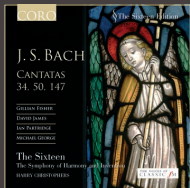


CORO

J.S. Bach: Cantatas 34, 50, 147



Harry Christophers
The Sixteen
Gillian Fisher
David James
Ian Partridge
Michael George

*"...a pleasure to listen
to when played and
sung as well as this."*

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Quinney provides
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throughout, occasionally
stealing the limelight as
in the organ introduction
to In dulci jubilo."*

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INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

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for Baroque Vocal 2009



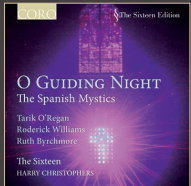
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the crunching organ chords
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Harry Christophers and
The Sixteen nail it expertly."*

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GRAMPHONE:
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COR16095

CORO

J.S. BACH

Trio Sonatas for Organ

Robert Quinney
organ

J.S. BACH

Trio Sonatas for Organ

Recording Bach's Organ Sonatas is perhaps an exercise in hubris, since they are arguably the most perfect pieces of music ever written for the instrument – and therefore, in their elegant economy and crystalline detail, the least forgiving of an inevitably less-than-perfect performance. Nevertheless, when Harry Christophers asked me for ideas for a short series of Bach organ recordings, the Sonatas sprang immediately to mind; and, while the head warned me of the pitfalls of actually committing a performance to disc, the heart was unable to refuse the opportunity. Finding the right instrument was essential: a difficult task given our still-developing knowledge of instruments of Bach's own time, and the many controversies surrounding historically informed performance (a field in which the organ, especially in the UK, has often lagged some way behind the vanguard). In the end, the Frobenius organ of The Queen's College, Oxford proved as close to ideal as any I could find; I am particularly delighted that this is the first solo recording to have been made on this influential instrument for almost 20 years.

Future discs will take the form of mixed recitals, after the model of Peter Hurford's recordings of the 1970s and '80s, which inspired me greatly as I began to play the organ. The present recording is dedicated to the memory of another source of inspiration, and a teacher of total generosity toward me and so many others – David Sanger.

Sonata I in E flat major BWV525	1 Movement 1: [no tempo indication]	3:21
	2 Movement 2: Adagio	5:15
	3 Movement 3: Allegro	3:45
Sonata II in C minor BWV526	4 Movement 1: Vivace	3:40
	5 Movement 2: Largo	4:04
	6 Movement 3: Allegro	3:58
Sonata III in D minor BWV527	7 Movement 1: Andante	5:41
	8 Movement 2: Adagio e dolce	6:34
	9 Movement 3: Vivace	3:36
Sonata IV in E minor BWV528	10 Movement 1: Adagio	2:42
	11 Movement 2: Andante	4:48
	12 Movement 3: Un poco Allegro	2:36
Sonata V in C major BWV529	13 Movement 1: Allegro	5:03
	14 Movement 2: Largo	5:05
	15 Movement 3: Allegro	3:39
Sonata VI in G major BWV530	16 Movement 1: Vivace	3:53
	17 Movement 2: Lento	7:34
	18 Movement 3: Allegro	3:31
	Total Running Time:	78:57

J.S. BACH

While it is impossible to be certain of anything at this distance, it seems likely that Bach intended his Six Sonatas à 2 *Clav. et Ped.* BWV 525-30 to form part of a series of pedagogical works directed at his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann. Bach's biographer Forkel claims this (1802), and there is a copy of the Sonatas partly in the hand of Friedemann: Sonatas I-III and the first 15 bars of Sonata IV, the remaining movements being in the hand of his stepmother Anna Magdalena. This copy, made shortly after Bach's score was completed, contains rather more articulation markings than the autograph (in Sonata VI/2-3 some articulation marks are apparently by the composer himself); this may suggest that Friedemann was undertaking serious study of the pieces, clarifying and even altering his father's original notation.

