonic Variations BWV 769a** on the Christmas hymn **Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her**. This set of five variations fits within Bach's later-life preoccupation with both monothematic cycles and canonic devices.

An opportunity for revision and publication arose in the late 1740s. In 1738 Bach's former student Lorenz Christoph Mizler had founded the *Correspondirende Societät der musikalischen Wissenschaften*. Members were required to pay an annual subscription of two thaler; submit a portrait in oil and, in Bach's case, a riddle in musical form. Bach joined in June 1747 as the fourteenth member; submitting his *Canon triplex* BWV 1076 and the *Canonic Variations*, as well as his portrait by E G Haussmann. In an addendum to the Obituary notice Mizler writes 'Our lately departed Bach did not, it is true, occupy himself with deep

theoretical speculation on music, but was all the stronger in the practice of the art. To the Society he furnished the chorale Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her fully worked out, which was thereupon engraved on copper.' The autograph, BWV 769a, and the published version performed here, **BWV 769**, differ in a number of details, notably the sequence of the last three movements.

Variation I: in Canone all' Ottava à 2 Clav. et Pedal

Canon at the octave between the hands with the chorale in the pedals — the connotation with Christmas here enhanced by the use of the cymbalsterne.

Variation II: Alio Modo in Canone alla Quinta à 2 Clav: et Pedal

Canon at the fifth between the hands, with the chorale in the pedals.

Variation III: Canone alla Settima

Canon at the seventh between left hand and pedal based on the chorale, cantus firmus in top part of right hand with expressive florid lower part.

Variation IV: à 2 Clav. et Pedal. per augmentation. in Canone all' ottava

Canon in augmentation at the octave between right hand and lower part of left hand, cantus firmus in the pedals. A florid right hand in seemingly never-ending arabesques.

Variation V: L'altra Sorte del' Canone all' rovescio, 1) alla Sesta. 2) alla Terza. 3) alla Seconda è 4) alla Nona

Canons galore: chorale in canon inverted at the sixth between right and left hand, then at the third, then at the second between left hand and pedal, at the ninth between pedal and right hand, finally in six parts and in quick succession all four phrases of the chorale are presented combining all possible techniques.

Directly below the last line of the Canonic Variations in P271 appears a fragment of the chorale setting **Vor deinen Thron tret' ich BWV 668**. Once thought to be in Bach's hand it is now believed to be in that of a Leipzig-based copyist known as Anon.Vr.

After 26 and a half bars this entry breaks off, but it is clear from the structure of the manuscript that further folios are missing. The only complete version of the chorale to survive (BWV 668a) is that appended to the original print of the Art of Fugue BWV 1080, included to indemnify potential purchasers disappointed by the lack of completion of Contrapunctus 14. On the verso of the title page of the Art of Fugue we find the words '...the deceased man in his blindness dictated this piece extemporarily to the quill of one of his friends' — hence the sobriquet Deathbed Chorale.

BWV 668 appears in its apparently original form (BWV 641) in the *Orgel-büchlein*, here under the title *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein*. For its later form, under the title *Vor deinen Thron tret ich*, Bach pares down the soprano elaborations into a simple statement of the chorale and enlarges the work from 9 to 45 bars by means of lengthy contrapuntal interludes based on the chorale melody. Whether BWV 668 belongs with the other 17 chorales to form the 'Eighteen Chorales' is a matter for conjecture.

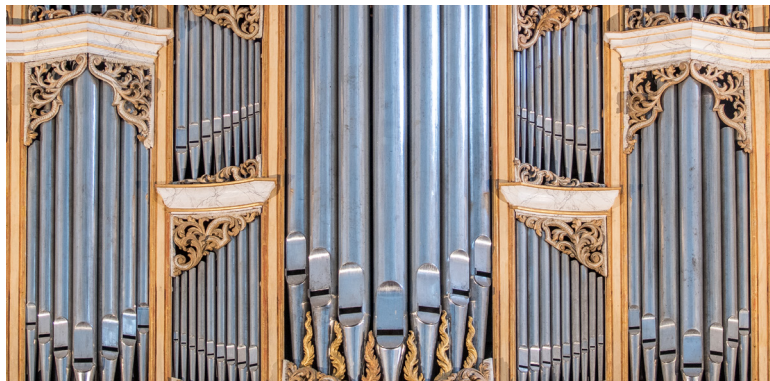
Akin in style to one of Bach's greatest chorale settings, *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir* BWV 687, although perhaps not as successfully argued, the setting in BWV 668 of the final line of the chorale contains as touching a harmonic pathos as any of Bach's greatest compositions.

