

2 CDS

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BACH— REGER

Transcriptions for Piano Duet

Brandenburg
Concertos Nos. 1-6

Toccatà and Fugue
in D minor

Prelude and Fugue
in E-flat major

Passacaglia
in C minor

PIANO DUO
TAKAHASHI | LEHMANN

**Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F major**

- I. *Allegro* 5:01
- II. *Andante* 3:45
- III. *Allegro assai* 2:40

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D major

- I. *Allegro* 9:44
- II. *Affettuoso* 5:42
- III. *Allegro* 5:58

Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 in F major

- I. *Allegro* 4:14
- II. *Adagio* 3:36
- III. *Allegro* 4:39
- IV. *Menuetto – Trio I – Polacca – Trio II* 6:50

Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582 12:56**Tocatta and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565 7:46****Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G major**

- I. *Allegro* 7:13
- II. *Andante* 3:17
- III. *Presto* 4:44

Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B-flat major

- I. *Allegro non tanto* 6:13
- II. *Adagio ma non tanto* 3:59
- III. *Allegro* 5:13

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major

- I. *Allegro con spirito* –
- II. *Adagio* 5:53
- III. *Allegro* 5:09

Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, BWV 552

- I. *Präludium* 7:55
- II. *Fuge* 5:31

**“A really powerful, inexhaustible medicine” –
Max Reger’s piano arrangements of Bach’s organ works**

Though Johann Sebastian Bach was not Reger’s earliest guiding star in the compositional firmament, he would soon become his most important reference point and benchmark, accompanying him throughout his life with never-diminishing intensity. Thus in a survey conducted by the magazine *Die Musik* (1905), Reger could answer with conviction: “Sebastian Bach is for me the beginning and end of all music; upon him rests, and from him originates, all real progress! [...] A really powerful, inexhaustible medicine, not only for all those composers and musicians who suffer from ‘misunderstood Wagner,’ but for all those ‘contemporaries’ who suffer from spinal tuberculosis of any kind. [...] That Bach could be misunderstood for so long is the greatest scandal for the ‘critical wisdom’ of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.”

As an interpreter, Reger dedicated himself somewhat belatedly to his musical role model. His concert programs only begin to include Bach’s keyboard and chamber music works starting around 1904; later, during his tenure as conductor of the Meiningen Hofkapelle (1911–1914), Bach’s music would form a focus of his repertoire. His autumn 1911 tour, during which the piano duo consisting of Reger and Philipp Wolfrum visited 16 cities in 23 days in Germany and Switzerland, can be seen as the culmination of his dedication to Bach performance. Concurrently in July 1911, a Bach-Reger festival founded by Fritz Busch took place in Bad Pyrmont for the first time.

The way Reger interpreted Bach was spectacular and guaranteed success with audiences. He saw himself as a re-creative artist and was not willing to let himself be bridled by reins of any kind. In a letter to the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel, he was forthright: “I am alerting you in advance that my ‘perhaps too personal’ way of playing, and accordingly of editing Bach will very much challenge the objections of the pedestrian blockheads, or more politely speaking, the literal scholars lacking in imagination. They will consider my many nuances, my ‘rubato,’ to be too modern and entrench themselves behind the wall of mental laziness, insisting that Bach should be played ‘classically’! Such people, who are more Catholic than the Pope, cannot be helped.”

August Schmid-Lindner, with whom Reger edited a number of Bach’s keyboard works starting in 1915, describes the Bach playing of his long-time duo partner in similar terms: “He was capable of expressing, in the most radical way, the idea that the work that he had beneath his hands was at that moment his property, in the event that a concerned academic sought to hold him accountable. Reger was certainly right when he roughly dismissed the nitpickers – and he was right in the whole matter, for there was something compellingly convincing, and at the same time tremendously captivating about the way in which he interiorized, merged with the work that he was performing.”

Reger’s Bach repertoire consisted of works that he was also able to present in his arrangements and editions. In addition to the preludes and fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, violin sonatas, and orchestral suites, it was above all the concertos in C minor, BWV 1060 and C major, BWV 1061 for two pianos as well as the fifth *Brandenburg Concerto*, BWV 1050 which brought him notable success.






In a wealth of arrangements and practical editions, Reger presented his view of Bach's music and, more particularly, made his organ and orchestral works accessible to the piano. With regard to the early arrangements, Thomaskantor Karl Straube praised the "perfect manner in which he succeeded in reproducing the sound characteristics of the organ on the pianoforte. The effects that, through his compositional art, he conjures forth from our modern domestic instrument are simply stunning. And the tempo and performance indications included within a piece are characterized by such an ingenious understanding of Bach that for this reason alone, engaging with Reger's arrangements is most highly recommended."

