

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Orgelbüchlein

*Orgel = Buchlein
(mit 48 ausgewähltem Exerzitia)*

JOAN LIPPINCOTT, ORGAN

GOTHIC

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Orgelbüchlein

JOAN LIPPINCOTT, ORGAN

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 599 | 01:31 |
| 2. Gott, durch deine Güte, or Gottes Sohn ist kommen, BWV 600 | 01:13 |
| 3. Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottessohn, or Herr Gott, nun sei gepreist, BWV 601 | 01:42 |
| 4. Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott, BWV 602 | 00:55 |
| 5. Puer natus in Bethlehem, BWV 603 | 00:59 |
| 6. Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, BWV 604 | 01:28 |
| 7. Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich, BWV 605 | 02:01 |
| 8. Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her, BWV 606 | 00:46 |
| 9. Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar, BWV 607 | 01:23 |
| 10. In dulci júbilo, BWV 608 | 01:31 |
| 11. Lobt Gott, ihr Christen allzugleich, BWV 609 | 00:47 |
| 12. Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 610 | 02:53 |
| 13. Christum wir sollen loben schon, BWV 611 | 02:44 |
| 14. Wir Christenleut, BWV 612 | 01:20 |
| 15. Helft mir Gottes Güte preisen, BWV 613 | 01:04 |
| 16. Das alte Jahr vergangen ist, BWV 614 | 02:14 |
| 17. In dir ist Freude, BWV 615 | 02:50 |
| 18. Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin, BWV 616 | 01:56 |
| 19. Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf, BWV 617 | 02:10 |
| 20. O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig, BWV 618 | 03:38 |
| 21. Christe, du Lamm Gottes, BWV 619 | 00:59 |
| 22. Christus, der uns selig macht, BWV 620 | 01:54 |
| 23. Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund, BWV 621 | 01:20 |

24. O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß, BWV 622	05:28
25. Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 623	01:01
26. Hilf, Gott, dass mir's gelinge, BWV 624	01:22
27. Christ lag in Todesbanden, BWV 625	01:32
28. Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, BWV 626	00:54
29. Christ ist erstanden, BWV 627	04:21
30. Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ, BWV 628	00:51
31. Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag, BWV 629	01:04
32. Heut triumphieret Gottes Sohn, BWV 630	01:27
33. Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist, BWV 631	00:59
34. Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend, BWV 632	01:31
35. Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV 633	01:57
36. Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot, BWV 635	01:17
37. Vater unser im Himmelreich, BWV 636	01:35
38. Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt, BWV 637	02:05
39. Es ist das Heil uns kommen her, BWV 638	01:01
40. Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 639	02:43
41. In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr, BWV 640	01:12
42. Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein, BWV 641	02:04
43. Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten, BWV 642	01:46
44. Alle Menschen müssen sterben, BWV 643	01:39
45. Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig, BWV 644	00:53

Total: 78:23



On the present recording the distinguished organist Joan Lippincott performs the entire contents of the *Orgelbüchlein*, Johann Sebastian Bach's first attempt at compiling an encyclopedic compendium of organ chorales. The inscription on the title page reads as follows:

Orgelbüchlein (Little Organ Book), in which a beginner at the organ is given instruction in developing a chorale in many diverse ways, and at the same time in acquiring facility in the study of the pedal, since in the chorales contained therein the pedal is treated in a wholly obbligato manner.

In praise of the Almighty's will
And for my neighbor's greater skill.

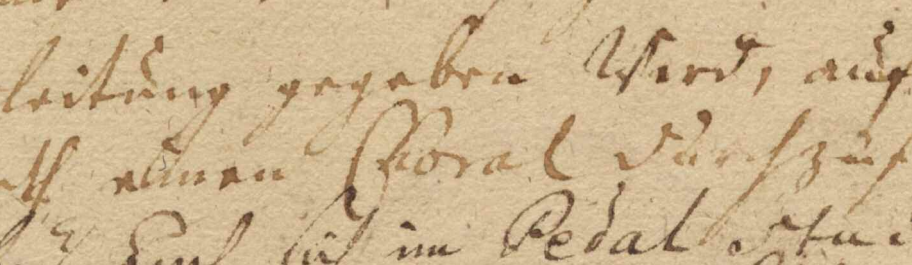
Composed by Johann Sebastian Bach
Capellmeister to the Serene Reigning
Prince of Anhalt-Cöthen

The term "little" most certainly refers to the diminutive size of the volume in which the music is preserved (a small album in landscape format measuring 7½" wide and 6" high) and the modest size of the pieces

(many no more than a dozen measures long) rather than the scope of the collection. By any standards, the *Orgelbüchlein* was an extraordinarily ambitious undertaking, calling for the composition of at least 164 organ chorales. It was Bach's first keyboard compilation, and it stands as a worthy predecessor to the carefully organized collections of the Cöthen and Leipzig periods.