The **Schübler Chorales BWV 645-650** appeared in 1748/49 and take their name from their publisher, Bach's former student Johann Georg Schübler: Despite Schübler's lack of experience, in 1747 Bach entrusted the engraving of the Musical Offering to him — a lack that was borne out in technically poor results. It is then all the more surprising that Bach entrusted important stages of the publishing process of this chorale collection to Schübler.

All but one (BWV 646) are note-for-note transcriptions of cantata movements, presumably selected by Bach. Stylistically their transparent, melodically-pleasing galant textures are antithetical to the philosophical and religious musings of Clavier-Übung Part III and the Canonic Variations, though as demanding technically. Melodies are given independence from the cantus firmus, creating light textures, often in just two parts. Particularly evident in the Schübler Chorales is Bach's innovative ability to develop the accompanying voices' independent structural and motivic characteristics. Bach's personal

copy of the print, complete with missing performance instructions and text corrections, indicates that the composer had no opportunity to correct the proofs. With no second edition, none of these revisions was incorporated. On Bach's death the manuscript passed to CPE Bach who had it bound with his father's copy of Clavier-Übung Part III and sold it on to Johann Nikolaus Forkel in 1774. After some detours it crossed the Atlantic to Princeton, where it resides as part of the Scheide Collection in Princeton University Library.

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Organ by Christoph Treutmann, 1737, Stiftskirche St.Georg, Grauhof, Germany

CHRISTOPH TREUTMANN ORGAN, 1737, GRAUHOFF, GERMANY

Christoph Treutmann the Elder was born in Silesia c.1673/74 and died in Magdeburg in 1757. He served as an apprentice in Magdeburg to Heinrich Herbst the Younger, going on to work with the famous Schnitzgers of Hamburg. Notable among Treutmann's pupils was the Brandenburg builder Joachim Wagner (see Trondheim organ used in Vol.1).

The GrauhoFF organ was built between 1711 and 1737 and today survives in close to its original state, making it one of the most important instruments in northern Europe. Comprising three manuals and pedal, 42 registers, and approximately 2,500 pipes, this is Treutmann's only remaining instrument, significant for combining the characteristics of Nordic Hanseatic and central German organ building in an almost perfect synthesis. It attracted much interest and admiration at the time, inspiring the organ expert, Johann Hermann Biermann, to write in *Organographia Hildensiensis Specialis, Hildesheim 1738: The structure and outline of this very magnificent and precious work presents itself to the eye as noble and lively beyond all measure. [...] It also possesses an all the more pervasive harmony and corresonantz, so that it might well brook comparison with a thunderstorm rumbling in the air, namely, when the Posaune 32' bass is added.*

A complete restoration of the organ was carried out between 1989 and 1992 by the Hillebrand Brothers. All the extant original parts were retained and others were renewed following Treutmann's original concept.

BACH ORGAN?

The very idea of a 'Bach organ' is contentious. Bach was well acquainted with instruments in Saxony and Thuringia, which displayed many outside influences, and also with the north German organs of Lübeck, Lüneburg, Hamburg and Berlin. He had an extensive knowledge of organ construction and was a highly respected organ consultant, and the aural palette he encountered throughout his life is reflected in his own musical eclecticism.

Inevitably in instruments of this age there are additional mechanical noises from the tracker action which form part and parcel of the experience. There is much that the mature Bach would have enjoyed in the GrauhoFF organ - a plethora of foundation registers including string stops such as the Hauptwerk Viola da Gamba (at both 16' and 8' pitch), and the gravität produced by the Pedal Groß Posaunen Baß 32', all within a single case creating a coherent and well-blended body of sound.

