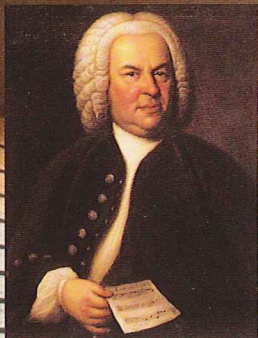


CRAIG SHEPPARD

J.S. Bach

The Well Tempered Clavier, Book II



 **Roméo
Records**

7269-70

The Well Tempered Clavier, Book II



A Short Introduction

The second volume of *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier* presents significantly greater problems for the performer than does Book I, because the provenance of the individual pieces is not nearly as straightforward. Book I, written over several years, was one of the audition pieces Bach submitted in 1722 for his eventual job as Cantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, a position he would occupy for the remaining twenty-seven years of his life. The works in Book II, on the other hand, appear to have been composed over a much greater span of time. There is no extant manuscript in Bach's own hand, but there are two distinct copies. The first copy, written out most likely by Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, stems from 1739 and 1740. It is complete, with the exception of the preludes in *c sharp minor*, *D Major* and *f minor*, and resides today in the British Museum. A second, complete version appeared in 1744, written out by Bach's future son-in-law, Johann Christoph Altnickol. It resides in the German State Library in Berlin. Both copies, in turn, spawned myriad other versions with differences in articulation and ornamentation, not to mention the actual notes, all further complicating the picture.

One egregious difference is the addition of fifteen extra bars to the *Fugue in e minor* in the Altnickol version. This later version of the fugue underscores one of the characteristics differentiating this volume from Book I. Unlike Book I, the vast majority of the works in Book II end abruptly, the last chord sometimes not even filling out the entire bar. Eleven of the preludes are in binary form, requiring repeats, which makes this volume a full forty minutes longer than Book I. Furthermore, these binary pieces manifest the distinct beginnings of sonata form. A development and recapitulation are easily discernable in a number of them — among which, the preludes *in d sharp minor, f minor, F sharp Major, g sharp minor, A flat Major and B flat Major*. Early manifestations of classical homophony are also apparent in the *f minor* and *B Major* preludes. These observations alone might justify advancements in style over Book I, until we take into account that a number of the pieces in Book II are thought to have been written as early as the Weimar years of 1708-1717, thereby predating most, if not all, of Book I. Undoubtedly some of the early pieces that eventually found their way into Book II were significantly revised and even augmented over time, yet we have no way of knowing when most of these changes would have occurred. Assigning specific dates to compositional advances in Bach's output remains, at best, a matter of speculation.

For the listener, one obvious difference in Book II is the lack of those wonderful, slow,

ruminative and often tragic fugues that we have in Book I (here, I'm thinking of the *c sharp minor*, *d sharp minor*, *f minor*, *f sharp minor*, *b flat minor*, and *b minor fugues* of the first book). Bach was composing Book I about the time that he lost his first wife, Maria Barbara, and no doubt much of his personal anguish and pain were poured into these great fugues. In particular, the key of *f minor* has always struck me as being associated with this tragedy — think of the *Sinfonia (three-part Invention) in f minor*, the *Prelude and Fugue in f minor* from the first book, and even the *Prelude in f minor* in Book II. Therefore, the exuberance of the *f minor Fugue* in the present volume comes as something of a shock, and would have been unthinkable previously. It is as if Lazarus has come back from the dead and is dancing on his own grave. What a reaffirmation of life! Indeed, what we now have in Book II are extremely energetic and assertive fugues on a massive scale. During the second half of the book, no less than seven of the twelve fugues fall into this category. The concepts are gargantuan, the sound world no less impressive, and one could easily imagine hearing them on a great organ in a major cathedral. Like many of Bach's greatest works, they build to an inexorable and powerful conclusion. Certainly the fugues in *g minor*, *A flat Major*, *b flat minor*, and *B Major* fall into this category. The earlier *Fugue in E Major* brings a similar picture to mind, a great dignified hymn, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale than the later fugues. The *Prelude in a minor* presents us with a different dilemma. The Altnickol version provides a type of chromaticism in bar 24 that should

raise many eyebrows. My theory is that either Altnickol, and/or Bach, wrote this in an intoxicated moment, as the harmony seems more attuned to the twentieth century than to the eighteenth. Bach was known to love his beer and wine (indeed, these were a sizeable part of his yearly provisions in his contract with the Thomaskirche). I prefer the more sober version in Anna Magdalena's copy. And, once again, Bach proves in the broad silences of the *a minor Fugue* that he can provide great humor and mirth in the minor key, perhaps the only composer (that I know of) who is capable of such.

