



Recorded at the Church of St. Maurice, Olomouc,
on 28 and 29 June, 1993

Recording director Jaroslav Rybář

Recording engineer Martin Kusák

Produced by Eva Jindrová

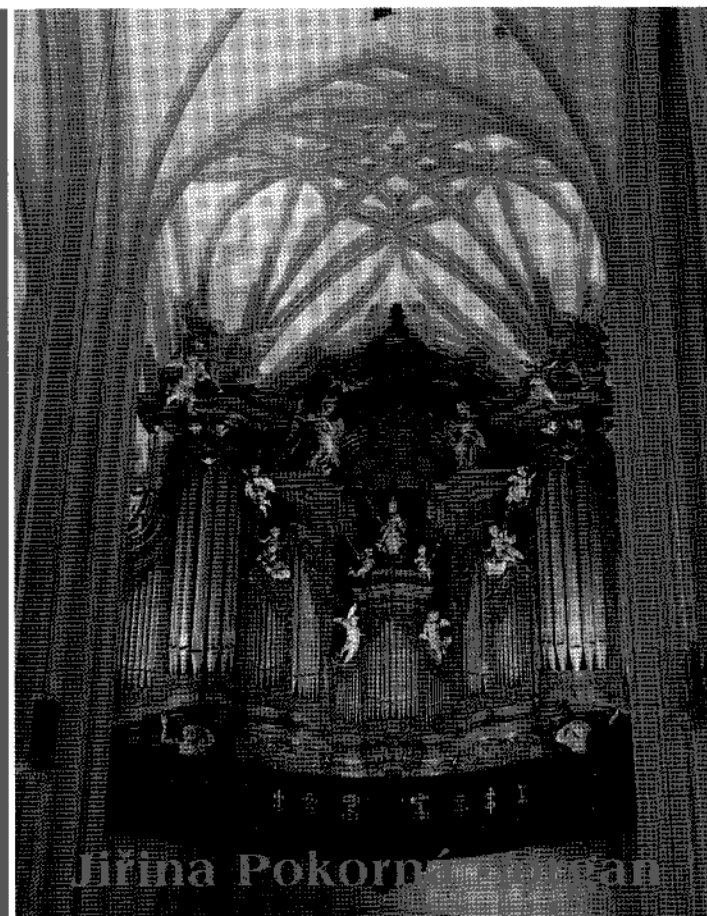
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J. S. BACH



Jiřina Pokorná

J. S. BACH Jiřina Pokorná organ

Jiřina Pokorná ranks alongside leading contemporary Czech organists. A native of Prague, she developed her musical talent from early childhood. She obtained formal education in the organ class of the Prague Conservatory, under Professor Kampelsheimer, and subsequently, under Professor Milan Šlechta at Prague's Academy of Music. She attracted the attention of the musical public while still a student, and embarked on a full-time career as a concert artist in the 1960s. Since then she has successfully represented the Czech organ school on concert tours covering Germany, Austria, Belgium and Italy. Apart from that, she appeared in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and made a highly successful tour of Japan in 1991. Miss Pokorná has combined her solo career with joint projects involving other prominent instrumentalists, including notably trumpet player of the Czech Philharmonic Miroslav Kejmar and

violinist Pavel Hůla, as well as working with several leading chamber ensembles. Her art has been made available to record collectors on a number of titles released by MUSICVARS, SUPRAPHON, PANTON, NIPPON COLUMBIA and PONY CANYON.

The Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV 542, is one of Bach's most beautiful compositions. Monumental and dramatic, in its essence it prefigures the best that was yet to be produced by musical Romanticism. It was written during Bach's stay at the court of Prince Leopold von Köthen, probably after the year 1720. In fact, this Fantasia is a large-scale toccata, featuring a distinctively outlined ground-plan and sharp dramatic contrasts, involving arioso and toccata passages blended in a pattern which generates an amazing suspense. Set against the romantic outbursts of the Fantasia, the Fugue's classical calm gives a soothing answer to the tormented questions posed by the preceding part. The Fugue is gentle and balanced, a mood determined by both the theme, the counterpoint and the vigorous motif in the interposed movements. Both pieces are combined here in a perfectly harmonious whole.

The Partitas, BWV 766, 767, 768 and 770, written at Lüneburg around 1700, typify J. S. Bach's early output. The Partita, Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig, BWV 768 is the most sophisticated of them in terms of technique, which may be accounted for by the fact that Bach returned to it later on, to rewrite it. As in his other partitas, here too Bach drew inspiration from both secular and church musical traditions. What will immediately impress the listener is the

piece's grandiose structure, as well as the highly sensitive way in which it combines counterpoint and variational technique. Notwithstanding the seriousness of the hymnic text, the music is joyful in the virtuoso passages, virtually none of the twelve instrumental movements showing a truly close relation to the textual content of the chorale's strophes. The work is widely regarded as the organ literature's most sophisticated partita.

The Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 537, was composed at the time of Bach's stay at the ducal court at Weimar. There, he was in close contact with Italian music whose fresh invention and songfulness came to inspire even his organ works. Here, the Fantasia develops two distinct themes. The first, woeful, heaves like a sigh over the pedal C. The second idea is introduced in a way that seemingly prefigures the thematic bipolarity of the later classical sonata. The ensuing Fugue links up with the Fantasia, content-wise, eventually to wind on a reprise of the whole work's opening theme. Thereby, it points to the future evolution towards three-part sonata form. The piece features a richly and elaborately varied structure as well as an astonishing wealth of harmonic bindings.

The Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582, exemplifies an ideal blend of counterpoint and variational technique. Here, Bach produced twenty variations with a final double fugue, on a bass theme of eight bars. The variations shed light, as it were, on the musical content of the basso ostinato theme which does not change. The first two variations are harmonic, the rest are contrapuntal, including several in which the bass

theme is transposed into higher-pitched voices. In all of them the harmonic base constitutes a starting point and simultaneously provides room for a motion which does not avoid sharp false relations. The work displays a gradational line and is duly crowned by a fugue whose theme is made up of a passacaglia theme and is accompanied by two continual counterpoints.

The grand organ of the Church of St. Maurice at Olomouc, built by Michael Enger between 1740 and 1745, dubbed the "Queen of Moravia's organs", ranks among the largest in Europe. The biggest of its 10,400 pipes is 11.75 metres tall. In its original version, the instrument had three manual keyboards and 44 registers. The organ underwent renovation between 1959 and 1969, during which it was enlarged, though the old part, including the original console, was preserved. The reconstructed and expanded instrument is currently coupled with a five-manual console comprising all of the original registers plus newly built ones, totalling 135.

J. S. BACH

Jiřina Pokorná - organ



COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

VA 0030 - 2131
STEREO
DDD

1	FANTASIA AND FUGUE IN G MINOR, BWV 542	15:00
2	FANTASIA	7:27
	FUGUE	7:32
3	PARTITA "SEI GEGRÜSSET, JESU GÜTIG, BWV 768	21:50
4	FANTASIA AND FUGUE IN C MINOR, BWV 537	10:21
5	FANTASIA	5:32
	FUGUE	4:49
6	PASSACAGLIA IN C MINOR, BWV 582	15:22

Total time 62:56

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Recording engineer Martin Kušák
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