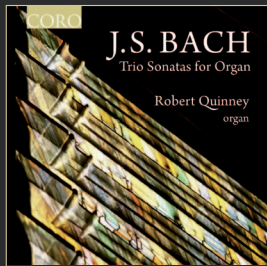


CORO



COR16095

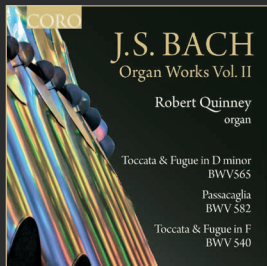
J.S. Bach Organ Works Vol. I Trio Sonatas for Organ

Recorded at The Queen's College, Oxford, on the beautiful Frobenius organ (one of the most notable instruments of its kind in the country), the Trio Sonatas are among Bach's most popular and appealing organ works.

"The disc a pure unfolding of pleasure." THE SUNDAY TIMES

"An excellent recording, which is to be thoroughly recommended."

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW



COR16112

J.S. Bach Organ Works Vol. II

Recorded at Trinity College, Cambridge, on the beautiful Metzler organ, this disc presents a number of virtuosic works from Bach's early years including one of the most famous pieces of organ music in the repertory – the Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

"Quinney's Bach gets to the heart of the music with refreshing clarity and a communication born of genuine understanding. Bring on the next volume soon, please."

GRAMOPHONE

Available at www.thesixteen.com and as a CD quality digital download at
www.thesixteendigital.com

COR16132

CORO
connections

J.S. BACH

Organ Works Vol. III

Robert Quinney
organ

Fantasia & Fugue in G minor
BWV 542

Canonic Variations
BWV 769a

Prelude & Fugue in G
BWV 541

Pastorella
BWV 590



J.S. BACH

Organ Works Vol. III

Three preludes on an Advent chorale and a remarkable series of canons woven around a Christmas hymn were the starting point for this third volume of organ works by Johann Sebastian Bach. These seasonal pieces are surrounded by three free works, all of which have at one time or another been labelled 'Great', and which complement the chorale-based music by virtue of key relationships, but perhaps also through shared *Affekt*. The programme is completed by the *Pastorella*, a picturesque curiosity among Bach's organ music, and one with a strong flavour of Christmas about it.

Robert Quinney

Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542

1	Fantasia	5.42
2	Fugue	5.32

Three preludes on *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* BWV 659–661

3	à 2 Clav. et Ped. BWV 659	4.17
4	à due bassi e canto fermo BWV 660	2.38
5	in Organo pleno - Canto fermo in Pedal BWV 661	2.36

Pastorella BWV 590

6	[Prelude]	3.32
7	[Allemande]	3.00
8	[Aria]	2.27
9	[Gigue]	4.24

Prelude and Fugue in C BWV 547

10	Prelude	4.32
11	Fugue	4.13

Einige Canonische Veränderungen über das Weynachts-Lied *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her* BWV 769a

12	Canone all'ottava (Canon at the octave)	1.29
13	Canone alla Quinta (Canon at the fifth)	1.21
14	Canto fermo in Canone (<i>Cantus Firmus</i> canon)	2.50
15	Canone alla Settima, <i>Cantabile</i> (Canon at the seventh)	2.24
16	Canon per augmentationem (Augmentation canon)	3.01

Prelude and Fugue in G BWV 541

17	Prelude	2.50
18	Fugue	4.35

Total playing time: 61.31

J.S. BACH

To compare music from different ends of J.S. Bach's long career does not reveal as much as we might expect in the way of 'development'. The familiar tropes of 'early' and 'late' are not equal to dealing with such prodigious ability, even when we can identify crucial points of expansion, such as Bach's encounter with Vivaldian Ritornello in 1713. Thus, while the *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* and *Prelude and Fugue in C*, or the *Pastorella* and *Canonic Variations* are utterly different in many respects, these differences serve to suggest shifts in Bach's preferences as a composer rather than a gradual refinement of his craft from the 'youthful' to the 'mature'. Rather than demonstrating a straightforward improvement in quality, both pieces exemplify in different ways the fluency and coherence with which Bach generated

Organ Works Volume III

and arrayed ideas, and the ambitious scale on which he tended to work, whether in individual movements or compendious multipartite collections.