Reger's involvement with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach began in the late 1880s during his lessons with Adalbert Lindner in Weiden. Through Hugo Riemann, whose pupil he became in April 1890, he subsequently learned "to recognize Bach as an absolute musician, as a master architect, draftsman, and ideal communicator of the art of composing" (Susanne Popp). During Riemann's composition lessons, the mastery of a polyphonic style modeled on Bach, also presented by Riemann in numerous publications, was one of the principal subjects.

When the English publisher George Augener was in Wiesbaden for a spa treatment in the summer of 1892, he made the personal acquaintance of Hugo Riemann; at the same time he also met Max Reger, who at the end of 1890 had followed his teacher from Sondershausen to Wiesbaden. Augener was sufficiently impressed by the young composer to offer him a seven-year contract. In addition to new works of his own, Reger subsequently made a number of two- and four-hand piano arrangements of organ works, primarily by Bach, for his first major publisher. He probably used William T. Best's series published by Augener, *Bach. Organ Works*, as his model – a gift from the publisher to his new "colleague."

In early 1893 Reger had, as he told Lindner, "arranged 3 of Bach's organ preludes & fugues for piano – for concert use – I want to see if Schott in Mainz might print them." Why he was not considering Augener in this connection, who had just published his first three opuses, is unclear. In any case, he described his arrangements as being "dreadfully difficult, such that [Carl] Fuchs, a tremendous pianist, clapped his hands to his head; but I can handle them and have already played one [BWV 532] at the Cons[ervatory]." These earliest Bach arrangements probably also included the **Tocatta and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565** (dedicated to Ferruccio Busoni). Evidently no business relationship with Schott ensued, since in the summer of 1894 Reger asked Eugen d'Albert for a recommendation and at the same time contacted Augener regarding a publication. Before the arrangement of BWV 565 was actually printed in London in July 1895 as No. 1 of the series *Concert programs. Pianoforte*, Reger had also made a four-hand arrangement, dedicated to his friend Karl Gemünd, whose publication by Augener (March/April 1896) was now no longer in doubt.

Making arrangements of one and the same organ work for both two- and four-hand piano evidently seemed promising to Reger, since he did the same with the *Prelude and Fugue in D major*, BWV 532, in *E minor*, BWV 548, and in **E-flat major, BWV 552**. For BWV 552, however, he first



arranged the four-hand version, dedicated to Martha Remmert, in August 1896 during holidays in his native Weiden, and then the two-hand version (concluding remark dated September 15, 1896). As for the difficulty level of the latter, the comments above regarding BWV 565 apply here as well. The belated publication of both versions in 1904, after Reger had long since changed publishers, at least had the advantage that both manuscripts returned to Reger's hands, though they were given away by his widow Elsa Reger on May 11, 1930, when Reger's urn was interred at the Waldfriedhof in Munich, as a gesture of gratitude. In any case, in spring of 1903, when Reger was occupied with the revise proofs of the Bach cantata *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*, BWV 93 that he had edited and was presumably no longer thinking of, let alone believed in, the possibility of the piano arrangements being published by Augener, he made another two-hand "concert arrangement" of BWV 552, dedicated to Waldemar Lütschg. It was characterized by its greater playability and published by Lauterbach & Kuhn in July of the same year. Reger's arrangements that were eventually published by Augener in 1904 included the **Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582** for piano four hands (his only version of the piece) made in August 1896, when the London publisher began postponing previously-accepted works – the initial enthusiasm having waned considerably. However, Reger's increasing name recognition did promise to bring lucrative business after all.

The arrangement of the **Brandenburg Concertos, BWV 1046–1051** for piano four hands had its origins in a request by Henri Hinrichsen from the C.F. Peters publishing house. After Reger had completed the two-hand arrangement, solicited at the same time, of twelve *Mörrike Lieder* by Hugo Wolf, he set to work in September 1904 while on vacation in Berg, Upper Bavaria and was soon able to report: "It will be very playable! I will add performance instructions that are almost completely lacking in the score, in order to bring the arrangements closer to our 'modern' [...] dynamic sensibility!" Upon delivering the first concerto on October 4, he pointed out: "Regarding the performance instructions, I made an effort to show considerable restraint, used performance instructions chiefly in order to dynamically differentiate the tutti and solo passages [...]. I hope that you are sympathetic to the arrangement; more cannot be left out; I have made it as 'transparent' as possible!" Due to lack of time, Reger was only able to continue his work in May 1905, discovering in the process that the Fifth Concerto "[was] exceptionally difficult to arrange; I made countless attempts before I finally figured out the right one." Not only was Hinrichsen so pleased with Reger's arrangements that he immediately asked him to do the same with the *Orchestral Suites*, BWV 1066–1069, but buyers were also so receptive to Reger's version of the *Brandenburg Concertos* that they were reprinted just two years later, with the same number of copies as the first edition.