As with Book I, I remain very indebted to Professor Paul Badura-Skoda of Vienna for his groundbreaking tome, *Interpreting Bach at the Keyboard*, in which he discusses all matters of Baroque articulation, ornamentation, rhythm and dynamics thoroughly and convincingly. Any serious student of the Baroque should avail him/herself of this great book. Hermann Keller's book, *Die Klavierwerke Bachs*, gives invaluable historical background to many of the pieces. It is written with great sensitivity and clarity of thought. Not least, the *Kritischer Bericht* edited by Alfred Dürr and published by Bärenreiter has provided enormous assistance in working through the many slight variations among editions, and in coming to what I hope are intelligent and well-founded decisions in many matters.

The piano used in these recordings is my own Hamburg Steinway model D, number 486770. In preparing Book II of *The Well Tempered Clavier*, I have used primarily the *Bärenreiter* edition. The *Henle* and *Tovey* edition were also consulted, as well as frequent incursions into the *Kritischer Bericht* previously mentioned.

These CDs were recorded in Seattle's Meany Theater on April 21 and 23, 2008.

Biography

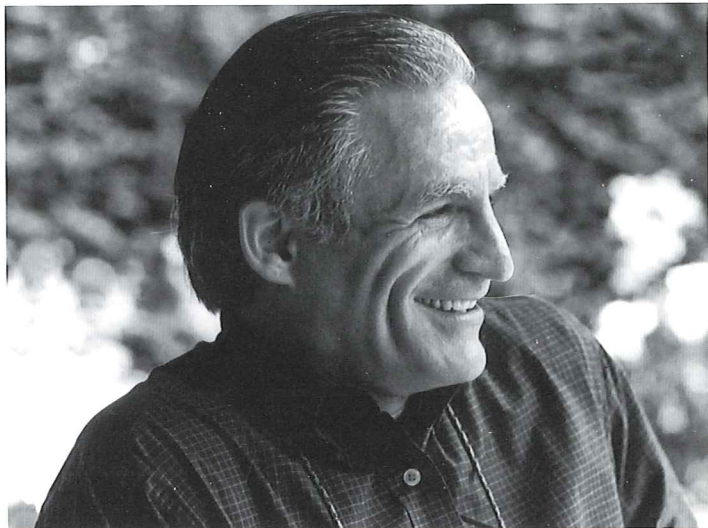


Photo: Fritz Tangemann

The Donald E. Petersen Endowed Professor of Piano at the School of Music of the University of Washington in Seattle, pianist CRAIG SHEPPARD has maintained a strong and enduring presence in the classical music world for nearly forty years, with his unique combination of ebullience and passionate energy, allied to a technical mastery and scholarly objectivity. In May, 2008, he gave solo recitals and master classes in four major cities in The Peoples' Republic of China - Beijing, Shanghai, Xiamen and Shenzhen. In March, 2008, Sheppard appeared once again in the Hunter Council Chambers of Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, performing Book II of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*, a work he recorded subsequently in Seattle's Meany Theater in April. Craig Sheppard has made seven trips to the Far East since June, 2002 — four to Japan, one to Taiwan, and one each to China and to Korea - giving lectures and concerts in major venues and universities in the region. On May 18th, 2004, he wound up a seven-concert series in Seattle's Meany Theater dedicated to the *32 Beethoven Piano Sonatas*, a popular series that met with great critical acclaim. In April, 1999, he gave his long-awaited recital debut at the Berlin Philharmonic, also to great critical acclaim. In 1999, he was presented by the Seattle Symphony in a highly acclaimed series of lecture/recitals at the Benaroya Hall. He appeared with the Seattle Symphony in 1998 in their inaugural season at Benaroya, and was also previously featured with the orchestra in the opening concerts of the 1996-97 season at the Opera House, along with the violinist Midori. Sheppard is invited frequently to perform at summer venues such as the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, and has taught and performed for a number of summers at the Heifetz International Music Institute in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire.

Craig Sheppard was born and raised in Philadelphia. After initial studies with Dr. Lois Hedner

and Susan Starr, he attended the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia as a student of Eleanor Sokoloff, and earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the Juilliard School in New York, studying with Sascha Gorodnitzki. In addition to working privately with Claude Frank and Lillian Kallir during summers at Tanglewood, Sheppard studied subsequently with Ilona Kabos, Peter Feuchtwanger, and Sir Clifford Curzon in London, and also worked with Rudolf Serkin and Pablo Casals at the Marlboro Festival.

