

STEREO  
360 SOUND

Stereo—MS 6622

STEREO  
MS 6622STEREO  
360 SOUND

Produced by Paul Myers

Other times less pointedly than ours, have left us a residue of problems concerning their musical composition. These problems, though they have not faded completely, composed not for future generations, but for a specific occasion, or to fill a definite and continuing function—like the famous "Two and Three Part Inventions" which he was composing an analysis masterpiece each time he picked up his pen. It is a certainty, though, that he knew precisely why he was composing that piece at that time, and not the other.

A composer's manuscript, then, was generally not looked upon as a precious possession—but all by the composer himself. Once it was published, the music was immediately no future function. If it was not published, it had, at any rate, been given the performance for which it had been written in the first place. Bach's manuscripts, however, were not of material for reserving to fill new commissions at short notice. He might give a manuscript to a friend as a kind of memento, but he would not do so unless he wanted to use it and send it to him in the hope of future favors, or outright cash. Or he might just as easily use it for his own benefit, or for that of his wife, or for his children, or for his students, or for his church, or for his church in the country. One has to take into account the number of cantatas that passed to an amateur extinction as sheets for a small child.

If earlier composers showed but little respect for their manuscripts, musicologists today voice some of the difference. Regardless of the existence of published editions, a composer's manuscript is the most important single piece of information we can possess regarding a composition—despite the fact that its discovery is likely to be the result of a chance finding. It is the core of Bach's Inventions and Sinfonias (frequently called the Two- and Three-Part Inventions), so, to speak, "voice blouses" of the piano, each of which casts a somewhat different light upon it.

The first of these to be found in the Clavierbüchlein (Little Clavier Book) for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, a collection of pieces gradually assembled for the musical education of Bach's oldest son, aged at that time about 12, is the most important single piece of information we can possess regarding a composition—despite the fact that its discovery is likely to be the result of a chance finding. It is the core of Bach's Inventions and Sinfonias (frequently called the Two- and Three-Part Inventions), so, to speak, "voice blouses" of the piano, each of which casts a somewhat different light upon it.

The second of these to be found in the Clavierbüchlein (Little Clavier Book) for Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, a collection of pieces gradually assembled for the musical education of Bach's oldest son, aged at that time about 12, is the most important single piece of information we can possess regarding a composition—despite the fact that its discovery is likely to be the result of a chance finding. It is the core of Bach's Inventions and Sinfonias (frequently called the Two- and Three-Part Inventions), so, to speak, "voice blouses" of the piano, each of which casts a somewhat different light upon it.

The second autograph is dated 1723, and for a variety of reasons it was not copied into the Clavierbüchlein for Bach's first son, but into the Clavierbüchlein for Bach's second son, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, who was 10 years younger than his brother. The details of the music, the two and three parts are again grouped separately and in parallel, this time, however, entirely in ascending order of key. Bach prefaced the music with the following title:

Fortright instructions, unswilful lasses of the clarion, especially these drosses of leaving, are shown in a clear way

## A WORD ABOUT THE PIANO

The instrument represented on this disc is a pre-World War II Steinway which answers to CD 318, and to which I feel a greater devotion than to any other instrument I have ever owned. For the past few years it has been reserved exclusively for our sessions at Columbia Records—not as a sacrifice on the part of the makers as you might imagine, since no one else has ever exposed the slight imperfections in it. The basses sound a trifle dead, and one of the most perfect two-part inventions is followed immediately with the corresponding three-part sinfonia, thus furnishing a series of transitions which make the problems and dangers of the Well-Tempered Clavier, according to digital piano, cannot be doubted that the composer conceived each pair at the same time.

There is, as he goes on to say, a correspondence of these pairs of inventions and sinfonias which can be found in many others. Certainly, such conjunctions of inventions and sinfonias is strikingly effective in performance. Hence the pedigree of the Well-Tempered Clavier.