The *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* BWV 542 is a hybrid 'work' with a chequered transmission history. It could be described as a pairing of a fantasia in G minor with a fugue in the same key – the latter of which also exists in a version pitched a tone lower. The fugue is transmitted in several manuscripts by younger contemporaries of the composer, whereas the fantasia appears only in copies made after his death; the two are only paired in two later sources. From this we might conclude that the fugue was composed earlier, and was never intended to be played with the fantasia – though on the question of intention, it is worth bearing in mind Peter

Williams's observation that pairings were 'presumably much less fixed when a whole church service could come between prelude and postlude'. Its early transmission notwithstanding, it is now firmly established in the canon, the apparent authenticity of the pairing conferred by the award of a number in the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis*. In fact the two movements are such perfect complements to one another that it is hard to hold the fortuity of the work's genesis against it. The fantasia draws on Southern German models, themselves derived from the *durezze e ligature* style of earlier Italian keyboard music. Typically, Bach creates something simultaneously more extreme in utterance yet more coherent than its models. There are many pedal points, evaded cadences and diminished chords, but a larger-scale musical argument is articulated by the alternation of the impulsive free sections with passages of cooler

writing, for three imitative voices above an obbligato pedal. This music is incorporated into the final free section, whereupon the formerly static pedal becomes mobile and harmonically propulsive, creating a sense of inevitable movement toward the final cadence – though resolution is delayed by the derailment of an apparent perfect cadence six bars from the end. In contrast to the shocks and frustrations of the fantasia, the fugue is expansive, and revels in its kinetic energy. The long-limbed subject, which is possibly based on a Dutch popular song, is developed in the episodes into cascades of (mostly descending) semiquavers. From about the halfway point, a contrasting quaver motif beginning with a rising fourth begins to assert itself; as often happens in Bach's fugues, this episodic material begins to behave rather like a 'theme', though in the end there is no doubt as to the subject's supremacy.

The text and melody of the chorale *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* were derived from the plainchant office hymn *Veni redemptor gentium*, the melody retaining the antique quality of the modal original. Apart from the opening prelude in the *Orgelbüchlein*, and no fewer than five cantata movements, the only extant settings of the chorale by Bach are the three in the ‘Eighteen’ or ‘Leipzig’ Chorales recorded here. This collection contains chorale preludes first composed no later than Bach’s time as Court Organist in Weimar (1708-17); they were revised during the last decade of his life, brought together in the manuscript known as P271 which contains, on either side of the revisions, the Six Sonatas for Organ and the autograph version of the *Einige Canonische Veränderungen über das Weynachts-Lied*, ‘Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her’. It seems likely that the *Nun komm* preludes were intended

to form a triptych. Unlike the similar trio of preludes on *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr* that succeed them in P271, they do not exhibit different national styles, but sharply contrasted texture and *Affekt*. BWV 659 is in some ways conventional, with its melismatic solo melody, ornamented in the North German manner, and thorough fore-imitation in the accompanying voices of the chorale. But the walking bass stands out as something different; its addition to the texture imparts a sombre yet searching character to the music. The bass of the second prelude is, again, a defining feature; but while in BWV 659 the bass stands somewhat aloof from the chorale-derived remaining voices, in BWV 660 the *due bassi* are in the foreground, vying with each other in close imitation. The chorale melody appears in pithy, rather stylised phrases in the right hand; but it is the virtuosic interplay of the left hand and feet that constantly demands

our attention. The effect is reminiscent of many cantata arias: the supposed principal voice (in an aria, the texted vocal line; here, the chorale melody) never achieves its expected supremacy, thanks to the tautness of the Ritornello structure and the sheer inventiveness of the other material. BWV 661 is a fugue *in organo pleno* (for full organ). The driving, angular subject is derived from the chorale melody, but introduces three startling leaps – two of an octave, and one of a minor sixth – which have no connection with the chorale. The pedal provides the real thing, in minims below the turbulent three-voice fugue.

