




NORTHSTAR
RECORDING
by BERT VAN DER WOUF

2 CD



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Suites BWV 1007-1012

Arranged for saxophone

Raaf Hekkema



SUPER AUDIO CD

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Arranged for saxophone

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CD 1

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Suite 1 (BWV 1007)

[1] Prélude	2:24
[2] Allemande	4:17
[3] Courante	2:29
[4] Sarabande	2:26
[5] Menuet I & II	2:58
[6] Gigue	1:45

Suite 2 (BWV 1008)

[7] Prélude	4:03
[8] Allemande	3:43
[9] Courante	2:07
[10] Sarabande	4:23
[11] Menuet I & II	2:30
[12] Gigue	2:41

Suite 3 (BWV 1009)

[13] Prélude	2:58
[14] Allemande	3:35
[15] Courante	3:21
[16] Sarabande	4:10
[17] Bourrée I & II	2:57
[18] Gigue	3:04

total time 56:03

CD 2

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Suite 4 (BWV 1010)

[1] Prélude	3:40
[2] Allemande	3:34
[3] Courante	3:28
[4] Sarabande	4:32
[5] Bourrée I & II	4:42
[6] Gigue	2:42

Suite 5 (BWV 1011)

[7] Prélude	5:18
[8] Allemande	4:30
[9] Courante	2:03
[10] Sarabande	3:45
[11] Gavotte I & II	4:01
[12] Gigue	2:06

Suite 6 (BWV 1012)

[13] Prélude	3:57
[14] Allemande	7:24
[15] Courante	3:40
[16] Sarabande	4:07
[17] Gavotte I & II	3:43
[18] Gigue	3:47

total time 71:08



I dedicate this CD to my wife, Simone Noortman. Not only has she been my life partner for the past twenty-plus years, she is also – although not a musician herself – my most important musical sounding board.

The path to this recording was long, windy and fascinating. It started with the awareness that the cello suites provide exceptional playing material for saxophonists. But I long felt that for playing Bach on the saxophone, only the light-sounding soprano saxophone would do—which was, I believed, incompatible with the instrument for which the suites were written. During preparations for my previous CD recording of Bach's partitas for violin (Challenge Classics, CC 72648), I discovered that the alto sax—fitted with an old-style mouthpiece—could reproduce the refined articulation of the violin. Vintage mouthpieces represent the sound ideal of days gone by, before the saxophone was regarded as a 'jazz instrument'. Then came the idea to play the suites on six different saxophones, each of which holds a unique place in the history of the instrument. After that, much time went into working out a usable assignment of transpositions and an appropriate choice of instruments, the resulting sound character being the deciding factor. Just as with Bach's partitas, I set out to devise a logical approach to the polyphony and the main musical lines. Of course, I had to occasionally adapt the note texture, a method I consider an integral part of the process of musical arrangement. I based my work on the manuscript as notated by the composer's second wife, Anna Magdalena Bach, which is generally regarded as the most reliable source.

Alongside arranging the music came the search for suitable instruments. For the recording of the partitas I had used a mouthpiece made by the Buescher company around 1920. I bought an instrument to go with it, a True Tone manufactured in 1926. This classic instrument was sold in huge numbers; even today they are still easy to come by and, as a rule, in decent shape. I also decided to use my C-melody (New Wonder Series I, 1922), made by the Conn, the other great American saxophone-builder from the early days. The C-melody saxophone was part of the 'saxophone craze' of the early twentieth century. Its warm and intimate sound made it an extremely popular instrument, especially for home use, but its main advantage was that, being pitched in the key of C, it required no transposition.