Following a highly successful New York debut at the Metropolitan Museum in 1972, Sheppard won the Silver Medal that year at the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition in England. Moving to London the following year, he quickly established himself through recording and frequent appearances on BBC radio and television as one of the preeminent pianists of his generation, giving cycles of Bach's *Klavierübung* and the complete works for solo piano of Brahms in London and other musical centers. During the twenty years he lived in England, he also taught at Lancaster University, the Yehudi Menuhin School, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, in addition to giving master classes at both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Sheppard has performed with all the major orchestras in Great Britain, as well as those of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, Buffalo and Rochester, among others in the United States, and with such conductors as Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas, Sir Andrew Davis, Lord Yehudi Menuhin, Erich Leinsdorf, Kurt Sanderling, Neeme Järvi, Hans Vonk, Aaron Copland, David Zinman, Gerard Schwarz and Peter Erös. Sheppard's repertoire is extensive, encompassing over forty solo recital programs, sixty concerti, and great portions of the chamber music and *lieder* repertoire. In the past several seasons, in addition

to both books of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* and the 32 *Beethoven sonatas* (in a series entitled *Beethoven: A Journey*), Sheppard's recital programs have included the complete *Études* of Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Debussy, and such major works as the *Goldberg* and *Diabelli Variations*, the complete Schumann *Novelettes*, and Ravel's *Miroirs* and *Gaspard de la Nuit*. Over the years, his work with singers such as Victoria de los Angeles, José Carreras, and Irina Arkipova; trumpeter Wynton Marsalis; and ensembles such as the Cleveland, Bartok and Emerson string quartets, has also constituted an important and ongoing element in his musical life.

Sheppard has made a number of highly acclaimed recordings with Romeo Records in the past several years, including the 32 Beethoven Piano Sonatas (*Beethoven: A Journey*), and three major Bach releases — *The Six Keyboard Partitas*, *Die Aufrichtige Anleitung* (*The Inventions and Sinfonias*), and *The Well Tempered Clavier, Book I*. Sheppard has also recorded on the EMI (Classics for Pleasure) Polygram (Philips), Sony, Chandos and Cirrus labels. Five CDs, all of live performances — including his Berlin performance of the *Goldberg Variations*, Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* plus the Scriabin Fifth Sonata, Chopin and Scriabin preludes, and Scarlatti sonatas coupled with the Opus 39 *Études Tableaux* of Rachmaninoff — have recently been issued on the label AT (Annette Tangermann)/Berlin, at-label@gmx.de.

Sheppard's students have won many prizes, both nationally and internationally, and he has appeared on numerous juries of piano competitions around the world. He is well known for his broad academic interests, particularly foreign languages.

For more information, go to www.craigsheppard.net.



Photo: Cynthia St. Clair

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CD 1 (73:24)

1. Prelude in C Major, BWV870	3:04
2. Fugue in C Major, BWV870	1:53
3. Prelude in c minor, BWV871	2:35
4. Fugue in c minor, BWV871	1:41
5. Prelude in C sharp Major, BWV872	1:47
6. Fugue in C sharp Major, BWV872	1:48
7. Prelude in c sharp minor, BWV873	4:03
8. Fugue in c sharp minor, BWV873	2:53
9. Prelude in D Major, BWV874	5:32
10. Fugue in D Major, BWV874	3:04
11. Prelude in d minor, BWV875	1:36
12. Fugue in d minor, BWV875	2:34
13. Prelude in E flat Major, BWV876	2:29
14. Fugue in E flat Major, BWV876	2:13
15. Prelude in d sharp minor, BWV877	4:13
16. Fugue in d sharp minor, BWV877	3:35
17. Prelude in E Major, BWV878	4:27
18. Fugue in E Major, BWV878	3:51
19. Prelude in e minor, BWV879	3:53
20. Fugue in e minor, BWV879	2:51
21. Prelude in F Major, BWV880	3:13
22. Fugue in F Major, BWV880	1:59
23. Prelude in f minor, BWV881	5:26
24. Fugue in f minor, BWV881	2:31

CD 2 (79:45)

1. Prelude in F sharp Major, BWV882	4:09
2. Fugue in F sharp major, BWV882	2:52
3. Prelude in f sharp minor, BWV883	2:47
4. Fugue in f sharp minor, BWV883	4:24
5. Prelude in G Major, BWV884	2:23
6. Fugue in G Major, BWV884	1:12
7. Prelude in g minor, BWV885	2:49
8. Fugue in g minor, BWV885	3:15
9. Prelude in A flat Major, BWV886	3:44
10. Fugue in A flat Major, BWV886	2:45
11. Prelude in g sharp minor, BWV887	4:57
12. Fugue in g sharp minor, BWV887	3:38
13. Prelude in A Major, BWV888	1:40
14. Fugue in A Major, BWV888	1:29
15. Prelude in a minor, BWV889	5:25
16. Fugue in a minor, BWV889	2:02
17. Prelude in B flat Major, BWV890	7:49
18. Fugue in B flat Major, BWV890	2:41
19. Prelude in b flat minor, BWV891	3:24
20. Fugue in b flat minor, BWV891	5:31
21. Prelude in B Major, BWV892	2:16
22. Fugue in B Major, BWV892	3:52
23. Prelude in b minor, BWV893	2:16
24. Fugue in b minor, BWV893	2:09


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