



Glenn Gould



BACH Goldberg Variations • Partitas 5 & 6

Not surprisingly, this 1954 performance is closer in spirit to the youthful high jinks of his exuberant 1955 recording than to the more studied recording from 1981— and although there are numerous differences in detail (thoughtfully discussed in William Aide's excellent notes), readers familiar with his legendary debut for Columbia will not find a substantially different interpretive outlook informing this disc. The sound, too, from Gould's own aircheck, is beset by harsh tone, bursts of crackle, and occasional instabilities of pitch; it's listenable, but hardly up to the norm for the period. So, in a sense, this remains a supplement—not only to the other Gould recordings, but to Lifschitz's as well—rather than a pillar of anyone's collection.

Still, the playing is infectious. To take just one brief stretch: who could resist the whimsical imperiousness of the Overture in Variation 16, or the dancelike vitality of Variation 18, or the tipsy conversation among the voices in Variation 19? And Gould's legacy is sufficiently small that virtually anything he recorded is worth seizing upon. In sum, you may not need this recording, but if you buy it, you won't regret your purchase.

Peter J. Rabinowitz, Fanfare Magazine, 1995, on the 1954 *Goldberg Variations*

Glenn Gould, with all his perceptive mind and exhilarating touch, is doomed to disaster, and won't earn my entrance fee until I know that he's given up baying the moon with melodies from Bach. In the D minor concerto the strings can cover him; but the two partitas are ruined by this melancholy obsessional *vil canto*. Since singing is so good a thing, to misquote Byrd, I wish Glenn Gould would learn not to sing.

WSM, The Gramophone, March 1959, on the *Partitas 5 & 6*

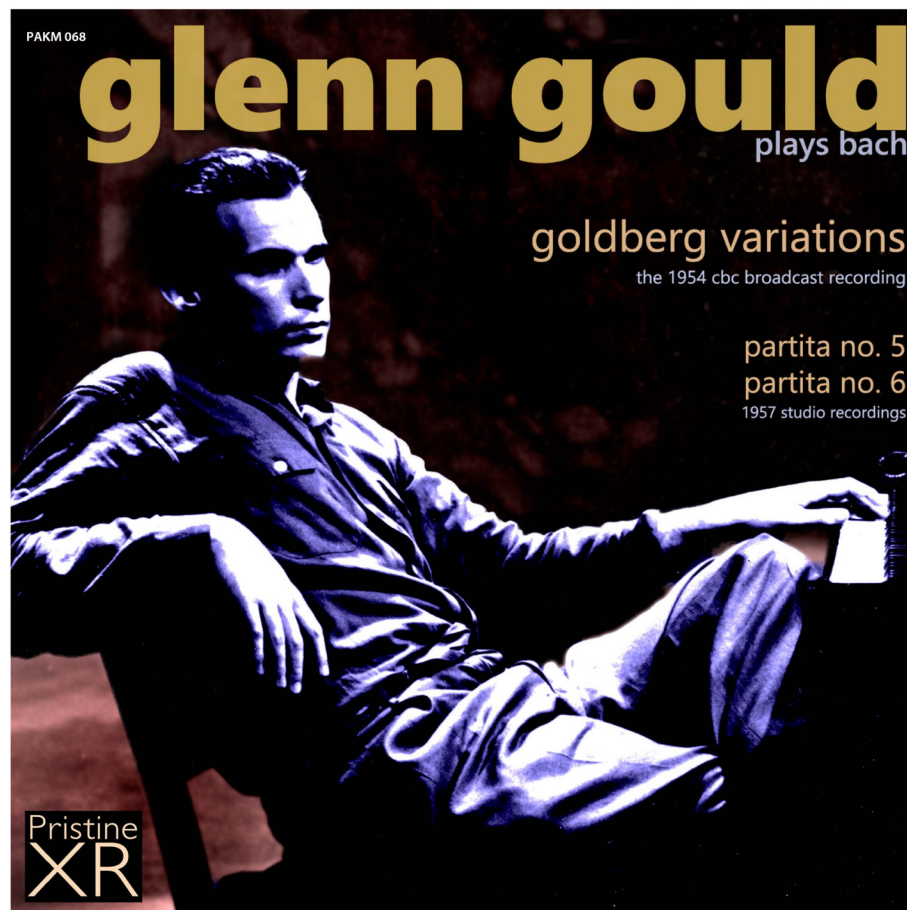
Producer's Note

This release offers two sides to the young Glenn Gould: his very earliest known recording the *Goldberg Variations* (and one in which his characteristic humming or singing is absent), followed by a studio recording from three years later of two Bach Partitas (by which time his fame was rapidly spreading, and that humming most certainly can be heard!)