On the advice of saxophonist and instrument collector Leo van Oostrom, I purchased a remarkable tenor: an 'Adolphe Sax' model built by Selmer in 1932. In 1928 Selmer, then already a renowned maker of wind instruments (particularly the clarinet) bought the remainders from the Adolphe Sax factory, founded by the inventor of the saxophone around 1840 and later taken over by his son. After several less-than-successful attempts at putting their own saxophones on the market, Selmer now had in its possession exemplars carrying the stamp of the master himself. Literally: Sax's numbering is stamped into the body of the instruments. Selmer appended its own numbering system, as well as its own keys and touchpieces, and introduced an exceptional instrument named after its inventor.

And then my former teacher Arno Bornkamp generously offered me the unique opportunity to use two instruments from his museum-quality personal collection: a Conn mezzo-soprano in F, and a straight alto saxophone by Buescher. To illustrate how apt it is that Conn is represented here by two instruments: in the period prior to the Stock Market Crash of 1929, Conn had a special six-man department called the 'Experimental Laboratory' dedicated to instrumental experiments. This was the birthplace of many remarkable saxophone variants. In manufacturing the alto in F (also called a mezzo-soprano), Conn breathed new life into one of Adolphe Sax's oldest dreams: to produce parallel saxophone families in B-flat/E-flat for wind bands, and in C/F for symphonic use. Alas, the Great Depression put an end to this saxophone treasure trove, and at present there are only several hundred F-mezzo's still in existence. The story goes that these instruments were intentionally damaged in the factory to then serve as practice models for apprentice repairmen. Buescher, then Conn's main competitor, introduced its own exclusive: an almost entirely straight alto saxophone, as opposed to the customary curved 'pipe' form. Buescher's straight alto (also called 'Stritch') was a real novelty, an attempt to create and capture its own corner of the market. The sound color cannot be compared to any other instrument: it is warm, deep and woody, perfectly suited to the 'theatrical' nature of the fifth suite. Neither instrument found much favor with the public, and production first waned, then was halted entirely as a result of the economic downturn. These days the instruments are much sought after by collectors worldwide.

In addition to this collection of vintage instruments, two instruments I have played for years are likewise unique in the history of the saxophone: a Yanagisawa Elimona soprano and a Buffet-Crampon Prestige alto. Having copied Selmer models for many decades, Yanagisawa introduced, in 1985, the first soprano saxophone with a detachable and interchangeable crook. Many manufacturers – including Selmer – have since followed suit. My beloved Buffet-Crampon Prestige alto, from 1985, is the first saxophone made of the softer red copper. Although Buffet-Crampon was a pioneer in the saxophone world pre-1900, it has since then followed a rather dubious course in manufacturing saxophones. The quality of the Prestige model, however, is without question: this is the ultimate classical saxophone, and therefore exceptionally suited to the greatest challenge of this CD project, Suite No. 6, which requires a modern approach, and in its sound is rather the odd man out in the collection.

This CD, moreover, requires the listener to adapt his or her ear per suite, as each of the six saxophones has an ideal tuning that does not always correspond to the usual one.

The six suites thus form a tribute to, in my opinion, the six historically important saxophone manufacturers: the Europeans Adolphe Sax, Selmer and Buffet-Crampon, the Americans Conn and Buescher, and the Japanese Yanagisawa (and I add here that I am in no way or form sponsored by manufacturers).

But the story does not end here. I had to find proper, well-fitting mouthpieces for each instrument. Easier said than done—the sound concept I consider so essential for Bach has gone completely out of fashion. I dug up these vintage mouthpieces (large chamber, small tip aperture) in dusty old bins here and there in (ever-scarcer) saxophone shops, or bought them online. Many of them were damaged or had been reshaped into modern mouthpieces. In order to render them usable for playing, I turned to mouthpiece specialist Marten Postma. Backed by his extensive knowledge of vintage saxophones, he was able to restore the old mouthpieces, and to fabricate others based on 1920s specifications. His website www.sax.mpostma.nl offers information concerning the insights into the physics of the saxophone he gleaned from measuring a large number of old instruments. I am eternally grateful to him.

