

parts of the world including that of the Middle East and Latin America. He also formed his own trio with bassist Pierre Michelot and drummer Christian Garros. Known for their jazz reworkings of Bach pieces, the trio debuted with a series of albums on Decca beginning with Play Bach No. 1 in 1959 and culminating in Play Bach Aux Champs Elysees in 1965. A major success for Loussier, the trio toured and recorded for 15 years, moving from Decca to Philips/Phonogram in the early '70s and selling over six million albums. The trio gained wider public recognition when their version of Bach's "Air on the G String," which was used in a series of award-winning Benson & Hedges television commercials. Along with leading his trio, Loussier began composing for film and television, issuing soundtracks for projects like 1967's The Killing Game, 1968's The Dark of the Sun, and 1969's You Only Love Once, among others.



An acclaimed French pianist known for his jazz interpretations of classical works, Jacques Loussier rose to prominence leading his trio in the 1960s. A gifted classical musician in his youth, Loussier gravitated toward jazz and issued a series of innovative, genre-bending albums under the Play Bach title in which he reworked the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Over the years, he applied this same approach to works by other classical composers, and even expanded his palette, exploring electronics and Latin traditions on albums like 1979's *Pulsion*, 1999's *Ravel: Bolero*, and 2011's *Schumann: Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood). He also composed for film and television, working out of his Studio Miraval in Provence. Following a stroke in 2011 he retired from the stage and passed away in 2019 at the age of 84.

Loussier was born in 1934 in Angers, France to a banker and homemaker. He first started taking piano

lessons around age ten. Soon after, he discovered the music of Bach, including pieces like "Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach" and "Prelude in G Minor." He became entranced, often improvising naturally upon the themes in the pieces. By his teens he had moved to Paris where he studied privately with noted pianist Yves Nat, delving deeper into Bach, as well as composers like Claude Debussy, Gabriel Fauré, and Camille Saint-Saëns. He enrolled at the Conservatoire National Musique and continued to expand his skills outside of class playing jazz gigs at local bars. While at school he began to compose, and further solidified his third stream approach fusing classical with jazz.

Following his graduation, he embarked on a fruitful career as an accompanist, working with a bevy of marquee singers including Charles Aznavour, Frank Alamo, Catherine Sauvage, and others. He was able to travel and soak up the musical traditions of other

PLAY BACH JAZZ

The Jacques Loussier Trio

- 1 Prelude No. 1 5:24
- 2 Fugue No. 1 5:01
- 3 Prelude No. 2 4:19
- 4 Fugue No. 2 2:46
- 5 Toccata 8:55
- 6 Prelude No. 8 4:54
- 7 Prelude No. 5 1:51
- 8 Fugue No. 5 1:49

Piano, Arranged By – Jacques Loussier
Drums – Christian Garros

Double Bass – Pierre Michelot
Released by Decca 1959



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