But the need for the two parts to be in balance, and the necessity to match their difficulties to the player's abilities, the Inventions and Sinfonias stand on their own feet as piano pieces.

What is an invention? Bach, as we have seen, was not quite sure himself. Prior to 1723, the term was used by the Italian composer, Girolamo Frescobaldi, for his organ fugues, and by Antonio Ronconi as a synonym for "suite."

(Four of the latter's inventions were mistakenly reprinted in the Clavierbüchlein for C.P.E. Bach, and the title remains a mystery. The term "inventions," though far more common musical usage, is equally non-specific here. Originally, the term referred to a kind of riddle, and it was not a dance. By the end of the 17th century it had developed a rather specific form, however, is not the form of the Well-Tempered Clavier.)

Such confusions of terminology are not past understanding when we examine the music itself, for, in fact, there had been nothing to indicate that Bach had any specific meaning by his term and certain writings, but they are neither fugues nor canons.

Adopting the broad definition that the Inventions are studies in two-part invention, we can trace an interesting lineage, beginning probably with the author of the Inventions, a piece for two instruments or voices, but there is a harmonic direction in these pieces. Bach, which is noted absent in the Clavierbüchlein, is to be found in the title of the Two-Part Inventions, even more so than the Sinfonias, that such a complex harmonic movement is established and maintained with the two voices. The two voices of the Inventions and other early forms were musically rather short of breath, and needed an infusion of new thematic material at frequent intervals.

A critic (Hermann Kretzschmar), is commenting on the predominance of German music, put his finger on the Two- and Three-Part Inventions, and the Sinfonias and Inventions which established that predominance. These principles might be termed as the very a small melodic motif is stated and developed, and the harmonic movement, and the melodic and harmonic implications are completely fulfilled and exhausted in the course of the composition, the way this single thin slice of the Well-Tempered Clavier is the sole generator of a work. So much is the secret, the source, and the "liveness" of the Inventions. With the benefit of historical hindsight, we know what it led to.

JAMES COOPERATION

Some other recordings by Glenn Gould you will enjoy:  
Bach: The Goldberg Variations—ML 5300  
Bach: The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book 1)—ML 2817/MS 6200P  
The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book 1)—ML 5800/MG 4400P  
The Six Partitas—ML 283/MS 623

Glenn Gould

SIDE 1 BACH: INVENTIONS AND SINFONIAS		2:12
No. 1 in C Major		2:38
No. 2 in C Major		2:38
No. 3 in B-flat Major		2:46
No. 4 in B-flat Major		2:46
No. 5 in D Major		2:46
No. 6 in D Major		2:46
No. 7 in F Major		2:52
No. 8 in F Major		2:52

28/22

SIDE 2 BACH: INVENTIONS AND SINFONIAS		2:12
No. 9 in C Major		2:38
No. 10 in C Major		2:38
No. 11 in A Major		2:46
No. 12 in A Major		2:46
No. 13 in D Major		2:46
No. 14 in D Major		2:46
No. 15 in F Major		2:52
No. 16 in F Major		2:52

28/11

© COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS • MARCAZ INC. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

G010003287528



Bach:  
The  
Two and  
Three  
Part  
Inventions  
(Inventions & Sinfonias)  
Glenn  
Gould

# Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750

## 2-Part Inventions and 3-Part Sinfonias

BWV 772-801

Zweistimmige Inventionen und dreistimmige Sinfonien  
Inventions à deux parties et Sinfonias à trois parties

### **1 Inventio 1 in C major**

BWV 772

1:32

### **2 Sinfonia 1 in C major**

BWV 787

0:46

C-Dur · en *ut* majeur

### **3 Inventio 2 in C minor**

BWV 773

2:54

### **4 Sinfonia 2 in C minor**

BWV 788

3:03

c-Moll · en *ut* mineur

### **5 Inventio 5 in E-flat major**

BWV 776

1:21

### **6 Sinfonia 5 in E-flat major**

BWV 791

3:08

Es-Dur · en *mi* bémol majeur

### **7 Inventio 14 in B-flat major**

BWV 785

1:37

### **8 Sinfonia 14 in B-flat major**

BWV 800

1:09

B-Dur · en *si* bémol majeur

### **9 Inventio 11 in G minor**

BWV 782

0:55

### **10 Sinfonia 11 in G minor**

BWV 797

3:45

g-Moll · en *sol* mineur

### **11 Inventio 10 in G major**

BWV 781

0:40

### **12 Sinfonia 10 in G major**

BWV 796

0:58

G-Dur · en *sol* majeur

### **13 Inventio 15 in B minor**

BWV 786

0:52

### **14 Sinfonia 15 in B minor**

BWV 801

1:04

h-Moll · en *si* mineur

### **15 Inventio 7 in E minor**

BWV 778

0:54

### **16 Sinfonia 7 in E minor**

BWV 793

1:33

e-Moll · en *mi* mineur

### **17 Inventio 6 in E major**

BWV 777

2:42

### **18 Sinfonia 6 in E major**

BWV 792

0:52

E-Dur · en *mi* majeur

### **19 Inventio 13 in A minor**

BWV 784

0:45

[20] **Sinfonia 13 in A minor**  
BWV 799  
a-Moll · en *la* mineur

[21] **Inventio 12 in A major**  
BWV 783

[22] **Sinfonia 12 in A major**  
BWV 798  
A-Dur · en *la* majeur

[23] **Inventio 3 in D major**  
BWV 774

[24] **Sinfonia 3 in D major**  
BWV 789  
D-Dur · en *ré* majeur

[25] **Inventio 4 in D minor**  
BWV 775

[26] **Sinfonia 4 in D minor**  
BWV 790  
d-Moll · en *ré* mineur

[27] **Inventio 8 in F major**  
BWV 779

[28] **Sinfonia 8 in F major**  
BWV 794  
F-Dur · en *fa* majeur

[29] **Inventio 9 in F minor**  
BWV 780

2:15

0:56

1:16

1:00

1:08

0:45

3:15

1:03

0:59

2:48

[30] **Sinfonia 9 in F minor**  
BWV 795  
f-Moll · en *fa* mineur

4:17

Total Time 50:11

**Glenn Gould** piano

Original LP: MS 6622 / ML 6022 · Released August 10, 1964  
Recording: Columbia 30th Street Studio, New York City, December 6/11/19, 1963,  
January 2 and March 18/19, 1964 · Producer: Paul Myers  
Cover Photo: Don Hunstein · Liner Notes: James Goodfriend & Glenn Gould  
LP Matrix: XSM 77394 [1-16], XSM 77395 [17-30] (stereo);  
xLP 77392 [1-16], xLP 77393 [17-30] (mono)  
© 1964 & © 2015 Sony Music Entertainment. All rights reserved.

Other times, less posterity-minded than ours, have left us a multitude of problems concerning their musical compositions. “Serious” music was at one time an actively traded commodity, composed not for future generations, but for a specific occasion, or to fill a definite and continuing function – like a royal fanfare. It is a moot point whether Bach knew he was composing an undying masterpiece each time he picked up his pen. It is certainty, though, that he knew precisely why he was composing *that* piece at *that* time, and not any other.

A composer’s manuscript, then, was generally not looked upon as a priceless possession – least of all by the composer himself. If the work was published, the manuscript obviously had no future function. If it was not published, it had, at any rate, been given the performance for which it had been written – in the first place. A composer might keep a back file of material for reworking to fill new commissions at short notice. He might give a manuscript to a friend as a kind of memento. He might inscribe some high-flown dedication upon it and send it to a wealthy nobleman in the hope of future favors, or outright cash. Or he might just as easily use it for wrapping the lunch when the family planned to spend a day in the country. One hesitates to guess the number of cantatas that passed to an ignoble extinction as shrouds for smoked fish.

