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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

J.S. BACH

HARMONIC SEASONS

Manuel Tomadin *organ*

Treutmann-organ 1737
Stiftskirche Grauhof, Goslar, Germany

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685 – 1750

Prelude and Fugue in G BWV541

1. Prelude 3'22
2. Fugue 5'12

3. Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend BWV709 a 2 Clav e Ped 3'40

4. Trio Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend BWV655 a 2 Clav e Ped 4'21

Prelude and Fugue in E minor BWV548

5. Prelude 7'12
6. Fugue 8'22

7. Vater unser im Himmelreich BWV682 a 2 Clav. et Ped. 8'48

8. Jesus Christus Unser Heiland BWV666 3'08

9. Fantasia in C minor BWV1121 (Anh. 205) 4'14

10. Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam BWV684 a 2 Clav. e C F in Pedale 3'59

Prelude and Fugue in C minor BWV546

11. Prelude 7'16
12. Fugue 6'20

13. Kleines Harmonisches Labyrinth BWV591 5'51

14. Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ BWV604 a 2 Clav e Ped 1'06

Prelude and Fugue in C BWV545

15. Prelude 2'13
16. Fugue 4'33

Manuel Tomadin *organ*

Organ: by Christoph Treutmann (the Elder), 1737

At the former Collegiate Church of St. George, Grauhof, Germany

Regardless of how we listen to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, we can always recognise a great poet, a theologian, and most probably the man who above all was able to transform doctrine into music, thus creating pages and pages which, still to this day, instil great feelings in the heart of people. As Lorenz Mizler would say in 1740, the 'author' has proven that in this type of composition, he rises above many other composers with regards to both expertise and ability. In him we find a musical symbolism which simply aims at illustrating the main idea of the dogma contained in the words; therefore it is inspired music, also the result of a historical period where Alchemy, Chemistry, Astronomy and Mathematics were at the basis of the divine quest. Not immune from these ways of thinking, Bach composed many cycles in the contrapuntal form among which were the *Orgelbüchlein*, *Clavier-übung*, *Leipziger Choräle*, etc. Each group has its own orderly construction which finds a very high level of perfection in some mathematical models. The beauty and extraordinariness lie in the fact that some of his compositions do not lose exemplarity and value even though they are isolated. This interesting recording work came from the idea of putting together a few of Bach's significant organ compositions, yet again, according to another perspective: that of the 'Harmonic Seasons'.

Consisting of 12 compositions, 12 months, 4 seasons, 4 preludes and fugue, each season has three compositions. Starting from the construction of the harmonic series existing in nature, by playing the notes G, E and C together what we obtain is known as the perfect, divine triad; the C major tone contrasts with the C minor tone and differs only from the modal note. As day is opposite to night, so spring is opposite to summer and autumn to winter. It is then that these first three compositions share the G major tonality in common; the next three pieces are in E minor and the other three in C minor. But the sun always comes after the storm, so the C major tonality best expresses that earthly joy in receiving salvation by the hand of God. With a careful eye one can notice that in the second last piece, *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ* BWV604, the tonality is a little equivocal, but the almost enigmatic advancement, has

always been a standard practice for the great author. 'Harmonic Seasons' is a way of listening to excellent Bach music in an alternative way but most of all it is the occasion for listening to the 1737 Treutmann organ of the Monastery Church in Grauhof, Germany, one of the ancient instruments among the most impressive ever built.

The season of the Sun could not begin with anything other than the *Prelude and Fugue in G major* BWV541, written during J. S. Bach's period in Weimar (1708-1717), most probably in 1712. The piece was later reviewed on various occasions, even with the addition of a slow middle movement. The repetition and use of notes and harmonies repeated in this piece are in the typical style of the northern German school. The prelude opens with a graceful passage consisting of a single voice which elegantly arches across the main harmonies. Next, the repetition of harmonies combines with a solstice type of fluid line, creating a considerable rhythmic thrust which persists until the end. The theme of the fugue is constituted by repeated notes, which entwine with the counter-subject at different modulations, and leads to a brief dramatic moment with great ability and suspended cadence.

Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend a 2 Clav. et Ped. BWV709, is an ornamented chorale which is also from the Weimar period; the old school of composition is clearly visible, not only in the use of ornaments, but also of constant rhythmic-melodic drops which are taken as a model in the other three voices, thus giving the composition a play of counterpoints, certainly superior to the figurative chorale techniques of his predecessors. The combination of these celestial notes with the veiled timbres of the instrument creates a very mystic atmosphere.