That the Sonatas furnished Friedemann with a technical challenge is clear

Trio Sonatas for Organ

to any subsequent performer; but Bach's intention may also have been to continue his favoured son's education in the art of composition – in particular the promiscuous combining of styles and genres that is arguably the most remarkable feature of Bach's music. This is achieved within the framework of the Italianate trio sonata, transferred to the organ 'on two claviers and pedal', with sophisticated use in three of the Sonatas (II, V and VI) of Vivaldian ritornello procedure. These are *Sonaten auf Concertenart*, to use the term coined by Johann Adolph Scheibe (1745) to describe a chamber sonata in which 'one part can be more active than the others [i.e. soloistic writing is as important an ingredient as imitative counterpoint]... the lower part cannot be written as elaborately here as in a genuine sonata' (the latter is unavoidable in an organ piece, since two feet cannot match five fingers for facility; and, even if several

million more years of evolution produce a creature better equipped for three equally complex independent parts, it will need also to have evolved two brains). Characteristically, Bach goes far beyond Scheibe's definition, producing elaborate movements such as Sonata II/1 and Sonata V/1, in which the trio texture is manipulated to produce a clearly audible division between Ripieno and Solo passages, with only occasional recourse to violinistic 'double stops' within a part. Moreover, Bach frequently brings together such unlikely companions as galant gesture and fugal imitation (as in Sonata II/3); a further transgression of the accepted norms of what a composer could do in a given genre.

Bach had written organ trios before, notably the Italianate trios on *Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend* BWV 655 and *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* BWV 664 composed in Weimar (his other chorale trios owe more of a debt to French organ trio movements). The influence of these

pieces is clear in the earliest Organ Sonata movements to be composed. In both BWV 655 and 664 a motif derived from the opening of the chorale dominates the whole piece; a similarly high motivic density characterises movements such as Sonata I/1, in which the broken-chord opening motif is never absent, whether appearing in its prime form, inverted, or (in longer note values and with a rest inserted) as a bass to imitative counterpoint between the hands.

Certain movements – notably Sonata IV/1, which exists in a counterpart version for oboe, viola da gamba and continuo in Cantata 76 – have origins in music for other instruments. Some commentators have assumed instrumental origins for much of the collection, an attitude which perhaps underestimates Bach's genius for the reconciliation of apparent opposites within his music: in this case a 'chamber' genre with the most public instrument of all, the organ (while the Sonatas might

well have been practised at home on piled-up clavichords, it seems likely that the organ was the intended performance instrument). It does not follow that because other composers did not write trio sonatas for the organ, Bach could not have conceived some, even many of the movements for that instrument. He clearly felt able to demand of it the same precision and clarity so easily achieved by string or wind instruments. In a number of places in the autograph Bach makes use of quasi-instrumental articulation marks, suggesting he may have been contradicting certain conventions of organ playing style, or at least seeking to expand the range of possible styles, perhaps by notating articulation in a way that reflected his own, celebrated virtuosity.



The 1965 Frobenius organ of The Queen's College, Oxford, is not what many would regard as a 'historically accurate' instrument for Bach. Its pipes

receive a steady supply of wind and it even has a swell box (the shutters of which remained immobile during all takes). These features do not, I think, make it an unsuitable instrument for the present recording; much more important factors are its exquisite voicing, superb mechanical action, and its modest size. The latter is significant because the relatively small separation between the three divisions (Great and Brustpositiv in the centre, Pedal divided on either side) allows close, chamber-music interplay in a way that a large organ, especially one whose secondary division is behind the player's back, would not. Lastly – perhaps most important of all – the acoustics of the chapel warmly enhance the singing quality of the organ without any loss of clarity. I am grateful to the Provost and Fellows of The Queen's College, in particular the Director of Music Dr Owen Rees, for granting us permission to use this marvellous instrument.

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1965 Frobenius organ of The Queen's College, Oxford

Robert Quinney

Robert Quinney is Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey. In addition to his daily work at the Abbey, he maintains a busy freelance schedule as a soloist and ensemble player. Since October 2009 he has been Director of Oundle for Organists, whose residential courses offer inspiring tuition for organists of all ages. He is also frequently to be heard performing with period ensembles such as The Sixteen, The English Concert, and The Cardinal's Musick.