The *Variations* derive from a CBC live radio broadcast performance of which Gould had a private recording made onto 33rpm acetate discs - no other copy is known. It first surfaced on a Sony CD in 1995 and has received a number of releases since then on various labels, including several on Sony. Each has suffered from a number of chronic defects, the most notable of which are pitch instability, piano tone and disc surface noise, swish, scuffs and so forth. Various engineers have had varied success in tackling some of these faults; this restoration aims to resolve as many as are now technically possible. For the first time the piano is pitched accurately and with much greater stability; tone is much improved; a plethora of intrusive surface noises have been either eradicated or diminished; general background noise from the disc is greatly reduced. There remains some unfortunate but mild distortion that is inherent in the recording, but overall this is an enormous step forward from previous issues, and what was perhaps little more than a curiosity can now be fully appreciated on its own terms as perhaps never before.

The 1957 *Partitas 5 and 6* were of course much better recorded, taped under proper recording studio conditions. Nevertheless some pitch issues between takes have been resolved here for the first time, and the piano tone has also benefited from XR remastering. Put together these two recordings paint a vivid picture of the young pianist, both live and in the studio.

Andrew Rose



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BACH GOLDBERG VARIATIONS (1954 RECORDING) - PARTITAS 5 AND 6
GLENN GOULD

BACH Goldberg Variations, BWV 988

- 1 Aria (2:44)
- 2 Variatio 1, a 1 Clav (0:56)
- 3 Variatio 2, a 1 Clav (0:45)
- 4 Variatio 3, Canone all'Unisono, a 1 Clav (1:19)
- 5 Variatio 4, a 1 Clav (0:36)
- 6 Variatio 5, a 1 ò vero 2 Clav (0:41)
- 7 Variatio 6, Canone alla Seconda, a 1 Clav (0:46)
- 8 Variatio 7, a 1 ò vero 2 Clav, al tempo di Giga (1:18)
- 9 Variatio 8, a 2 Clav (0:49)
- 10 Variatio 9, Canone alla Terza, a 1 Clav (0:54)
- 11 Variatio 10, Fughetta, a 1 Clav (0:52)
- 12 Variatio 11, a 2 Clav (0:52)
- 13 Variatio 12 a 1 Clav, Canone alla Quarta in moto contrario (1:21)
- 14 Variatio 13, a 2 Clav (2:59)
- 15 Variatio 14, a 2 Clav (1:03)
- 16 Variatio 15, Canone alla Quinta, a 1 Clav.: Andante (2:34)
- 17 Variatio 16, Ouverture, a 1 Clav (1:38)
- 18 Variatio 17, a 2 Clav (0:53)
- 19 Variatio 18, Canone alla Sesta, a 1 Clav (0:38)
- 20 Variatio 19, a 1 Clav (0:39)
- 21 Variatio 20, a 2 Clav (0:53)
- 22 Variatio 21, Canone alla Settima (1:14)
- 23 Variatio 22, a 1 Clav, alla breve (0:41)
- 24 Variatio 23, a 2 Clav (0:58)
- 25 Variatio 24, Canone all'Ottava, a 1 Clav (1:11)
- 26 Variatio 25, a 2 Clav, adagio (4:24)
- 27 Variatio 26, a 2 Clav (0:55)
- 28 Variatio 27, Canone alla Nona, a 2 Clav (0:47)
- 29 Variatio 28, a 2 Clav (0:59)
- 30 Variatio 29, a 1 ò vero 2 Clav (0:55)
- 31 Variatio 30, a 1 Clav, Quodlibet (1:09)
- 32 Aria da Capo (4:16)

Broadcast live, 21 June 1954, CBC Canada
Acetate discs from the Gould archive

BACH Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 929

1. Preambulam (1:48)
2. Allemande (1:52)
3. Corrente (0:42)
4. Sarabande (2:04)
5. Tempo di Minuetto (1:06)
6. Passepied (0:48)
7. Gigue (1:40)

BACH Partita No. 6 in E minor, BWV 930

1. Toccata (9:52)
2. Allemande (2:06)
3. Corrente (2:20)
4. Air (0:44)
5. Sarabande (3:41)
6. Tempo di Gavotta (0:53)
7. Gigue (3:29)

Recorded 29 & 31 July, 1 August 1957
Columbia 30th St. Studio, New York City
Issued in the US as Columbia Masterworks ML5186
Issued in the UK as Philips ABL3234

Glenn Gould *piano*

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Glenn Gould

Total duration: 75:44

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