



J. S. BACH ORGEL-BÜCHLEIN



Disc One

- 1 Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (BWV 599) (1:48)
- 2 Gott, durch deine Güte - Gottes-Sohn ist kommen (BWV 600) (1:07)
- 3 Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottes Sohn - Herr Gott, nun sei gepreiset (BWV 601) (2:07)
- 4 Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott (BWV 602) (0:57)
- 5 Puer natus in Bethlehem (BWV 603) (1:06)
- 6 Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ (BWV 604) (1:34)
- 7 Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich (BWV 605) (1:54)
- 8 Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her (BWV 606) (0:44)
- 9 Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar (BWV 607) (1:11)
- 10 In dulci jubilo (BWV 608) (1:43)
- 11 Lobt Gott, ihr Christen, allzugleich (BWV 609) (0:53)
- 12 Jesu, meine Freude (BWV 610) (2:55)
- 13 Christum wir sollen loben schon (BWV 611) (2:15)
- 14 Wir Christenleut' (BWV 612) (1:31)
- 15 Helft mir Gotts Güte preisen (BWV 613) (1:13)
- 16 Das alte Jahr vergangen ist (BWV 614) (2:21)
- 17 In dir ist Freude (BWV 615) (2:53)
- 18 Mit Fried' und Freud' ich fahr' dahin (BWV 616) (2:25)
- 19 Herr Gott, nun schließ den Himmel auf (BWV 617) (2:34)
- 20 O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig (BWV 618) (3:51)
- 21 Christe, du Lamm Gottes (BWV 619) (1:37)
- 22 Christus, der uns selig macht (BWV 620) (2:33)
- 23 Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund (BWV 621) (1:29)
- 24 O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß (BWV 622) (4:33)
- 25 Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ, daß du für uns gestorben bist (BWV 623) (1:26)
- 26 Hilf, Gott, daß mir's gelinge (BWV 624) (1:38)
- 27 Christ lag in Todesbanden (BWV 625) (1:26)
- 28 Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, der den Tod überwand (BWV 626) (1:04)

Disc Two

- 1 Christ ist erstanden (BWV 627-Vers 1) (1:30)
- 2 Christ ist erstanden (BWV 627-Vers 2) (1:28)
- 3 Christ ist erstanden (BWV 627-Vers 3) (1:55)
- 4 Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ (BWV 628) (0:50)
- 5 Erschienen ist der herrliche Tag (BWV 629) (1:25)
- 6 Heut' triumphieret Gottes Sohn (BWV 630) (1:42)
- 7 Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist (BWV 631) (0:59)
- 8 Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend' (BWV 632) (1:18)
- 9 Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier (BWV 633) (2:01)
- 10 Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot (BWV 635) (1:33)
- 11 Vater unser im Himmelreich (BWV 636) (1:42)
- 12 Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt (BWV 637) (2:35)
- 13 Es ist das Heil uns kommen her (BWV 638) (1:15)
- 14 Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ (BWV 639) (2:21)
- 15 In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr (BWV 640) (1:17)
- 16 Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein (BWV 641) (1:57)
- 17 Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten (BWV 642) (2:32)
- 18 Alle Menschen müssen sterben (BWV 643) (1:47)
- 19 Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig (BWV 644) (1:03)
- 20 Canonic Variations on 'Von Himmel hoch, da komm ich her' (BWV 769a) 1 - Canone all'ottava (1:27)
- 21 2 - Alio Modo in Canone alla Quinta (1:22)
- 22 3 - L'altra Sorte del Canone all'rovercio (2:23)
- 23 4 - Canone alla settima, cantabile (2:54)
- 24 5 - Canon per augmentationem (2:59)
- 25 Meine Seele erhabt den Herren (Magnificat) (BWV 733) (4:20)

Helmut Walcha, Schnitger Organ, Capell, Germany

Recorded June 1990 and September 1992, producer Dr E Thienhaus
Transfers from Archiv LPs APM 14021, 14022 and 14030
XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, May 2010
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Helmut Walcha

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HELMUT WALCHA

AT THE SCHNITGER ORGAN IN CAPPEL



BACH - ORGEL-BÜCHLEIN

CHORAL PRELUDES NOS 1 - 45, BWV 599-644

CANONIC VARIATIONS BWV 769A - MEINE SEELE ERHABT DEN HERREN (MAGNIFICAT) BWV 733

Helmut Walcha's Bach recordings are rightly hailed as some of the greatest of the twentieth century. He recorded more or less the complete organ music twice for DG – the first time around (1947-52) in mono, and then again a few short years later (1956-71), remaking the series in stereo. As a result the mono recordings soon slipped into a kind of semi-obscurity, with later reissues concentrating on the stereo equivalents.

There is some kind of sense in this for the listener – by comparison to the potentially room-filling and awe-inspiring sound of a large church organ and its attendant acoustics which envelop you when listening to stereo recordings, it seems to me that more than usual is somehow lost in a mono organ recording; the instrument seems considerably diminished, the impact distant, one-dimensional and uninspiring.

This was the sound I heard coming from my speakers when I started transferring the first of five LP sides which together made up the source material for this release (the sixth side featured older recordings of a different organ), and I was deeply ambivalent with regard to the possibilities offered by the recordings. It was more through a sense of curiosity than any real hope that I began experimenting with the restoration and remastering of such unlikely work – and a feeling that Pristine really had managed to neglect the organ repertoire over the last five or so years.

The first sign that all was considerably better than I at first thought came with XR re-equalisation – by now the minor irritants of vinyl surface noise had already been dealt with and I saw immediately from the frequency response curve that much musical information had probably been somewhat buried by poor recording equipment. In particular the magnificent lower registers of the organ were often muted to the extent that they were barely audible; restoring these to their more normal levels had literally ground-shaking consequences! Further up the frequency range and there again was more to be heard than the records ever suggested – with XR re-equalisation what was beginning to emerge suggested something of the full grandeur of the instrument itself.

I still had a problem, however. One of the great aspects of listening to a church or cathedral organ is the effect the building's acoustics have on the sound experience, as one is enveloped in sound which appears to arrive from all directions and none at the same time. This seemed more than Pristine's Ambient Stereo processing normally delivers, so I turned instead to the option of using advanced convolution reverberation. This takes the acoustic 'sound' of a real location and maps it digitally, allowing the reverberation from that space to be used in an exceptionally realistic manner for other recordings.

Although I did not have an acoustic mapping of the church used for this recording, what I did have in my collection was a remarkably similar church. The village church of Cappel, in which stands the beautiful Schnitger Organ heard here, is rather small and unassuming – its shorter reverberant decay time blurs the music less and allows one to hear much more fine finger-work than might be apparent in a larger church or cathedral. By mixing in a small amount of convolution reverb derived from a very similarly sized and constructed church I was able to take this recording a final step closer to reality and realise the full sense of presence and place captured in the grooves of those 60 year-old LPs.

In fact, so convinced am I that this recording really needs this additional 'help' that I've taken the unprecedented step of offering it only as an Ambient Stereo recording – in all formats. Without it the recordings seemed (to me) somewhat ineffectual and dusty relics, superseded by their later re-recordings. With it they're truly alive and astonishingly vivid and contemporary – given full rein and a good bass response from your loudspeakers the grander works are truly awe-inspiring to hear, while the more contemplative pieces completely hold the attention. In short, I'm delighted and just a little overwhelmed by what has been possible here – as I hope you will be too.

NOTES BY ANDREW ROSE - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM