

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach

COMPLETE ORGAN MUSIC

Filippo Turri

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach 1710-1784

Complete Organ Music

Drei dreistimmigen Fugen *Three 3-part Fugues*

1. Fugue in B flat F.34	2'56
2. Fugue in F F.33	5'22
3. Fugue in C minor F.32	6'38

Acht dreistimmigen Fugen für Orgel oder Clavier F.31

Eight 3-part fugues for Organ or Clavier F.31

4. I. Fugue in C	1'37
5. II. Fugue in C minor	2'28
6. III. Fugue in D	1'05
7. IV. Fugue in D minor	2'40
8. V. Fugue in E flat	2'49
9. VI. Fugue in E minor	4'37
10. VII. Fugue in B flat	1'04
11. VIII. Fugue in F minor	7'11

Drei Fugen für die Orgel mit Pedal *Three Fugues for Organ with pedal*

12. Fugue in D	2'05
13. Fugue in C minor	4'29
14. Fugue in G minor F.37	2'17

Sieben Choralvorspiele F.38 *Seven Chorale Preludes F.38*

15. I. Nun komm der Heiden Heiland	1'46
16. II. Christe, der du bist Tag und Licht	2'15
17. III. Jesu, meine Freude	3'59
18. IV. Durch Adams Fall is ganz verderbt	3'35
19. V. Wir danken dir, Herr Jesu Christ	2'41
20. VI. Wir Christenleut han jetzund Freud	1'09
21. VII. Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit	3'03

Vier Fugen für die Orgel mit zwei Clavieren und Pedal

Four Fugues for Organ with two keyboards and pedal

22. Fugue in A minor "Alla Capella"	4'52
23. Fugue in C minor	6'59
24. Fugue in B flat	4'40
25. Fugue in F	5'08

Filippo Turri *organ*

Truhenorgel by L. Patella, 1998 (tracks 1-11)
F. Zanin organ, 2007 (tracks 12-25)

The first son of Johann Sebastian and Maria Barbara Bach, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (Weimar, 22 November 1710 – Berlin, 1 July 1784) lived a life that in many respects would fit in perfectly with the biography of a tormented artist of the romantic age. He studied under his father, showing early talent as an instrumentalist (organist, harpsichordist, violinist) and composer, as well as considerable gifts as a mathematician. Given his father's Pythagorean passions, this latter aptitude is not really as surprising at it might at first seem, yet it is certainly true that Wilhelm Friedemann was versatile and his interests widespread. At the early age of 23 he was appointed principal organist at the church of St. Sophia in Dresden, and in 1747 became *Musikdirektor* and organist at the Church of Our Lady in Halle. On account of his years in Halle, where he married Dorothea Elisabeth Georgi (1721-1791), he is often referred to as the "Halle" Bach.

Wilhelm Friedrich stayed in Halle from 1747 to 1764, a period that proved to be harrowing, to the extent that he tried on various occasions to move elsewhere. When he did leave the Hanseatic city, he never again found regular employment, which meant that he had to earn his living as a concert performer, composer and teacher. He first settled in Leipzig, then moved to Braunschweig, followed by Gottingen and lastly Berlin, where he was offered the honorary post of *Kapellmeister*, an unpaid job. He died in poverty in 1784, entirely forgotten by the musical community.

So Wilhelm Friedemann was one of the first musicians to attempt a career as an independent musician. He was thwarted in this aim, however, possibly because he was an alcoholic, with a cantankerous disposition that certainly did not endear him to the world of music. He lived in the transition period between baroque and classicism, and never really adapted to the linear simplicity of the new style. He remained attached to the "elevated" concept of music expressed by his father, and to a style interwoven with imposing counterpoint, and yet not entirely devoid of the inner turmoil characteristic of coeval *Sturm und Drang*.

With Wilhelm Friedemann, traditional forms also underwent expansion from within, giving voice to dramatic content that often seems to be in conflict with the

rigidity of the conventional structure. It is as though the expressive content of the music is about to burst out of the form that contains it.

