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GLENN GOULD

plays Bach's Goldberg Variations

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With two piano versions and two harpsichord versions, competition is now equal, at least numerically. As A.R. left the matter, in his review of the Leonhardt performance, the better of the two harpsichord versions was Landowska's. Of the two pianists, there is no doubt whatever in my mind that Gould is superior in every way. Some of his tempi may be fast, but his is a speed connected with urgency more than with show or brilliance. He carries a phrase through a gigantic upward or downward sweep, effortless, controlled, and clear as crystal. Those listeners who, unlike Count Kayserling, fall asleep rather than keep awake through this forty-five minute ritual, will have no difficulty in keeping their eyes and ears open when they play this new Philips recording.

Gould has some of the clearest keyboard counterpoint I have heard for a long time and (unlike Demus) is sparing in his use of the pedal. Compare, for instance, the two versions of Variation 11, or of 14. In both cases Gould is faster, but the odd thing is that he is also clearer. Demus produces a thick, rather muddy sound, makes too much of descending bass figures, and plods rather than plays. Sometimes I found it hard to believe that two corresponding variations were really the same music!

The Philips disc is helped by really splendid recording, with the piano tone full and sonorous, yet capable of the fine expressiveness required for Variations 21 and 25. This is a performance that I shall treasure, for it has the kind of architecture in tone which is often longed for but rarely found.

D.S., *The Gramophone*, January 1958, *review of first UK issue*

Producer's Note

Glenn Gould's legendary 1955 recording of the *Goldberg Variations* needs no introduction. From the very first it was recognised as a classic - not just in the review reproduced here, but two years earlier in Harold Schonberg's "*Letter from America*", in which he wrote a single line: "An interesting Columbia debut is that of Glenn Gould, a young Canadian pianist who played Bach's *Goldberg Variations* with some original ideas that never sound eccentric." On more than one occasion I've been asked whether it might be possible to excise Gould's extraneous noises, to which the answer is, in some cases, yes, in others, not *yet*... In this new XR remastering this was not the aim, though some have gone. Rather, my intention was to improve the sound of the piano. My hope was to find significant tonal improvements - an A-B comparison with the best existing transfers suggests this has been achieved, with the piano now appearing as a full, three-dimensional instrument where before it was rather flat and dull. I resisted the temptation to pad out this release with extra material. This is the Gould *Goldberg*, and it's never sounded better.

Andrew Rose

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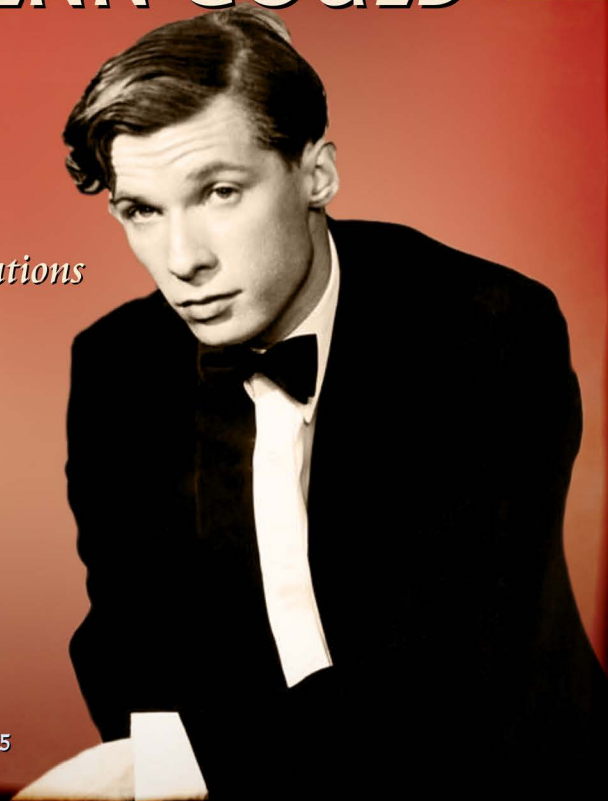
GLENN GOULD

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J.S. Bach

Goldberg Variations

BWV 988



STUDIO RECORDING, 1955

J. S. BACH *Goldberg Variations*

- 1 Aria (1:54)
- 2 Variatio 1. a 1 Clav (0:45)
- 3 Variatio 2. a 1 Clav (0:38)
- 4 Variatio 3. Canone all'Unisono. a 1 Clav (0:55)
- 5 Variatio 4. a 1 Clav (0:29)
- 6 Variatio 5. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav (0:37)
- 7 Variatio 6. Canone alla Seconda. a 1 Clav (0:34)
- 8 Variatio 7. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav. al tempo di Giga (1:08)
- 9 Variatio 8. a 2 Clav (0:46)
- 10 Variatio 9. Canone alla Terza. a 1 Clav (1:21)
- 11 Variatio 10. Fughetta. a 1 Clav (0:55)
- 12 Variatio 11. a 2 Clav (0:56)
- 13 Variatio 12 a 1 Clav. Canone alla Quarta in moto contrario (1:02)
- 14 Variatio 13. a 2 Clav (1:09)
- 15 Variatio 14. a 2 Clav (0:59)
- 16 Variatio 15. Canone alla Quinta. a 1 Clav.: Andante (2:17)
- 17 Variatio 16. Ouverture. a 1 Clav (1:18)
- 18 Variatio 17. a 2 Clav (0:54)
- 19 Variatio 18. Canone alla Sesta. a 1 Clav (0:46)
- 20 Variatio 19. a 1 Clav (0:43)
- 21 Variatio 20. a 2 Clav (0:48)
- 22 Variatio 21. Canone alla Settima (1:43)
- 23 Variatio 22. a 1 Clav. alla breve (0:42)
- 24 Variatio 23. a 2 Clav (0:55)
- 25 Variatio 24. Canone all'Ottava. a 1 Clav (0:57)
- 26 Variatio 25. a 2 Clav. adagio (6:29)
- 27 Variatio 26. a 2 Clav (0:53)
- 28 Variatio 27. Canone alla Nona. a 2 Clav (0:50)
- 29 Variatio 28. a 2 Clav (1:11)
- 30 Variatio 29. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav (1:00)
- 31 Variatio 30. a 1 Clav. Quodlibet (0:48)
- 32 Aria da Capo (2:11)

Glenn Gould *piano*

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Glenn Gould**

BACH Goldberg Variations
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