The solid and severe architecture of the Trio super *Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend* a 2 Clav. et Ped. BWV655, contrasts with lightness and airiness the progress in the form of a trio. It is inserted in one of the most important cycles composed by Bach, the *Leipziger Choräle* (the Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes, the so-called Leipzig Chorales), erroneously called with this name, as they were actually composed in a different period. This trio was composed in Weimar and in fact the published

version presents a few melodic and rhythmic differences compared to the initial version. At the end of the composition, the chorale theme is entirely played on the pedal as if it were a chorale fantasia.

The *Prelude and Fugue in E minor* BWV548 is a much more mature work, written after Bach settled in Leipzig. Regardless of its strict melodic structure, the prelude is a great harmonic adventure. Inside it we can recognise the sections in the form of *Stylus Fantasticus*. The fugue is divided into three sections, with its theme, 'chromatic wedge' expanding around a single note. After the harmonic tension and surprise of this first section, the fugue's second section settles almost like a 100-measure toccata, full of extremely virtuosic runs and then fully resumes the fugue's first section; exactly in the same way as in the prelude.

Some of Bach's compositions often require the use of two manuals and pedal, such as the case of the enigmatic *Vater unser im Himmelreich* a 2 Clav. et Ped. BWV682, written almost in trio sonata form. The original chorale is so elaborate that it becomes invisible. The two upper voices combine in an ascending canon form, and Luther's text shows concepts of suffering, blame, obedience and patience. The succession of unceasing rhythmic figures in the manner of the Lombard rhythm is almost intermittent, and chromatic motifs make the composition incredibly unique and interesting. The composition is included in the *Clavier-Übung III*, written in Leipzig between 1731 and 1741; Bach wrote two versions for each chorale: one for the grand organ and one for the manualiter organ (without pedals) reflecting Martin Luther's Large and Small Catechisms.

In the last decade of life, as previously mentioned, Bach worked on a collection of chorales, which had already been written during the Weimar, Arnstadt and Mühlhausen periods with the idea of publishing them: the Leipzig Chorales, just like the *Clavier-Übung III* of 1739. The idea was then later fulfilled by his son, C. P. E. Bach, who made them famous under the name: the Great Eighteen Chorale Preludes. Included in these, we find *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* BWV666, a piece almost

entirely manualiter with a strong contemplative character, for the Communion rite. The flowing of the notes expresses the belief that God will free us from the ‘tortures of hell’, according to the words of the first verse.

The *Fantasia for organ in C minor* BWV1121 (Anh. 205), is an interesting composition which can only be found in the manuscript of the Andreas Bach book, a compilation from which some of the works of a young Bach, Pollarolo, Pachelbel, Böhm and Buxtehude are taken. The tonality in C minor is sad, and at times dramatic; here a young Bach expresses himself freely through fantasy surely to convey a religious message which is reverent yet serene at the same time. In the last section the tempo passes from 6/4 to 4/4; as if the suffering had its days or measures numbered. Probably written in 1706, up to not long ago the work was considered non authentic. But then the in-depth calligraphic analysis established the paternity mostly through comparison with the *Canzona* BWV588 and *Fantasia* BWV563; it is a triad probably of Italian inspiration.

In the Jordan, our Lord Jesus Christ was baptised by the hand of Saint John, with water which can wash away the Original Sin, but can also cause a cruel death by drowning. Bach describes this concept in *Christ unser Herr, zum Jordan kam* a 2 Clav. et canto fermo in Ped., BWV684, with an unceasing figure of fluent semiquavers, presenting a simple but fascinating image of the Jordan River. The quaver motif played by the right hand could be interpreted as a sign of the baptism of Saint John the Baptist which seems to lead us towards the end where the lyrics open up to a new life.

The *Prelude and Fugue in C minor* BWV546, which closes this wide emotional moment, can be easily presented as one of the most imposing compositions of his production, even though the fugue was conceived at an earlier time, during the Weimar period. The Prelude was most probably added later, during the Leipzig period after 1723. Many different reasons could be behind this union among which was the need to have a new prelude and fugue in a very challenging moment. The Prelude counts 144 measures, a number which rather frequently recurs in Bach’s numerology (Bach=14, Johann Sebastian Bach=41).