Specification of Christoph Treutmann organ:

Hauptwerck

Principal 16'
Viola da Gambe 16'
Lieblich Principal 8'
Spitzflöte 8'
Viola di Gambe 8'
Qunita 6'
Octava 4'
Nassat 3'
Rauschpfeiffe 3 f.
Mixtur 4-5-6 f.
Trommet 16'
Trommet 8'

Hinterwerck

Gedacht 8'
Quintadena 8'
Principal 4'
Flöte Travers 4'
Octava 2'
Waldflöte 2'
Quinta 1 1/2
Scharff 3 f.
Haubois 8'

Manualumfang: C, D bis c'''

Pedalumfang: C, D bis d'''

Tremulant für das Manualwerck

Koppel vom Oberwerck zum Hauptwerck als Schiebekoppel

Koppel vom Hinterwerck zum Hauptwerck als Zug

3 Sperrventile, 2 Zimbelsterne

Oberwerck

Principal 8'
Rohrflöte 8'
Octava 4'
Spitzflöte 4'
Quinta 3'
Superoctava 2'
Sesquialtera 2 f.
Mixtur 5 f.
Fagott 16'
Vox humana 8'

Pedalwerck

Principal 16'
Soubbas 16'
Rohrflöte 12'
Octava 8'
Flachflöte 8'
Superoctava 4'
Mixtur 4 f.
Groß Posaunen Baß 32'
Posaune 16'
Trommet 8'
Schalmey 4'

Registrations chosen for this recording can be found at www.jamesjohnstone.org



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Early Music OUP

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Organists' Review

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Diapason

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JAMES JOHNSTONE



James Johnstone enjoys a varied musical life as harpsichordist and organist, working mainly within the period instrument world. Following studies in London and Holland, James has forged a career as recitalist, chamber musician, continuo player and teacher:

He was a longstanding member of the Gabrieli Consort & Players, taking part in their award-winning recordings for Deutsche Grammophon, and also of Florilegium with whom he recorded 10 discs and toured Europe and the Americas.

He is principal keyboardist of the Monteverdi Choir since 2008. James has also performed and recorded with the symphony orchestras of Boston, Chicago and Bavarian Radio at the invitation of Bernard Haitink.

As a recitalist he has performed in Great Britain, Denmark, Holland, Germany, France, Spain, Poland, Switzerland, Israel, Ecuador, Colombia and the United States. He is professor of Early Keyboards at the Guildhall School of Music & the Royal Academy of Music.

James has released eight solo discs on organ and harpsichord of works by Blow, Gibbons, Ercole Pasquini, Cornet, Elizabethan Virginalists and a Bach recital from the Waalse Kerk, Amsterdam. This CD is the third in a projected complete edition of Bach's organ works.

www.jamesjohnstone.org

With sincere thanks to Martin Hoffman and the
VEREIN DER FÖRDERER DER TREUTMANN-
ORGEL von 1737 in der Stiftskirche Grauhof e.V.

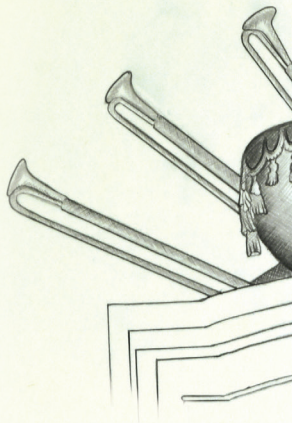
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METRONOME



JAMES JOHNSTONE

Christoph Treutmann organ, 1737, Grauhof, Germany

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

2 VOLUMES

LEIPZIG CHORALES

SCHÜBLER CHORALES

CANONIC VARIATIONS

VOLUME 1

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10	Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten	BWV 647	04:40
11	Meine Seele erhebt den Herren	BWV 648	03:09
12	Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ	BWV 649	02:39
13	Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel herunter	BWV 650	03:33

CANONIC VARIATIONS ON VOM HIMMEL HOCH BWV 799			
14-18	Variations I-V		12:30



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BACH ORGAN SERIES VOL 3
MET CD 1096

Total Running Time 127:46 (Disc 1: 61:43 Disc 2: 66:03)