Christopher Grafschmidt / Dennis Ried
Max Reger Institute Karlsruhe
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PIANO | DUO TAKAHASHI | LEHMANN

The Piano Duo Takahashi|Lehmann was founded in 2009 in Berlin. The two pianists have known each other since their days as students of Klaus Hellwig at the Universität der Künste Berlin. Since its founding, the concert activities of the Duo have constantly gained in intensity. The musicians perform in numerous European countries as well as in Korea, Japan, China and the Russian Federation. The Duo has also been invited to festivals including the MusicAlp Festival (France) and the Gimhae Festival (Korea).

The repertoire of the Duo Takahashi|Lehmann includes, alongside the traditional works for piano four hands and for two pianos, numerous original transcriptions of important composers, some of which had previously been forgotten, as well as works of the 20th century. In this connection, the two pianists always work together closely with contemporary composers. The programmes of the Duo Takahashi|Lehmann are notable for the manifold relationships between the works, so that one can frequently speak of “composed programmes”. For all that, the relationships are by no means merely theoretical, but can readily be perceived sensually and emotionally.

Björn Lehmann has performed to an equal extent as soloist and chamber musician, whereby his main interest in both areas is New Music. He studied in Hamburg, Lausanne and at the Universität der Künste Berlin with Klaus Hellwig. He received important artistic stimuli from Ferenc Rados, Leonard Hokanson, Robert Levin, Zoltan Kocsis, members of the Amadeus Quartet, Hartmut Höll and Irwin Gage, amongst others.

Concert tours have taken Björn Lehmann to most European countries, Japan, South Korea and Latin America. He has performed at numerous festivals, including the Bachfest in Leipzig, the Ludwigsburg (Castle) Festival, the Kassel Music Days, Concentus Moraviae (Czech Republic), Flaneries musicales de Reims (France) and El Blanco y Negro (Mexico). Perma-



Her current chamber-music partners include the violinists Sophia Jaffé and Stephan Picard, the cellist Markus Nyikos as well as musicians of the Berlin Philharmonic. Björn Lehmann has collaborated closely with the composers Friedrich Goldmann, Mathias Spahlinger and Arnulf Herrmann and has made radio/television recordings at German and other broadcasting stations. Björn Lehmann has been a professor at the Universität der Künste Berlin since 2011. He regularly holds master classes in such countries as Germany, France, Japan, South Korea, and China, and has served as a juror at international competitions, including the 2018 Concours de Genève.

Norie Takahashi attracted early attention by winning prizes at competitions, including the Beethoven Competition in Bonn (2nd prize, special prize for a contemporary work), the Beethoven Competition in Vienna (4th prize), the Schubert Competition in Graz (1st prize and audience prize), the Leeds International Piano Competition (special prize) and the Concours Reine Elizabeth in Brussels (finalist's diploma).

Following her studies in Tokyo, she continued studies with Klaus Hellwig at the Universität der Künste Berlin. She received numerous artistic stimuli from Bruno Leonardo Gelber, Robert Levin, Ferenc Rados, Pascal Devoyon and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, amongst others.

Norie Takahashi is active as a soloist and chamber musician in many European countries and in Asia. She performs as a soloist with such orchestras as the Prague Radio Orchestra, the Bonn Beethoven Orchestra, the Cologne Chamber Orchestra, the Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra in Tokyo, the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and the Osaka Symphony Orchestra. In addition, she has regularly been invited to participate at major international festivals, including Carinthian Summer, Ruhr Piano Festival, Männta Music Festival (Finland), Tongyeong Music Festival (Korea), Sendai Music Festival (Japan), Kassel Music Days, New Music Days in Darmstadt and the Mosel Festival. Norie Takahashi's chamber-music partners include the cellists Johannes Moser and Danjulo Ishizaka, the violinist Viviane Hagner and the violist Tomoko Akasaka.

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