If earlier composers showed but little respect for their manuscripts, musicologists today more than make up the difference. Regardless of the existence of published editions, a composer’s autograph manuscript is now considered the most important single piece of information we can possess regarding a composition – despite the fact that its discovery is likely to raise as many problems as it solves. In the case of Bach’s *Inventions and Sinfonias* (frequently called the *Two- and Three-Part Inventions*) we are, so to speak, “thrice blessed,” for the composer has

left us three separate autographs of the music, each of which casts a somewhat different light upon it.

The earliest of these is to be found in the *Clavierbüchlein* (*Little Clavier Book*) für *Wilhelm Friedmann Bach*, a collection of pieces gradually assembled for the musical education of Bach’s eldest son, aged 10 at the time the book was begun. The *Clavierbüchlein* opens with an explication of the various keys and key signatures, and the correct interpretation of the signs for musical ornaments. It follows with pieces of gradually increasing difficulty, each composed (or adapted) as needed, and the character of each very probably influenced by Wilhelm Friedemann’s immediate digital problems. The *Inventions and Sinfonias* are found toward the end of the book, but under different names, each two-part piece being titled *Praeambulum*, and each three-part, *Fantasia*. The two- and three-part pieces are grouped separately, but in similar order of keys: first ascending (C major, D minor, E minor, etc.) to B minor, then descending (B-flat major, A major, G minor, etc.). Philipp Spitta, the greatest of Bach biographers, has pointed out that the D major *Sinfonia* is there only in part, and the C minor *Sinfonia* not at all, although both appear in other manuscripts.

Were this the only surviving manuscript of the *Inventions and Sinfonias*, one might logically conclude that Bach’s purpose in writing them was purely pedagogical. They explore a wealth of technical problems (though not as systematically as some études of a later generation), and they give the player practice in a number of major and minor keys. The complexities of managing three individual voices rightfully reserved until the player has mastered the handling of two. But there are few better indications of Bach’s multi-faceted compositional style and intent than the somewhat different illumination of the other manuscripts.

The second autograph is dated 1723, and for a variety of reasons is usually considered to be Bach's final word on the details of the music. The two- and three-part works are again grouped separately and in parallel, this time, however, entirely in ascending order of key. Bach prefaced the music with the following title: "Forthright instruction, wherewith lovers of the clavier, especially those desirous of learning, are shown in a clear way not only 1) to learn to play two voices clearly, but also after further progress 2) to deal correctly and well with three obbligato parts, moreover at the same time to obtain not only good ideas, but also to carry them out well, but most of all to achieve a cantabile style of playing, and thereby to acquire a strong foretaste of composition. Prepared by Joh. Seb. Bach, Capellmeister to his Serene Highness the Prince of Anhalt-Cöthen. Anno Christi 1723."

The intent is again tutorial, but Bach shows us now that he has a great deal more in mind than the simple development of finger dexterity. For these are lessons in taste as well as technique, and they are models for beginners in composition. But there is yet a third manuscript, dating also from 1723, and differing from the others in one very important respect: each two-part invention is followed immediately with the corresponding three-part sinfonia, thus forming a series of two-movement units not unlike the preludes and fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. According to Spitta, "... it cannot be doubted that the composer conceived each pair at the same time." There is, as he goes on to say, a correspondence of theme in several of the pairs, and a correspondence of mood in many others. Certainly, such conjunction of invention and sinfonia is strikingly effective in performance. Hence the pedagogical intent has been pushed far into the background. Freed of the necessity to match their difficulties to the player's abilities, the *Inventions* and *Sinfonias* stand on their own feet as pure music.

