

BACH – Inside Polyphony

Christian Grøvlen

In this project «Bach — Inside Polyphony» Christian Grøvlen approach the composers rich and moving world from the inside, not only spiritually, but also in pure sound. He set out to color each voice intimately and through the recording process to come as close to the polyphony as possible. With this work he has opened new doors towards the communicative power of the music itself, the understanding of his own piano playing and aspects of his artistry and personality. All in order to present this magnificent music as clearly and honestly as possible for the listener to take part in.



Inside Polyphony

One might say that the piano repertoire starts with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Indeed, some people have even said that music also ends with Bach – all other music being mere “afterthoughts”. To me as a pianist his music has always been a starting point. I admit that as a child it sometimes felt like a chore to work on his *Inventions* and on the *Preludes and Fugues*. As a student there were times when I did not even touch his music when I probably should have. Still, I remember my love of practising and performing his music through my childhood and teenage years, and I am very happy to have rekindled that love.

My desire to work on Bach’s music came quite suddenly, though I do not think it came accidentally. This music, with all its emotional power, beauty and logic, is the strongest antidote to any insecurity one might feel either musically or technically. There is literally no separation between emotional content and physical execution. At the same time I was very attracted to the idea of producing and projecting the equality of voices on the piano. This means being able to colour each voice in such a way that as a listener one would feel the voices are talking to, singing or even dancing with each other. This has been a gigantic task for me to achieve on the piano. I should point out that this has not been a scientific experiment, but rather a direct expression of my work as a young artist.

I do not wish to discuss each work in detail but, rather, leave the interpretation to the listener. I should, however, say that each work has become tremendously close to me, and I hope this love shines forth in the recording.

This project has taught me many things – most importantly, to listen. The smallest detail becomes amplified through the

microphones. Recording Bach has brought me a new understanding of my playing, of the music and of the pianistic realm. It was not so much a feeling of reaching a goal, as of being given a brand new starting point, and a greater horizon. Bach is generous, perhaps more so than most composers. Everything is there, each note carries a specific meaning within a complete whole – all we have to do is play, and listen. To do that, to play and to listen, is the very essence of our art and the most difficult thing to achieve. For me, working on this felt like a return and a departure at the same time – a complete circle, as if I were finally saying what I had always thought. I am very grateful for the experience, and I hope the result can bring joy to others as well.

I have lived in music for as long as I can remember. I am a pianist because we had a piano at home, something for which I am utterly grateful. The piano is, in my opinion, the complete instrument, second only to the human voice. I have been lucky enough to have had a succession of great teachers, respectively in Bergen, Oslo, Vienna and Copenhagen. I made my official concert debut in Universitetets Aula in May 2015 in Oslo, and at the Bergen International Festival in June the same year.

I have a strong, supporting family who has helped me and encouraged me in my work. Art in all its forms has influenced me, and so has great musicians like Rachmaninov, Cortot, Kleiber and Norman. But most of all, I have always felt that making music is a social activity, a unique form of communication, clearer and more immediate than language. Music gives our thoughts and our feelings wings. To take part in the flight is my great privilege as an artist.

Christian Grøvlen, 2017



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Den som jeg, vil jeg ikke sløte u

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

- 1 Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor, BWV 903: Fantasia 6:54
- 2 Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D minor, BWV 903: Fugue 5:12

- 3 Sinfonia No. 1 in C major, BWV 787 1:02
- 4 Sinfonia No. 2 in C minor, BWV 788 2:21
- 5 Sinfonia No. 3 in D major, BWV 789 1:15
- 6 Sinfonia No. 4 in D minor, BWV 790 2:19
- 7 Sinfonia No. 5 in E-flat major, BWV 791 1:49
- 8 Sinfonia No. 6 in E major, BWV 792 0:56
- 9 Sinfonia No. 7 in E minor, BWV 793 2:34
- 10 Sinfonia No. 8 in F major, BWV 794 1:11
- 11 Sinfonia No. 9 in F minor, BWV 795 5:10
- 12 Sinfonia No. 10 in G major, BWV 796 1:07
- 13 Sinfonia No. 11 in G minor, BWV 797 2:05
- 14 Sinfonia No. 12 in A major, BWV 798 1:39
- 15 Sinfonia No. 13 in A minor, BWV 799 2:02
- 16 Sinfonia No. 14 in B-flat major, BWV 800 1:23
- 17 Sinfonia No. 15 in B minor, BWV 801 1:22

- 18 French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814: I. Allemande 3:29
- 19 French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814: II. Courante 1:59
- 20 French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814: III. Sarabande 3:25
- 21 French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814: IV. Anglaise Gavotte 1:26
- 22 French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814: V. Menuet and Trio 3:22
- 23 French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814: VI. Gigue 2:16

- 24 Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829: I. Praeambulum 2:17
- 25 Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829: II. Allemande 5:04
- 26 Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829: III. Corrente 1:49
- 27 Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829: IV. Sarabande 4:15
- 28 Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829: V. Tempo di Minuetto 2:03
- 29 Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829: VI. Passepied 1:49
- 30 Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829: VII. Gigue 3:56







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