Despite the mention of Bach's position in Cöthen on the title page, the *Orgelbüchlein* is a product of his tenure in Weimar (1708-1717), where he served first as organist and then, from 1714 onward, as concertmaster as well at the court of Duke Wilhelm Ernst. These were golden years for Bach the organist, since his employer admired and supported his playing and gave him every opportunity to develop and demonstrate his talents. As it was expressed later in Bach's obituary: "The pleasure His Grace took in his playing fired him with the desire to try every possible artistry in his treatment of the organ. Here, too, he wrote most of his organ works." The *Orgelbüchlein* reflects Bach's initial ambitions in Weimar in the realm of the organ chorale.

Bach began the project by laying out

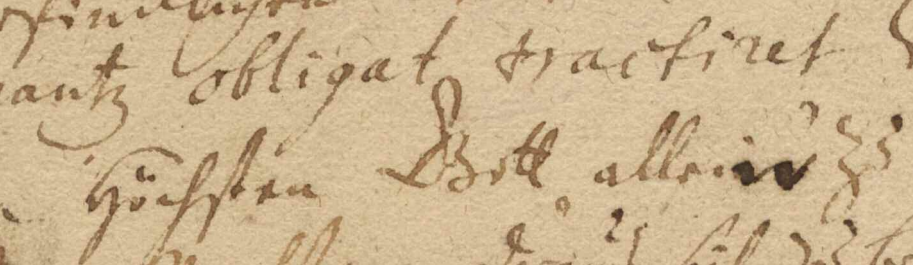


space for 164 chorales in a small handwritten album that is now preserved in the Berlin State Library. He ruled each page with music staves and inserted the titles of the chorales to be set. He followed the general order of hymnbooks of the day, allotting spaces first for 60 *de tempore* chorales – that is, hymns for the church year, commencing with Advent and ending with Trinity and special feast days. He then continued with 104 *omni tempore* chorales, or hymns for general use, starting with chorales associated with Luther’s Catechism and continuing with chorales associated with various aspects of Christian life (Christian Life and Conduct; the Cross, Persecution, and Temptation; the Christian Church; Death and Burial; and so forth).

Bach did not follow the precise order or contents of any known hymnal. It is also noteworthy that he favored the classical

chorales of earlier generations. More than 70% of the tunes date from the 16th century, and most of the remainder date from before 1650. There are very few representatives of the “newer” hymns that later featured so prominently in his Leipzig cantatas and Passions and in the Schübler Collection of c. 1748. Such popular melodies as Philipp Nicolai’s “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” (Sleepers Awake, A Voice is Calling!) and Paul Gerhardt’s “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden” (O Sacred Head Now Wounded) do not appear in the *Orgelbüchlein*. The emphasis, rather, is on the chorales of the Reformation, the founding period of the Lutheran church – a retrospective interest to which Bach returned 25 years later in the Third Part of the *Clavierübung*.

With the staves and titles in place, Bach began to fill in the music, eventually completing 45 of the planned 164 settings. In



some cases he drew on pre-existing pieces or sketches and entered the musical text in a clean, firm hand. In other instances he composed directly on the page, correcting or revising the music as necessary as he went. In the famous setting “O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross,” BWV 622, he crossed out a completed measure altogether and added a new version below, via an insert. These re-workings give the *Orgelbüchlein* album the appearance of a compositional workbook.

Bach wrote the bulk of the *Orgelbüchlein* chorales in Weimar, most probably before he was appointed concertmaster in 1714 and began writing cantatas on a regular basis. He later returned to the collection twice, first in Cöthen around 1722 to add the title inscription, and then in Leipzig in the 1730s or 1740s, to add “Helft mir, Gotts Güte preisen,” BWV 613, and the initial two measures of “O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid,” BWV Anh. 200,

which remained incomplete.

We do not know for certain what moved Bach to undertake the *Orgelbüchlein* project. Certainly as organist to Wilhelm Ernst, a devout Lutheran who required regular attendance at the court chapel, Bach would have needed preludes or interludes for congregational singing and communion music during worship services. He was trained to improvise such pieces, of course, but writing them out offered the opportunity to display the full range of his compositional skills to his supportive employer. This is especially true of the intricate canonic pieces that appear throughout the collection.