In preparing this recording, I took indispensable lessons from the Baroque cellist Roel Dieltiens. To him I am likewise greatly indebted.

translation: Jonathan Reeder

The sheet music will be available via Schott Music mid / late 2018.
More information: <http://en.schott-music.com>



Instruments (for saxophonists and other interested listeners):

Suite 1

C-melody saxophone (or tenor saxophone in C) Conn New Wonder Series I (1922), modernized Conn Eagle mouthpiece, restored to its original state by Marten Postma.

Suite 2

Tenor saxophone Selmer 'Adolphe Sax' (1932), Buescher True Tone mouthpiece (ca. 1930), renovated by Marten Postma.

Suite 3

Soprano saxophone Yanagisawa Elimona (1991), Vandoren S27 mouthpiece.

Suite 4

Alto saxophone (or mezzo-soprano) in F Conn (1928), mouthpiece custom-made by Marten Postma.

Suite 5

Straight alto saxophone Buescher True Tone (1927), Buescher mouthpiece (ca. 1920).

Suite 6

Alto saxophone Buffet-Crampon Prestige (1985), mouthpiece custom-made by Vandoren specialist Jean-Paul Gauvin, based on a Selmer C**.



Raaf Hekkema

Multiple prize-winner Raaf Hekkema has an adventurous spirit. Whether he plays Paganini's violin concerto with orchestra, explores microtones on the saxophone, unravels the inhumanly complex mathematical musical puzzles that Conlon Nancarrow wrote for the pianola – Hekkema doesn't bat an eye. Performing mainly his own arrangements, he gives approximately 100 concerts a year the world over. Hekkema has appeared as soloist with numerous orchestras and has given many international masterclasses. The solo CD 'Paganini Caprices for Saxophone' (MDG, 2006) earned him the German Echo Klassik 'Instrumentalist of the Year' title. His compositions and arrangements are published by Schott Music. In 2014 his new solo cd 'Bach Partitas for Saxophone' appeared with Challenge Classics, alongside the publication of the sheet music by Schott Music.

Hekkema is co-founder of Calefax Reed Quintet (since 1985), for whom he has arranged hundreds of works, many of which have been recorded. Calefax's repertoire spans nine centuries, Western and non-Western, from improv to contemporary classical. Additionally, the quintet has initiated projects with distinguished artists from the theatre, dance, film, animation worlds as well as those with diverse musical backgrounds. Calefax has taken lessons from, or worked with, experts in the field of early music, including Paul Van Nevel, Bartold and Sigiswald Kuijken, Jan-Willem de Vriend and Frans Brüggen. The ensemble plays at prominent concert venues worldwide, from South America to Japan, appears regularly on international radio and television, and has issued an impressive collection of CD recordings. Calefax has also

been the recipient of various prizes and distinctions. Thanks to the decades-long co-operation with the members of Calefax, all of whom studied with prominent wind players from the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Hekkema's playing has taken on a musical character unlike any other saxophonist's. From 2015 on, Raaf Hekkema is head of the classical saxophone department at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague.

www.raafhekkema.com | www.calefax.nl

On 'Bach Partitas for Saxophone':

'It's a daring enterprise, but Hekkema soon ends all doubts. In places the saxophone even wins over the violin. Unbelievable.' - Het Parool

On 'Paganini Caprices for Saxophone':

'Raaf Hekkema is insane. Thank goodness. Otherwise we would never have heard Paganini's renowned caprices on the saxophone (...) He plays the caprices in such a way that your attention never flags. Hekkema is insane, but it's brilliant insanity.' - Luister

'Recording of the month.' - MusicWeb International

'Highest ranking.' - Classics Today



This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



www.northstarconsult.nl

Executive producer: Bert van der Wolf
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Producer, Balance engineer, editing & mastering: Bert van der Wolf
Recording assistant: Martijn van der Wolf
A&R Challenge Classics: Anne de Jong
Liner notes: Raaf Hekkema
Translations: Jonathan Reeder
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