What is an invention? Bach, as we have seen, was not quite sure himself. Prior to 1723, the term had been used by the Italian composer Vitali as a title for pieces involving special tricks, and by Antonio Bonporti as a synonym for "suite." (Four of the latter's inventions were mistakenly reprinted in the *Bach Gesellschaft* collected edition.) Obviously, neither of these usages parallels Bach's, and his reasons for using the title remain a mystery. The term "*sinfonia*", though of far more common musical usage, is equally non-specific here. Originally, a sinfonia was almost any kind of an instrumental piece that was not a dance. By the end of the 17th century it had developed a rather specific form which, however, is not the form of these sinfonias by Bach.

Such confusions of terminology are not past understanding when we examine the music itself, for, in fact, there had been nothing quite like these pieces before. They contain both fugal and canonic writing, but they are neither fugues nor canons. Adopting the broad definition that the *Inventions* are studies in two-part counterpoint, one can trace for them a long lineage, beginning perhaps with the ancient form of the *bicinium*, a piece for two instruments or voices. But there is a harmonic direction in these pieces by Bach which is totally absent in the earlier works, and it is one of the miracles of the *Two-Part Inventions*, even more so than the *Sinfonias*, that such a complex harmonic movement is established and maintained with such an economy of notes. And the *bicenia*, *fantasias* and other early forms were melodically rather short of breath, and needed an infusion of new thematic material at frequent intervals.

A critic (Hermann Kretzschmar), in commenting on the predominance of German music, put his finger on the *Two- and Three-Part Inventions* as the source of the very principles which established that predominance. Those principles might

be itemized as the way a small melodic motif is stated and developed; the way its melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and contrapuntal implications are completely fulfilled and exhausted in the course of the composition; the way this single thin slice of musical material is used as the sole generator of a work. So much is the secret, the achievement, and the “invention” of the *Inventions*. With the benefit of historical hindsight, we know what it led to.

JAMES GOODFRIEND

#### *A word about the piano*

The instrument represented on this disc is a pre-World War II Steinway which answers to CD 318, and to which I feel a greater devotion than to any other piano that I have encountered. For the past few years it has been reserved exclusively for our sessions at Columbia Records – not as great a sacrifice on the part of the makers as you might imagine, since no one else has ever expressed the slightest interest in it. This has enabled me to carry out some rather radical experiments in regard to the action of this piano, in effect, to try to design an instrument for baroque repertoire which can add to the undeniable resource of the modern piano something of the clarity and tactile felicity of the harpsichord.

For those sessions in which more recent or more conventionally pianistic repertoire has been our concern, we have not made any special demand upon this instrument, but prior to each of the Bach sessions of the past few years, CD 318 has undergone major surgery. The alignment of such essential mechanical matters as the distance of the hammer from the strings, the “after-touch” mechanism, etc. has been earnestly reconsidered in accordance with my sober conviction that no

piano need feel duty-bound to always sound like a piano. Old 318, if released from its natural tendency in that direction, could probably be prevailed upon to give us a sound of such immediacy and clarity that those qualities of non-legato so essential to Bach would be gleefully realized.

In my opinion, the present disc brings us within reach of this objective. The operation performed just before the sessions which produced the *Inventions* was so successful that we plunged joyfully into the recording without allowing old 318 its usual post-operative recuperation. Consequently, our enthusiasm for the rather extraordinary sound it now possessed allowed us to minimize the one minor after-effect which it had sustained – a slight nervous tic in the middle register which in slower passages can be heard emitting a sort of hiccup – and to carry on with the sessions without stopping to remedy this minor defect. I must confess that having grown somewhat accustomed to it I now find this charming idiosyncrasy entirely worthy of the remarkable instrument which produced it. I might even rationalize the matter by comparing it with the clavichord’s propensity for an intra-tone vibrato. However, in our best of all worlds we would hope to preserve the present sound while reducing the hiccup effect so, as the television card says on those occasions when sound and video portions go their separate ways

– “STAY TUNED IN – WE’RE FIXING IT.”

GLENN GOULD