The *Kleines Harmonisches Labyrinth* BWV591, is a very ambiguous piece. Bach’s paternity of this piece has been questioned many times. The thought could seem much more classic, presumably at the end of the XVIII century or the beginning of the XIX century. There are three sections: *Introitus – Centrum – Exitus*. The use of frequent modulations according to the enharmonic procedure generates a labyrinth as a metaphor for the soul in its arduous life journey just like a wanderer who reaches paradise at the end of his tortuous life (in this case underlined by the insertion of the Zimbelstern stop). The arpeggiated chords at the end of the first section are very similar to the composition of the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue for harpsichord.

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ a 2 Clav. et Ped. BWV604, is a short chorale prelude taken from the *Orgelbüchlein*. The autograph manuscript of this piece was written by Bach on only two staves. The *cantus firmus* is generally in the soprano but the other lower voices also contain part of the chorale within them. In particular, in the fifth verse, a valley of tears is described which could be well highlighted by Bach in the many katabases (falling lines) present in the soprano and lower voice. The falling movement is also alternated by various anabases which would free this valley of tears with the ascension of Christ. The composition ends with the invocation of the Kyrie Eleison on repeated notes which crown the praise to Jesus Christ during the Advent period.

Our musical journey through the ‘Harmonic Seasons’ ends with the lively *Prelude and Fugue in C major* BWV545, of which the current version is Bach’s revision, made in Leipzig, of a previous version written during the Weimar period. The pair perfectly complement one another; the prelude has a solemn and striking character while the fugue opens with a majestic ascending subject which uses the first 5 notes of the scale. The monumental Treutmann organ also contributes to underlining its seriousness. The figure in syncopation between the voices is one of the main elements of this fugue.

© Manuel Tomadin

Translation: Dott.ssa Chiara Maria Bieker



Christoph Treutmann Organ 1737, in der Stiftskirche St. Georg in Grauhof bei Goslar (D)

C. Treutmann began the building of the grand organ of the Collegiate Church of St. George in Grauhof, Goslar in 1734. He was already in his sixties, well-known as an organ builder, wealthy and highly-praised; he was especially open to organ innovations which were slowly spreading. The building lasted three years and the result was his greatest and most elaborate instrument. It was a fortunate coincidence that this piece, Treutmann's masterpiece, survived to this day almost unchanged through all the vicissitudes of time. The organ surely took inspiration from G. Silbermann's organs, also in consideration of the fact that an only façade was built. The fine stops of the Viola da Gamba 8' and 16' are very elegant and, at that time, were a rarity and the registration of 32' stops at the pedal imbues a powerful gravity. At the time it was said that the sound was similar to a rumbling thunderstorm.

Hauptwerk (II)

Principal 16'
Viola di Gambe 16'
Lieblich Principal 8'
Spitzflöte 8'
Viola di Gambe 8'
Quinta 6'
Octava 4'
Nassat 3'
Rauschpfeiffe 3 f.
Mixtur 4-5-6 f.
Trommet 16'
Trommet 8'

Oberwerk (III)

Principal 8'
Rohrflöte 8'
Octava 4'
Spitzflöte 4'
Quinta 3'
Superoctava 2'
Sesquialtera 2 f.
Mixtur 5 f.
Fagott 16'
Vox humana 8'

Hinterwerk (I)
 Gedackt 8'
 Quintadena 8'
 Principal 4'
 Flöte Travers 4'
 Octava 2'
 Waldflöte 2'
 Quinta 1 ½'
 Scharff 3 f.
 Hautbois 8'

Pedalwerk
 Principal 16'
 Soubbas 16'
 Rohrflöte 12'
 Octava 8'
 Flachflöte 8'
 Superoctava 4'
 Mixtur 4 f.
 Groß Posaunen Baß 32'
 Posaune 16'
 Trommet 8'
 Schalmey 4'

Manualumfang: C, D bis c'''

Pedalumfang: C, D bis d'

Tremulant für das Manualwerk

Koppel vom Oberwerk zum Hauptwerk als Schiebekoppel

Koppel vom Hinterwerk zum Hauptwerk als Zug

3 Sperrventile, 2 Zimbelsterne



Registrations

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

1 2 Prelude and Fugue in G BWV541

HW: LP8,O4,Mix OW: P8,O4,SO2,Mix Ped: P16,O8,Tr8,Sch4 Koppel HW-OW

3 Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend *a 2 Clav e Ped* BWV709