But the *Orgelbüchlein* also served as a compositional forum for Bach, giving him the chance to focus on issues of motivic development, part-writing, harmony, and musical expression. He may have limited the size of the pieces so that he could explore these matters



in a highly concentrated way. It is in the *Orgelbüchlein*, in fact, that we see Bach composing in rigorous four- and five-part harmony for the first time, giving each voice – soprano, alto, tenor, and bass – its full melodic and contrapuntal due. The pieces, small as they are, set the stage for the part-writing that appears in his mature keyboard, instrumental, and vocal works. In a sense, the *Orgelbüchlein* chorales were preparatory exercises in disciplined counterpoint.

Copies of the collection by Bach's students confirm that he also used the music for pedagogical purposes. The title page itself may have been an afterthought, but it is clear from the Weimar copies of various *Orgelbüchlein* chorales written by his pupil Johann Tobias Krebs that Bach put the works to use early on as teaching material, not only for learning to play the manuals and pedal and coordinating hands and feet (possibly the most difficult task facing a budding organist), but also for gaining a foretaste of how to develop a chorale "in many diverse ways". Compositionally, the commitment to obbligated pedal writing presented the challenge of creating motivically related but playable figures. For the first time in the realm of pedal playing, compositional considerations vied strongly with technical considerations. The

result was a "modern," fully integrated organ score. The great works of the Leipzig years – the Six Trio Sonatas, *Clavierübung* III, the Canonic Variations on "Vom Himmel hoch," and the "Schübler Chorales" – have their origins in the diminutive chorales of the *Orgelbüchlein*.

The *Orgelbüchlein* chorales also exhibit a new approach to rhythm. The settings display a continuous, driving, Italianate instrumental pulse, sometimes created by a single part ("Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf," BWV 617), other times produced by the accumulative effect of subunits within four or five voices ("Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ," BWV 604). At the same time, the music contains an unprecedented degree of harmonic tension, created by strategically placed chromaticism, unprepared dissonance, and clashing contrapuntal lines. Syncopated motives and across-the-beat ties also contribute to the rhythmic vibrancy, as do compelling harmonic progressions and strategically placed deceptive cadences. The ending of "O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross," for instance, is outright shocking: To emphasize the word "cross" in the text phrase "He bore the heavy burden of our sins, indeed, extended upon the cross," Bach touched on the mystical chord of C flat major in moving back to the

home key, E flat major, for the conclusion.

Another distinctive feature of the *Orgelbüchlein* chorales is Bach's treatment of accompanimental motives. They do not change with each new phrase of the chorale, as was commonly done in the past, but rather they remain the same from beginning to end, creating a single *affect*, or mood. In "Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt," BWV 637, for example, the jarring interval of the diminished seventh, representing the anguish of Adam's corruption, appears in the pedal throughout the piece, as a sort of *idée fixe*. This contrasts with the setting of the same text (BuxWV 183) by Bach's illustrious predecessor Dieterich Buxtehude, in which a falling bass highlights the phrase of the text "Through Adam's fall" and a chromatic line emphasizes another phrase, "the same poison." In Bach's music, the use of a single motive to paint the scene results in much greater formal unity. This approach foreshadows the similarly unified settings of *Clavierübung III* and the Schübler Chorales.

Johann Gotthilf Ziegler, who studied with Bach in Weimar, later stated: "With regard to the playing of chorales, I was instructed by my then-living teacher, Capellmeister Bach, not to play the songs merely in an offhand way, but rather accord-

ing to the meaning of the words." In modern times Bach scholar Robert L. Marshall has said of the *Orgelbüchlein* chorales that the accompaniment, while almost always unrelated to the melodic substance of the chorale, is suggested by the emotional or theological symbolism of the text: "In effect, the chorale text, silent but implied by the traditional melody, is presented simultaneously with its exegesis by the counter-voices." The expressive effectiveness and high degree of unification of the accompanimental parts distinguish the *Orgelbüchlein* pieces from Bach's earlier organ chorales as well as those of his predecessors and contemporaries. It was a new approach.