The *Pastorella* BWV 590 is, like BWV 542, an improbable ‘organ work’, but one that is now firmly fixed as a favourite. It has some of the makings of a keyboard suite – an *Allemande*, a final *Gigue* – but, at four movements, is too short to qualify as a fully-fledged

partita. It bears some resemblance to the early programmatic *Capriccio sopra la lontananza del suo fratello dilettissimo* BWV 992, which may in turn owe something to Kuhnau’s *Biblischer Historien*. Unlike these possible models, the *Pastorella* movements lack descriptive titles; but they are nevertheless suggestive, with the application of a little imagination, of a Nativity scene. Furthermore, in place of the *Capriccio*’s final fugue ‘in imitation of the posthorn’ (which carries the beloved brother off into the distance) is a fugal gigue whose subject spins in semiquavers around the opening notes of the carol *Resonet in laudibus* (also sung to the text ‘Josef lieber, Josef mein’).

The *Canonic Variations on the Christmas Hymn* ‘Vom Himmel hoch’ are, unlike the lightweight *Pastorella*, a significant contribution to a group of late works of overtly ‘learned’ character.

The published version, BWV 769, was presented in 1747 as a token of Bach's entry into the 'Corresponding Society of the Musical Sciences' founded by the polymath Lorenz Mizler in 1738, the membership of which already included Telemann, Handel and Carl Heinrich Graun; it was on the same occasion that the famous Haussmann portrait of Bach was commissioned. This recondite purpose might lead us to assume that the *Canonic Variations* are of interest only to the *cognoscenti*. But they should not be regarded as esoterica, filed under 'late contrapuntal works' (and not only for the obvious reason that all of Bach's music is contrapuntal). Like the *Art of Fugue*, the *Musical Offering*, and the *Goldberg Variations*, the *Canonic Variations* employ sophisticated contrapuntal techniques in a sort of intense research into a theme, exploring and exploiting its potential for combination with other voices

and themes, within a variety textures and drawing upon a number of musical styles. But they exist as much for the delight of the naïve ear as for the satisfaction of the expert eye. Indeed, the genesis of the *Canonic Variations* argues strongly against the idea that such music was conceived purely as an 'academic' exercise. The autograph copy, BWV 769a, which post-dates the first stage of engraving (of the three 'simple' Canons – at the Octave, Fifth, and Seventh), includes several alterations to the printed version. This autograph version is laid out in the standard organ music format – on three staves throughout, for the convenience of the performer – in contrast to the print's 'enigmatic' notation of the first three canons (in which the second canonic voice is represented by an incipit of a few notes only) and open-score presentation of the Augmentation Canon. BWV 769a is clearly intended for performance.

The autograph copy also alters the movement order: the *Cantus Firmus* Canon (which ends the print) is inserted between the Canons at the Fifth and Seventh, with the Augmentation Canon at the end. There is thus a central climax – the five-part stretto presentation of the chorale, over a thunderous low C pedal, at the end of the Inversion sequence – and a less obviously climactic but arguably even more effervescent finale, whose conclusion is marked by a subtle peal of bells. The autograph order also allows the exquisite Canon at the Seventh to take a more prominent role: in its new position, it is an intimate foil to the grandiloquent inversion canons that precede it. Laden with expressive suspensions, and making more than passing reference to the *galant* style, this music is not clever for its own sake, but presents an exotic fusion of the learned and the sensuous,

quite out of keeping with the stylistic proprieties of Bach's day.