In particular his works for the organ stand out from those of his contemporaries for a number of reasons. The first and most evident is the way they have features in common with his father's compositions, but also differ from them considerably. While on the one hand Wilhelm Friedemann continued to use the forms perfected by his father (the Fugue is an obvious case in point), on the other he made use of these forms in a manner that brings to mind the grand, tormented Fugues that Beethoven composed in the last years of his life. As such, they are like problems to be solved, like containers that are no longer sufficient to encompass the composer's intrepid discourse and abundance of feelings.

The *Three Fugues for Three Voices* with which tracks 1-11 begin are a clear example of this dichotomy. From the outset, the first *Fugue in B flat major* reveals the desire to transcend the limits imposed by tradition, yet without entirely rejecting them. Entrusted to the upper voice, the subject does not at first feature on its own, as the established rules for the Fugue would require, but with the addition of a second voice (a sort of *basso continuo*) that increases its expressive potential and accentuates the jocosity of the whole composition.

The second is the *Fugue in F major*, which is completely the opposite. Dark and tormented in mood despite the major key, it is pervaded with intense chromatism and full of bold formal and harmonic developments that contribute to a length that is highly unusual for an instrumental fugue. But then Wilhelm Friedemann was a genius, fully aware of the need to extend the confines of the form to accommodate the skilful reiteration of certain intricacies, thereby making the intrinsic complexity of the piece accessible. A further interesting feature is the way the composer wove into the musical text variations of the initials B – A – C – H, as though it were his own personal version of the wordplay notation that his father had introduced before him.

Next comes the long and elaborate *Fugue in C minor* that is also full of intense

chromatism and dramatic developments of form and harmonics. It is a restless piece that only achieves peace in the final cadenza, where the composer's torment finds temporary relief.

Although shorter than the three previous pieces, the *Eight Fugues without Pedal* are keyboard compositions that provide us with a crystalline view of Wilhelm Friedemann's compositional style. The cycle begins with the joyful *Fugue in C major*, which is followed by the pensive, finely worked *Fugue in C minor* and the heady *Fugue in D major*. Next comes the *Fugue in D minor*, which again reveals the composer's unhappiness in the intense use of chromatic effects and the rhythmic instability created by the constant use of paired duplets and triplets.

The fourth *Fugue in E flat minor* returns to a mood of serenity, featuring an unusually long subject spread over six bars. By contrast, there is a vein of intense melancholy in the *Fugue in E minor*, with its almost elegiac subject and rueful developments. Next comes the exultant *Fugue in B flat major*, which is almost Gigue-like in character. The cycle ends with the severe, complex *Fugue in F minor*, a sort of epitome of the entire collection that lasts for over seven minutes, full of depth, insight and the fruits of consummate inventive skill.

Tracks 12-25 opens with the *Three Fugues for Organ with Pedal Obbligato*, a collection that is more traditional than the *Three Fugues for Three Voices*. Once again, the use of counterpoint is handled with great mastery, but without the dramatic elements characteristic of the previous triptych. There is plenty of imposing development, such as the constant repetition of the subject in the pedal in the *Fugue in G major* that concludes the cycle, and also great depth of reflection, especially in the *Fugue in C minor* that in many respects can be likened to the later *Seven Choral Preludes*, small gems of metaphysical meditation on the melodies that are composer's basic material for dissection, development and articulation.

The *Seven Choral Preludes* are indeed profound works of reflection. Sacred music evidently suited Wilhelm Friedemann well, because he was able to tame his exuberant

genius in pages of great spiritual and human depth. Even his handling of counterpoint contributes to his way he manages to illustrate the invocations of the different Chorales.

The magnificent *Four Fugues for Organ with Two Manuals and a Pedal* belong to the same technical and expressive genre as the *Three Fugues with Pedal Obligato*. They all reveal magnificent range, masterly articulation, great depth of feeling, meticulous counterpoint and particular formal clarity: characteristics that make them the high point of this homage to the “Bach of Halle”, a composer whose newly rediscovered greatness will delight music-lovers and provide musicians with plenty of material for refining their perceptions and furthering their understanding of the Masters.