Bach poured the bulk of his ideas into three formal molds. The most common design is the melody chorale, in which the hymn tune is set forth in the soprano with very little embellishment and no interludes between phrases. In such pieces the simplicity of the melodic cantus firmus stands in strong contrast to the contrapuntal complexity of the other voices. Thirty-two settings in the *Orgelbüchlein* fall into this format, which Bach seems to have developed especially for this project. Examples include the opening piece in the collection, "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland," BWV 599, "Der Tag, der ist so





freudereich," BWV 605, and "Christ lag in Todesbanden," BWV 625. Despite using the melody chorale format so many times, Bach seems to have had a special goal in mind for each setting. In "Der Tag, der ist so freudereich," for instance, the soprano presents the cantus firmus in simple half-, quarter-, and 8th notes. The alto and the tenor provide an animated commentary through jazzy, syncopated off-beat figures. And the continuo-like bass line moves in a steady chain of 8th notes, providing a firm foundation for the entire setting. The unceasing rhythmic pulsations, shimmering on three levels, create the subliminal feeling of eager anticipation for the day of Christ's birth.

The second type of setting is the canonic chorale, in which the chorale tune is represented in canon with a very short interval between the *dux* (the leader) and the *comes* (the

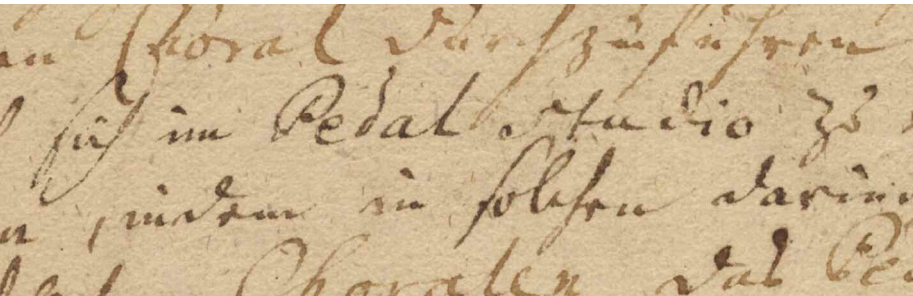
follower). Bach wrote eight canonic chorales for the collection, possibly in friendly competition with his Weimar colleague Johann Gottfried Walther, who showed a special predilection for this type of chorale prelude setting. Examples include "Gott, durch deine Güte, oder Gottes Sohn is kommen," BWV 600, "Christe, du Lamm Gottes," BWV 619, and "In dulci jubilo," BWV 608. While Walther preferred straightforward canons at the unison or octave, Bach was much more adventurous, pushing the envelope and writing more complicated pieces. "Christe, du Lamm Gottes," for instance, is a canon at the twelfth, and "In dulci jubilo" is a double canon at the octave.

The third type of setting is the ornamental chorale, in which the chorale tune, greatly embellished with coloratura flourishes and embellishments, sounds on one

keyboard against simple accompanimental parts on another. These settings are especially expressive and call for considerable freedom in the interpretation of the florid melodic line. The three examples are “Das alte Jahr vergangen ist,” BWV 614, “Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein,” BWV 641, and “O Mensch beweine,” mentioned above.

Given the great invention and variety of the *Orgelbüchlein* chorales and Bach’s apparent enthusiasm for the project, one wonders why he decided in the end to abandon it, leaving 119 pieces unfinished. One suspects that Bach set the work aside because he found the diminutive format too restrictive for his growing compositional ambitions. In addition, he had accomplished what he set out to do – that is, bring his writing under tight contrapuntal control. Indeed, two settings from the last layer of entries suggest that he was ready to move on to new things.

The first, “Christum wir sollen loben schon,” BWV 611, is a melody chorale. But as Bach emphasized in its title, the hymn tune is now located in the alto, a most unusual voice for carrying the cantus firmus in an organ chorale. The second, “In dir ist Freude,” BWV 615, is a free fantasia, with the chorale melody split up and presented phrase by phrase in small fragments, sometimes adorned and sometimes not. Against this the pedal presents a carillon-like figure that recurs in ostinato fashion and breaks into a demanding, virtuosic trill and turn in the final measures. In this piece, especially, Bach seems to burst out of the *Orgelbüchlein* mold and look ahead to other projects calling for larger pieces: the “Great Eighteen” Chorales, initiated during the Weimar years, and *Clavierübung* III, completed in 1739. For these and Bach’s other mature chorale preludes, the *Orgelbüchlein* set a noble precedent.



the artist

Joan Lippincott has been acclaimed as one of America's outstanding organ virtuosos, performing under Karen McFarlane Artists management and recording for Gothic Records.