Although the majority of Bach's 'free' organ music originated during the part of his career when, we assume, he played the organ most frequently – 1708-17, as Court Organist in Weimar – there are a number of Preludes and Fugues that exist in authoritative sources from Bach's time in Leipzig (after 1723). There can be no doubt that the two movements of the *Prelude and Fugue in C* BWV 547 were intended to form a pair. Both end with abrupt, detached chords and a tonic pedal; there is no mistaking the resemblance (there is, of course, the possibility of adaptation from non-matching originals). The inventive basis of the prelude could not be simpler: ascending scales and (mostly) descending triads, the latter mirrored in the 9/8 metre (three groups of three quavers per

bar). The Ritornello-versus-Episode duality is articulated here not by texture but by harmony; this is static in the Ritornelli, adumbrated by the pedal's ostinato broken chords, and modulatory in the Episodes, in which the same pedal motif is often altered to produce cycle-of-fifths movement. The fugue is an astonishing *tour-de-force* of counterpoint. Scarcely a bar is not derived from the very concise subject or the material that clusters around it; yet the fugue is – again – no exercise, but a dramatic and even witty piece that wears its learning lightly. Indeed, the very fact that the music is saturated by the all-generating subject, in a series of increasingly ingenious fugal expositions, creates a tension that is almost comic – how long can this go on? And what has happened to the pedals? Eventually they enter, playing the subject in majestic augmentation, but a few bars later the prime form of the subject,

in the tenor voice, is distorted into augmented harmonies that threaten to derail the whole process. Again the fugue gets back on track, only to be disrupted by the abrupt chords first heard at the end of the prelude. Finally, the grand closing stretto over a tonic pedal ends not with a magnificently ornamented final cadence, but with a further abrupt gesture – just a quaver chord, the remainder of the bar fastidiously filled up with rests. The bubble has burst.

A similarly light touch graces the *Prelude and Fugue in G* BWV 541. Bach's autograph copy, which incorporates a number of small improvements to an earlier version transmitted by other copyists, may have been prepared for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's (successful) audition for the post of Organist at the Sophienkirche, Dresden. The opening flourish – reminiscent of

free passages in North German organ praeludia of the generation before Bach – persists throughout the prelude, in the frequent passages of running semiquavers, at the top or bottom, and sometimes in the middle of the now concerto-like texture (it brings to mind the first movement of the third 'Brandenburg' Concerto BWV 1048, with its baton-passing soloists). The fugue subject is vocal in character, its repeated notes apparently in search of a text. Its close resemblance to the phrase 'Ich hätte viel Bekümmernis' from Cantata 21 has often been remarked upon, but the *Affekt* of the two pieces could hardly be more different. In contrast to the C minor misery of the cantata movement, the fugue is arguably Bach's sunniest work in the genre. The 'obligato pedal', as it is described in the autograph score's title, is an unusually active line even by this composer's standards, full

of bubbling decorated scales and incisive *suspirans* upbeats. The fugue makes no attempt to suppress the exuberant energy unleashed by the prelude – quite the opposite, in fact.



It was, as always, a pleasure to return to Trinity College, Cambridge, to record again on its peerless Metzler organ. I am grateful to Stephen Layton, Paul Nicholson, and their colleagues for their generosity and assistance.

The producer of both previous volumes of this series was David Trendell – conductor, organist, scholar, teacher, and to many fortunate people, friend – who died on 28 October 2014. With love and deep gratitude, this recording is dedicated to his memory.

Robert Quinney
© 2015

Robert Quinney

Robert Quinney is Organist of New College, Oxford. In addition to the daily direction of New College's world-famous choir, his work comprises teaching, lecturing, examining as a Tutorial Fellow of the college and an Associate Professor at the University Faculty of Music. He also maintains a parallel career as a solo organist, and he is a prolific recording artist: his discs of organ music by J.S. Bach, Elgar, Dupré, Wagner and Brahms – and several CDs with the Choir of Westminster Abbey and The Sixteen – have been widely acclaimed. His first CD with New College Choir – symphony anthems by John Blow, many of which have been recorded for the first time – is due for release in 2016.