His double compact disc *The Grand Organ of Westminster Cathedral* was Instrumental Disc of the Month in *BBC Music Magazine*, earned a five-star review in the French journal *Diapason*, and was an Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*: "Alongside his impeccable performances, Quinney's greatest achievement is to produce music-making which really communicates itself to the listener." In 2011 he began a series of Bach recordings for CORO with the six Trio Sonatas, played on the organ of The Queen's College, Oxford; a disc of music by Elgar played on the organ of Westminster Abbey is also available on the Signum label.

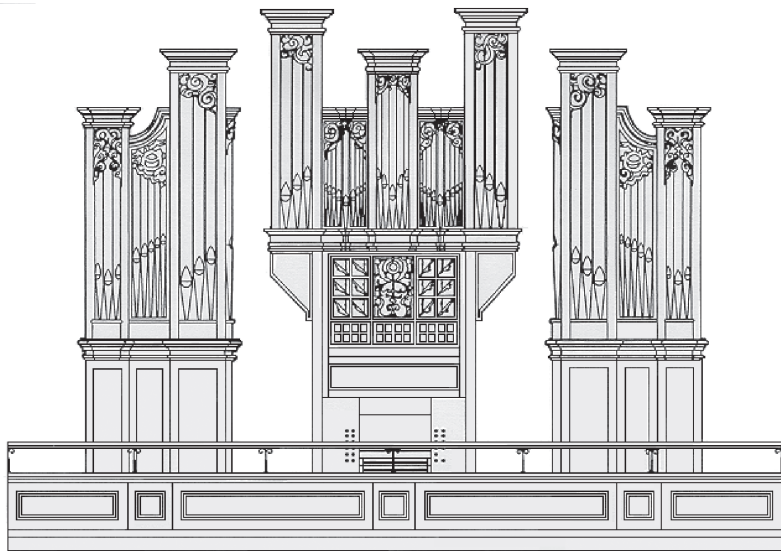
Robert Quinney read music at King's College, Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar from 1995 to 1998. After a year as Acting Sub-Organist at Westminster Abbey, he moved to Westminster Cathedral as Assistant Master of Music in September 2000. Since returning to Westminster Abbey in 2004 he has performed with the Abbey Choir on concert tours to the United States, Australia and Russia, on an acclaimed series of recordings for Hyperion, and at several televised services – including the Marriage of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in April 2011. He directed the Abbey Choir for the Michaelmas term of 2010, during which period he gave première performances of choral works by Richard Rodney Bennett, Jonathan Dove, Grayston Ives and Matthew Martin.



Robert Quinney at the organ console of Westminster Abbey

The Organ of The Queen's College, Oxford

Standing in the West gallery of the college chapel, the organ of The Queen's College, Oxford was built by the Danish firm of Frobenius in consultation with the then Organist of the College, James Dalton. The case was designed by Fin Ditlevsen and the organ was completed in 1965.



Disposition of the organ of The Queen's College, Oxford

GREAT	BRUSTPOSITIVE (enclosed)	PEDAL	COUPLERS
Gedeckt 16'	Gedeckt 8'	Subbass 16'	B/P
Principal 8'	Principal 4'	Principal 8'	G/P
Rohrflute 8'	Rohrflute 4'	Gedackt 8'	B/G
Octave 4'	Gemshorn 2'	Octave 4'	
Octave 2'	Quint 1 1/3'	Mixture III	
Sesquialtera II	Scharf III	Fagot 16'	
Mixture IV	Cromhorne 8'	Schalmei 4'	
Trumpet 8'	Tremulant		

mechanical action

RECORDING PRODUCER: David Trendell

RECORDING ENGINEER: David Hinit

RECORDED AT: The Queen's College, Oxford, 11-13 January 2011

COVER IMAGE: Marie Docher / PhotoAlto Agency RF Collections / Getty Images

DESIGN: Andrew Giles: discoyd@aegidius.org.uk



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