© Filippo Turri

Translation by Kate Singleton

ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS

Chiesa di Sant’Antonio Abate Padova (tracks 12-25)

Disposizione fonica dell’organo F. Zanin, 2007

GRAND’ORGANO (HAUPTWERK):

Bordone 16’
Principale 8’
Flauto 8’
Viola 8’
Ottava 4’
Flauto 4’
Nazardo 2’ 2/3
Superottava 2’
Flauto in terza 1’ 3/5
Mixtur 5 file
Tromba 8’

PEDALE:

Subbasso 16’
Principale 8’
Ottava 4’
Trombone 16’
Trombone 8’



POSITIVO TERGALE (RÜCKPOSITIV):

Bordone 8'
Quintadena 8'
Principale 4'
Flauto 4'
Ottava 2'
Flautino 2'
Cimbalo 3 file
Sesquialtera 2 file
Dulcian 8'

ACCESSORI:

Unione a cassetto dei manuali, Primo al pedale, Secondo al pedale,
Tremolo funzionante sull'intero strumento.

Due manuali di 56 note (C1-G5)
Pedaliera di trenta note (C1-F3)
25 registri, 1626 canne, trazione
integralmente meccanica
Temperamento Werckmeister III

Abbazia di Santa Maria delle Carceri, Este
Padova (tracks 1-11)
Truhenorgel di L. Patella, 1998
Disposizione: gedackt 8', flote 4', prinzipal 2'
Trasmissione: meccanica



Filippo Turri studied at the Antonio Buzzolla Conservatoire in Adria (RO) with Alessandro Albenga and Giampietro Rosato, obtaining his Diploma with full marks in Organ and Organ Composition. Further study of various aspects of the organ repertoire were to follow under Pier Damiano Peretti, Michael Radulescu, Francesco Finotti and Roberto Loreggian. He is particularly interested in performance practice and techniques pertaining to historic keyboards, performing works of the Italian and German repertoire of the 17th-18th centuries. He plays throughout Italy, and is regularly invited to perform abroad, especially in Switzerland and Germany, his concerts meeting with widespread acclaim for the technical skill, originality of interpretation and expressive intensity that have become his hallmarks. Apart from his engagements as a soloist, he also plays continuo and accompaniment for vocal and instrumental ensembles, performing in some of the most remarkable places of Christianity such as St. Peter's in the Vatican and the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. He is organist at the Cathedral of S. Mauro at Cavarzere (VE) and that of S. Maria Assunta in Loreo (RO), playing two of the monumental organs of the Veneto region: the B. Formentelli organ built in 1972, and the G. Callido organ of 1787.



Filippo Turri ha studiato presso il Conservatorio Statale di Musica “Antonio Buzzolla” di Adria (RO) sotto la guida di Alessandro Albenga e Giampietro Rosato, diplomandosi con il massimo dei voti in Organo e Composizione organistica. Ha approfondito lo studio di vari ambiti del repertorio organistico perfezionandosi con Pier Damiano Peretti, Michael Radulescu, Francesco Finotti e Roberto Loreggian. Particolarmente interessato alla prassi esecutiva sulle tastiere storiche, si dedica con predilezione all’esecuzione di musica italiana e tedesca del sei-settecento. È regolarmente invitato a tenere concerti in vari Paesi (Italia, Svizzera, Germania), riscuotendo ovunque consensi che rilevano solidità tecnica, originalità interpretativa, intensa espressività. All’attività solistica affianca da sempre quella di continuista e accompagnatore di gruppi vocali e strumentali, grazie alla quale si è esibito in alcuni dei luoghi più suggestivi della cristianità (Basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano, Basilica di S. Francesco in Assisi). Organista del Duomo di S. Mauro in Cavarzere (VE) e del Duomo di S. Maria Assunta in Loreo (RO), suona due monumentali strumenti del territorio veneto (organo B. Formentelli, 1972; organo G. Callido, 1787).

*I would like to thank Roberto Loreggian for the artistic direction
and Francesco Bergo for advice on the organ stops*