Robert Quinney read music at King's College, Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar. After four years as Assistant Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral, he became Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey in 2004. While at the Abbey he performed on concert tours to the United States, Australia and Russia, at several televised services – including the Marriage of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in April 2011 – and on the 2012 BBC TV documentary *Westminster Abbey*. In April 2013 he moved to Peterborough Cathedral, where he was Director of Music for 16 months. Between 2009 and 2014 he was Director of *Oundle for Organists*, whose residential courses continue to attract young organists from all over the world.

Photograph © Nick Rutter



The Organ of Trinity College, Cambridge



Photograph: Joanna Harries

The organ of Trinity College Chapel was built by the Swiss firm Metzler Söhne in 1976. The design, by Bernhardt Edskes, incorporated the surviving pipework of the two organs built for Trinity by 'Father' Bernard Smith in 1694 and 1708. The organ has three manuals and forty-two ranks, of which seven are original. The 8' Principal on the Rückpositiv is from Smith's 1694 organ, while the 16' Principal on the Pedal and the 16' Principal, 8' and 4' Octave, 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ ' Quinte, and 2' Superoctave on the Great are from 1708. The Victorian enlargements to both the instrument and its cases have been removed, and all the pipework is contained within the restored Smith cases, whose carving recalls the school of Grinling Gibbons. The cases are likely to have been designed by Smith and executed by him or one of his team. The salient characteristics of this mechanical-action organ are the meticulous craftsmanship and artistic integrity employed by Metzlers, the durability of the instrument, together with its rich but gentle resonance, its aptness for the acoustics of the Chapel, and its exquisite balance. It is understandably regarded as one of the finest instruments in the United Kingdom.

Disposition of the Organ of Trinity College, Cambridge

HAUPTWERK	RÜCKPOSITIV	SCHWELLWERK	PEDAL
1* Principal 16	13* Principal 8	24 Viola 8	36* Principal 16
2* Octave 8	14 Gedackt 8	25 Suavial 8	37 Subbass 16
3 Hohlflöte 8	15 Octave 4	26 Rohrflöte 8	38 Octavbass 8
4* Octave 4	16 Rohrflöte 4	27 Principal 4	39 Bourdon 8
5 Spitzflöte 4	17 Octave 2	28 Gedacktflöte 4	40 Octave 4
6* Quinte 2 2/3	18 Gemshorn 2	29 Nasard 2 2/3	41 Mixtur V
7* Superoctave 2	19 Larigot 1 1/3	30 Doublette 2	42 Posaune 16
8 Sesquialter III	20 Sesquialter II	31 Terz 1 3/5	43 Trompete 8
9 Cornett IV 21	21 Scharf III	32 Mixtur IV	44 Trompete 4
10 Mixtur IV-V	22 Dulcian 8	33 Fagott 16	
11 Trompete 8	23 Tremulant	34 Trompete 8	
12 Vox Humana		35 Tremulant	(*Father Smith ranks)
	45 Rückpositiv/Hauptwerk	46 Schwellwerk/Hauptwerk	
	47 Hauptwerk/Pedal	48 Rückpositiv/Pedal	49 Schwellwerk/Pedal

RECORDING PRODUCER: Matthew Martin

RECORDING ENGINEER: David Hinitt

ASSISTANT: Joseph Wicks

RECORDED AT: Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, 7-10 September 2015

COVER IMAGE: iStockPhoto

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



© 2015 The Sixteen Productions Ltd.

© 2015 The Sixteen Productions Ltd.



For further information about recordings on CORO Connections

call: +44 (0) 1865 793999 or email: coro@thesixteen.com

www.thesixteen.com