HW: Sfl8 HinW: Gd8,Hb8, Ped: S16, Ffl8 Trem

4 Trio Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend *a 2 Clav e Ped* BWV655

OW: P8,Sfl4 HinW: P4,Fl4,Wfl2 (one octave low) Ped: O8

5 6 Prelude and fugue in E minor BWV548

Prelude HW: P16,LP8,O4,Mix OW: P8,O4, Q3,Mix,Fag16

Ped: P16,Rfl12,O8,SO4,Pos16,Tr8,Sch4 Koppel HW-OW

Fugue HW: P16,LP8,O4,Mix OW: P8,O4,Q3,Mix Ped: P16,O8,SO2,Pos16

HinW: Gd8,P4,O2,Q1 1/2 Koppel HW-OW

7 Vater unser im Himmelreich *a 2 Clav. et Ped.* BWV682

HinW: G8,Hb8 OW: P8 Ped: S16,O8

8 Jesus Christus Unser Heiland BWV666

OW: Sfl4 Ped: S16 (one octave upper)

9 Fantasia in C minor BWV1121 Ahn. 205

OW: P8,Vh8 Ped: P16

10 Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam *a 2 Clav. e C F in Pedale* BWV684

HW: Vlg16,Vlg8,Sfl8,O4 OW: P8,Q3,O4 Ped: Tr8

11 12 Prelude and Fugue in C minor BWV546

Prelude: HW: P16,Lp8,O4,Q6,Mix,Tr16 OW: P8,Q3,O4,SO2,Mix

Ped: P16,O8,SO4,Pos16,Tr8,GPos32 Koppel HW-OW in bar 120 HW:+ Raus

Fugue: HW: P16,LP8,O4,Mix,Tr8 OW: P8,Q3,O4,SO2,Mix

Ped: P16,Rfl12,O8,SO4,Pos16,Tr8,Sch4 Koppel HW-OW

13 Kleine Harmonisches Labyrinth BWV591

HW: LP8,Sfl8 OW: Sfl4,Vh8 Ped: S16,Ffl8 in bar 17 HW:+ Vlg16,Vlg8

HinW: G8 in bar 32 +trem in bar 44 + Cimbelstern

14 Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ *a 2 Clav e Ped* BWV604

HW: Sfl8,O4 OW: P8,O4,Sesq Ped: S16,O8

15 16 Prelude and Fugue in C BWV545

Prelude HW: P16,LP8,O4,Raus,Mix OW: P8,O4 Ped: P16,O8,SO4,Pos16,Tr8

Fugue HW: P16,LP8,O4,Raus,Mix,Tr8 OW: P8, O4 Ped:

P16,Rfl12,O8,SO4,Pos16,Tr8,Sch4

Koppel HW-OW

Manuel Tomadin studied piano, organ, organ composition and harpsichord, continuing his harpsichord studies at the University of Udine (where his thesis was based on J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations). As well as devoting himself to the practices of Renaissance and Baroque music, he has participated in masterclasses led by Claudio Astronio,



Andrea Marcon, Michael Radulescu, Luca Scandali, Ferruccio Bartoletti, Peter Planyavsky, Olivier Latri, Paolo Crivellaro, Jon Laukvik, Ludger Lohmann, Gustav Auzinger, Hans Fagius, Peter van Dijk, Teo Jellema, Francesco di Lernia and Eric Lebrun. From 2001 to 2003 Tomadin studied at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (Switzerland) with Jean-Claude Zehnder and Andrea Marcon. He regularly collaborates with Baroque recorder-player Manuel Staropoli, and belongs to the early music and period-instrument group Terg Antiqua.

Tomadin enjoys a busy concert career in Italy and Europe, and has recorded several CDs on the historical organs of the Italian region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the Netherlands and Germany; many of these – featuring music by Tunder, Leyding, Kneller, Bruhns, Hasse, Handel and Druckenmuller – have been awarded 5 stars or 5 diapasons. He teaches organ and harpsichord at the ‘G. Tartini’ Conservatory of

Music in Trieste. He was organist of the civic Cathedral of Trieste from 2004 to 2008 and is now organist of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the same city. Tomadin has won awards at several national and international contests, including the first prize in Germany's Fussen-Breitenwang-Mittenwald and the second prize in the prestigious Paul Hofhaimer Competition in Innsbruck on two occasions (2006 and 2010). He was also the winner of the Grand Prix d'ECHO 2011 in the Alkmaar Schnitger Competition, and is artistic director of both the International Organ Festival ‘G.B. Candotti’ in Udine and the ‘Johann Sebastian Bach Orgelherbst’ Festival in Trieste. Tomadin plays the organ and harpsichord as part of the Friuli in Musica project.

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