Of her many recordings on the Gothic label, ten are devoted to the music of J.S. Bach: *Toccatas and Fugues*, *Leipzig Chorales*, *Trio Sonatas*, *Sinfonia*, *Preludes and Fugues*, *Clavierübung III* and *Schübler Chorales*, *Weimar Preludes and Fugues*, *Concerto Transcriptions*, *Art of Fugue*, and *Orgelbüchlein*.

A review in *The American Organist* said of *Art of Fugue*: "Lippincott brought the *Art of Fugue* down from its pedestal and turned it into a living, breathing piece of music, by turns thoughtful, dancing, graceful, or bold. She drew from a veritable painter's palette of articulations, touches, phrasings, tempi, and registrations to express the widely varied characters and mood that Bach put into groups of contrapuncti and canon."


ARTIST PORTRAIT BY CHRISTIAN STEINER



Joan Lippincott recordings on Gothic Records

LP:	Toccatas and Fugues by Bach	1980
	Liszt Ad Nos/Franck Grande Piece	1983
	Pinkham Epiphanies, Revelations, Man's Days are like the Grass	1983
	Organ Concertos by JSB	1986
	Bach (582, 545, 552, 547)	1987
	Music for a Cathedral (Gigout, Leighton, Vierne, Franck, Davies, Widor)	1987
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CD: G-49039	Music of D. Pinkham & F. Liszt	1983
G-78624	Music for a Cathedral	1987
G-49044	Favorite Hymns and Anthems	1990
G-49046	Widor Symphony V, Alain Trois Danses	1991
G-49051	Mozart and the organ	1992
G-49061	Princeton University Chapel (Mendelssohn, Duruflé, Howells, Widor)	1993
G-49072	Joan Lippincott & Philadelphia Brass	1995
G-49093	Toccatas and Fugues by Bach	1997
G-49099	Leipzig Chorales of J.S. Bach	1998
G-49166	Bach Trio Sonatas	2000
G-49130	Bach: Sinfonia	2001
G-49202	Bach: Preludes and Fugues	2002
G-49249-2	Bach Clavierübung III + Schübler Chorales	2005
G-49255	Fenner Douglass Organ (Bach, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Mozart)	2007
G-49260	Bach: Weimar Preludes and Fugues	2008
G-49275	Bach: Concerto Transcriptions	2010
G-49278-2	Art of Fugue (2CDs)	2012
G-49297	Bach: Orgelbüchlein	2015

For more information about Lippincott and her recordings, visit www.gothic-catalog.com



Cimbelstern

Vogelgesang

stop list

The Joe R. Engle Organ Built by Paul Fritts and Company Organ Builders (2000), Opus 20
Miller Chapel, Princeton Theological Seminary

Great

Bourdon 16'
Principal 8'
Rohrflöte 8'
Quintadena 8'
Octav 4'
Spitzflöte 4'
Quint 2 2/3'
Octav 2'
Tierce 1 3/5'
Mitur IV-VI
Scharff III-V
Trompet 8'
Trompet 4'
Bärpfeife 8'

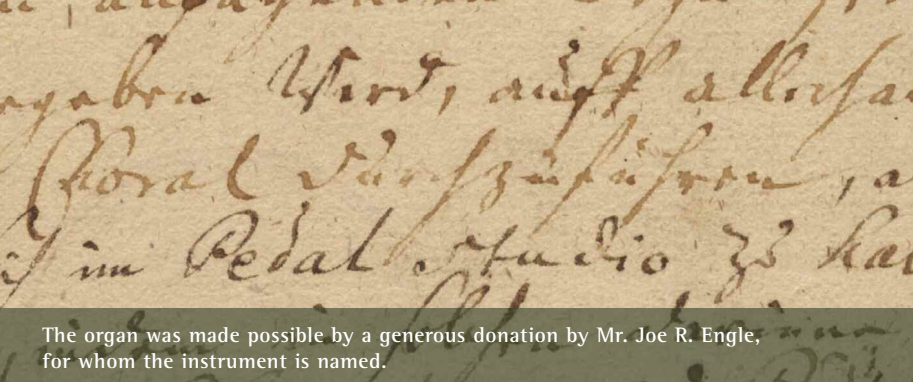
Swell

Principal 8'
Gedackt 8'
Violdigamba 8'
Voix celeste 8'
Octav 4'
Rohrflöte 4'
Nasat 2 2/3'
Octav 2'
Gemshorn 2'
Terz 1 3/5'
Mitur IV-VI
Dulcian 16'
Trompet 8'
Hautbois 8'

