

B A C H



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH 1685–1750

Goldberg Variations, BWV 988

(Aria with Diverse Variations, *Clavier-Übung [Part IV]*)

1	Aria		2.36	20	Var. XIX:	<i>on 1 manual</i>	0.39
2	Var. I:	<i>on 1 manual</i>	1.46	21	Var. XX:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	1.00
3	Var. II:	<i>on 1 manual</i>	1.10	22	Var. XXI:	Canon at the seventh	2.41
4	Var. III:	Canon at the unison, <i>on 1 manual</i>	1.27	23	Var. XXII:	Alla breve, <i>on 1 manual</i>	1.44
5	Var. IV:	<i>on 1 manual</i>	1.01	24	Var. XXIII:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	1.59
6	Var. V:	<i>on 1 or 2 manuals</i>	0.39	25	Var. XXIV:	Canon at the octave, <i>on 1 manual</i>	1.32
7	Var. VI:	Canon at the second, <i>on 1 manual</i>	0.54	26	Var. XXV:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	5.38
8	Var. VII:	Al tempo di giga, <i>on 1 or 2 manuals</i>	2.10	27	Var. XXVI:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	1.46
9	Var. VIII:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	0.50	28	Var. XXVII:	Canon at the ninth	0.52
10	Var. IX:	Canon at the third, <i>on 1 manual</i>	1.22	29	Var. XXVIII:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	1.58
11	Var. X:	Fughetta, <i>on 1 manual</i>	1.44	30	Var. XXIX:	<i>on 1 or 2 manuals</i>	2.07
12	Var. XI:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	0.53	31	Var. XXX:	Quodlibet, <i>on 1 manual</i>	1.54
13	Var. XII:	Canon at the fourth	1.33	32	Aria		3.15
14	Var. XIII:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	4.28				60.26
15	Var. XIV:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	1.28				
16	Var. XV:	Canon at the fifth, <i>on 1 manual</i>	3.58		Ji	piano	
17	Var. XVI:	Ouverture, <i>on 1 manual</i>	2.47				
18	Var. XVII:	<i>on 2 manuals</i>	0.56				
19	Var. XVIII:	Canon at the sixth, <i>on 1 manual</i>	1.29				

*Even though we are centuries apart, Bach has left us this music
to create a synergy that is greater than all of us combined.*

*For me, as a twenty-something living in this day and age,
the biggest lesson I learned decoding the things beyond the notes is empathy.
There will always be an infinite number of social, political and interpersonal issues
I can't fully grasp at surface level.*

*But playing this music has taught me the ability to open up my mind;
to remind myself constantly to put myself in others' shoes;
even those of someone who walked the earth more than 300 years ago,
and who left us with music that continues to connect souls.*

While this CD of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* marks Ji's international recording debut, he's already performed for an audience of millions. In 2016, Ji starred in an Android® commercial that premiered during the Grammy® Awards, in which he played the rapid-fire third movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* on duelling pianos, one of which had each key tuned to the same note. (The "monotune" performance was so compelling that *People Magazine* declared Ji the "real star of the Grammys".)

A play on Android's slogan "Be together, not the same" — the company's not-so-subtle dig at a rival — the commercial couldn't have been better suited to the 26-year-old millennial, who has steadfastly been doing things his way in an industry known for being resistant to change.

Since winning the prestigious Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 2012, Ji has been bringing his unique take on classical music to a wider public than ever before. "I've come back to the meaning of the music, and only the music," he says. "I really do believe in the power that it has to get through to somebody."

For Ji, Bach's *Goldberg Variations* is a perfect case in point. Considered one of the most important examples of variation form in the classical canon, the work requires great technical proficiency while simultaneously allowing for a high degree of musical interpretation, given the work's limited markings. "I found my sound learning this piece," says Ji, "because it's so stripped naked."

Ji's rendition features nods to contemporary music, from pop rhythmic motifs to jazz improvisation, and even some reverb. "I thought about what it might be like if Bach were alive today," he says. "I feel like a lot of the time, we neglect the fact that these composers were like us, that they had human desires, human ambitions, human problems — all the emotions they dealt with on a day-to-day basis. I want that to come out in the music."

"I've found a formula that works for me, and that makes me feel like I've stuck to my integrity as a musician."

Stacey Kors





I am in the business of making sure this music we call classical stays alive. The only way anything can stay alive over a long span of time is if it embraces the ever-changing trends in society. How do I make sure that I make music with integrity, but make it enjoyable and seemingly not complex to the vast majority of people in the world? I stay present. I listen to the sounds of today. But most importantly, I trust the music and its ability to speak to one generation after another. I think about why music exists (while some pieces are manifested out of one's ego, these will lose their impact very quickly). And after thinking about it, the answer was really simple: it's **pure and **honest**. Two things we need in life, but are somehow tremendously difficult to obtain, so we listen to music.**

Goldberg Variations /'Gould, bəg ,Ve(ə) rē' āSHənz/ *n* the beginning and the end



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ALL HANDS

Open Daily Except Monday