Pedal

Principal 16'
Subbaß 16'
Octave 8'
Bourdon* 8'
Octav 4'
Nachthorn 2'
Mitur VI-VIII
Posaune 16'
Trompet 8'
Trompet* 4'
Cornet 2'

**Transmissions from
other pedal stops*

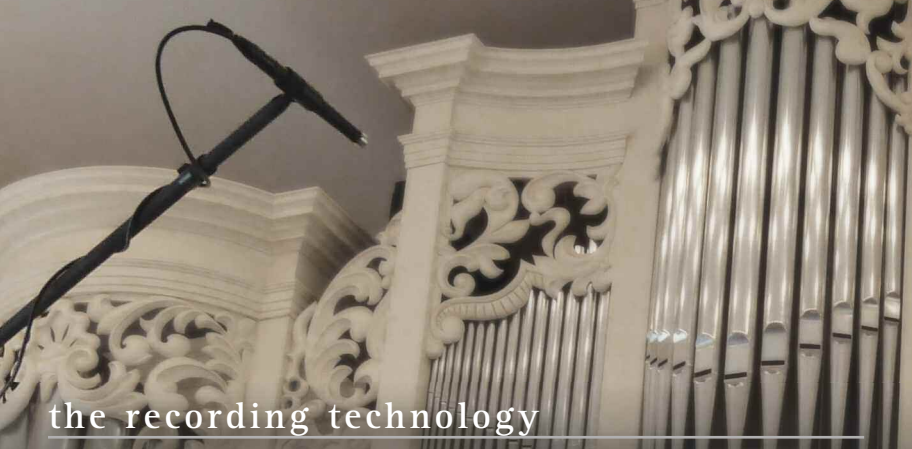


The organ was made possible by a generous donation by Mr. Joe R. Engle, for whom the instrument is named.

Couplers: Swell to Great
Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal

Compass: Manual: 56 notes
Pedal: 30 notes

Features: Burnished tin front pipes
Suspended key action
Mechanical stop action with pre-set system by Solid State Logic Ltd.
Variable Tremulant
Wind Stabilizer
Tierce (1 rank for Swell Mixture)
Cimbelstern
Vogelgesang
Manual wind supply option
Kellner temperament



the recording technology

This is the first recording from Loft Recordings engineers using DXD (Digital eXtreme Definition) technology. DXD encodes the sound in 24-bit words at a sample rate of 352.8 khz per channel (a standard CD uses 16-bit words and a 44.1khz sample rate). Recordings made in the format can be down-sampled to DSD64 (the format used in SACDs), DSD128, and DSD256 (which is 256 times the resolution of a standard CD). The recording was made with five identical DPA 4003 omni-directional microphones---three in a Decca Tree configuration in front, and two set for surround. There were no transformers in the signal path of any microphone, preserving an open sounding deep bass and spacious treble.

“Technology speak” aside, this recording preserves extreme low-level details of the sound, from the sandy breath of the front pipes to the very last of the reverberation tails. Clarity of the stereo image is unexcelled, even in the bass. DXD and the associated electronics that we have tested and chosen to use yield the highest fidelity recording possible today.



credits

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
ORGELBÜCHLEIN
JOAN LIPPINCOTT, ORGAN

Recorded June 15-17, 2015

Executive producer: Roger Sherman
Audio engineer: Roger Sherman
Editing and Mastering: Roger Sherman
Program notes: George B. Stauffer
Booklet editor: Victoria Parker
Graphic designer: Tim Braun
Photos: Roger Sherman

*The Gothic Catalog thanks Martin Tel, C.F. Seabrook Director of Music,
Princeton Theological Seminary, for his support for this recording.*

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GOTHIC

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Johann Sebastian Bach: *Orgelbüchlein*, Joan Lippincott, organ

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14.	Wir Christenleut, BWV 612	01:20	35.	Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, BWV 633	01:57
15.	Helft mir Gottes Güte preisen, BWV 613	01:04	36.	Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot, BWV 635	01:17
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Total: 78:23

G-49297

GOthic

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Although most pieces in Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* are short-form works, they are anything but unsophisticated. Packed with imaginative approaches to setting chorale melodies, this set of virtuosic gems is worthy of repeated hearings.

Joan Lippincott is especially well-known for her Bach performances on Gothic. Said *Fanfare* magazine, "Lippincott's wide variety of tempos, colors, and moods make this possibly the most enduring *Art of Fugue* ever recorded...highly recommended!"

DXD
Digital eXtreme Definition

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO