

Mastering Equipment Used In Our Recordings

Digital: Digital Audio Denmark AX24 Analog to Digital Converter

Lynx AES16 used for digital I/O

Antelope Audio Isochrone OCX Master Clock

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with JRF Magnetics Custom Z Heads & Siltech wiring

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services

Manley Tube Tape Pre-amps Modified by Fred Volz of Emotive Audio

Cables: Purist Audio Design, Pure Note, Siltech

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks, Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's

George Malcolm

Born: February 28, 1917 - London, England

Died: October 10, 1997 - London, England

The esteemed English harpsichordist, pianist, conductor and teacher, George (John) Malcolm, first studied the piano. He was taught for 18 months by a gifted nun in the kindergarten class at the Notre Dame Convent in Clapham, and, deciding he had a special talent, she took him along to play to Hugh Allen at the Royal College of Music. He was accepted, and at the age of seven studied piano with Kathleen McWhitty. There was no Junior department at the College in those days, and for several years he was the only child there. While attending a London day school, he continued at the College and then, having completed his time at Oxford University, he returned to take up his studies with Herbert Fryer. After attending Balliol College, in Oxford from 1934 to 1937, he completed his training at the Royal College of Music in London.

George Malcolm was on the threshold of his career as a professional pianist when the onset of war drastically changed the direction of his life. He was appointed an Royal Air Force bandleader, which involved organising and conducting concerts all over the country. After World War II, he had hoped to resume his intended career. He liked the idea of owning an antique instrument for his own pleasure at home, and he bought his first harpsichord. The instrument was rare then, and very soon George and his harpsichord were in great demand for concerts. His favourite instrument was to be built by Thomas Goff, and was known for its marvellous dynamic qualities, which George used to exciting and dramatic effect, although his brilliant harmonies and ornamentations have always annoyed purists.

George Malcolm had a distinguished career as a harpsichord virtuoso, chamber music pianist, and conductor. While his concert career was being established, he was appointed director of Music at Westminster Cathedral (1947-1959). He had a deep affinity with Catholic church music and had enjoyed a successful period of time as choir-master in a south London church. He disliked the hoity sound so prevalent in choir-boys at that time, and was to achieve great success in producing the bright "continental" sound, which contrasts with that of Anglican choirs. This sound so impressed Benjamin Britten that he wrote his *Missa Brevis* especially for the Westminster Cathedral Choir. Malcolm left the Cathedral to enable him to accept the ever increasing demands on him for concert performances. He became conductor of the London Philomusica from 1962 to 1966, and associate conductor of the BBC Scottish Orchestra in Glasgow from 1965 to 1967, as well as continuing to play the large 18th century keyboard repertoire. He was founding patron of Spode Music Week, an annual residential music school that places particular emphasis on the music of the Roman Catholic liturgy. In 1965 he was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and was ISM Distinguished Musician Award of 1996-1967.

George Malcolm was particularly associated with the Baroque revival. He was a pioneering harpsichordist, introducing many people to this instrument through his records and live performances. Like Wanda Landowska, he favoured rather large harpsichords which now are seen as inauthentic for Baroque music, although the instruments he used were more authentic than hers. However, while aspects of his performances may seem outdated, his influence is gratefully acknowledged by a number of today's musicians, e.g. Andrés Schiff. He seems to have left posterity no sound recordings as a pianist, but he made more impact as an organist, choir-trainer and conductor.



Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue

The Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue (BWV 903), one of Bach's best known works, is an extravagant work of virtuosity and bold harmonic structure. It is an extraordinary piece - large, sprawling, emotional, and unique in its character compared to the rest of Bach's music. The title of the piece comes from either the fugue's chromatic melody, or from the startling modulations in the Fantasia. Either opinion is equally acceptable and debated.

Bach composed only a few "fantasies" – a type of prelude usually preceding a fugue. The fantasy is highly virtuosic and similar in form to the toccata, English fantasy, and the canzone, in that it consists of alternating sections of differently textured music. The English fantasy differs from Bach's fantasies because it does not contain any free, improvisational sections. And unlike the Italian canzone, Bach's chromatic fantasy does not include sections of imitative counterpoint. The intended instrument for the Chromatic Fantasy is the harpsichord as shown by the extensive use of arpeggio writing, and specifically noted in the heading of one of the earliest copies, *Fantasia chromatique pour le Clavecin*.

The Chromatic Fantasy consists of three main sections: the first being a true prelude, the second a recitative-like section, and the third a mixture of the two. Some scholars, however, categorize the extensive arpeggio part preceding the recitative as a separate section in itself. The first section (mm. 1-48) consists of technically demanding toccata-like passagework. Conversely, the recitative that follows (mm. 49-60) is musically challenging, requiring extreme emotional sensitivity. And the third section (mm. 61- 79) combines the two elements in a virtuosic drive to the end.

In terms of the harmonic structure of the piece, section one moves from tonic to dominant, the second extends the dominant, and the third returns to tonic with a full authentic ending cadence. While it might be easy to lose a sense of main tonality amidst the recitative-like passage work, Bach continually circles around the dominant during the first section and artfully establishes tonality despite a multitude of runs, passages, and arpeggios. To the listener it might seem that the fantasy is entirely chromatic and even atonal, but Bach maintains tonality with the use of conventional cadences and finally, a fixed tonic pedal in the last section that brings together this grand introduction to the fugue.

The fugue begins in a strict style but gradually loosens, revealing elements of the fantasy. It opens with a long and complex semitonal subject. The fugue has three sections with eleven entrances of the fugal theme. Every entry of the theme contains an element of uncertainty, yet each seems to be anticipated by the previous one. The first section stays mostly in d minor, while the second section modulates as the theme is introduced in distantly related keys. The third section again returns to d minor and ends with bravura passage work, scales, and "organistic" octave doubling in the bass, not unlike the closing of a toccata. Compared to the fugues of The Well-Tempered Clavier, this fugue is treated much more freely.

The Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue is believed to have been composed in the 1720s in Weimar. Bach's autograph has been lost, so published editions are based on copyists' manuscripts, with differences posing editorial problems. Several manuscripts are believed to have been in concurrent use in Bach's home, each with varying modifications. There is another version of the Fantasy labeled BWV 903a. This was the lost manuscript dated "Bernburg 1757" and is considered the earliest form of the work. This version replaces the first twenty measures of the original fantasy with 23 completely different measures.

Musicians must be extremely cautious in their selection of which edition of a work to use. The goal should be to find an edition that reveals, as closely as possible, the composer's true intentions. I reviewed several different editions of the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue and my findings are as follows: The Bach-Gesellschaft – reprinted by Dover - provides alternate versions when there are discrepancies between different manuscripts. The Henle edition follows the copy prepared by Agricola in 1740, possibly under Bach's actual supervision. It is an urtext version, but provides editorial fingering in italics. It also includes the early BWV 903a version at the end. The Schirmer edition does not specifically denote a certain manuscript as its source, only that it is "correct and critically revised". The editor takes many liberties to include fingerings, rhythmic phrasing, and interpretive indications (i.e. tempo, dynamics, accents, pedaling, etc.) in order to "initiate the player into the spirit of the work". The Kalmus edition (edited by Bischoff) is based on a manuscript belonging to the Berlin Royal Library, bearing the date, Dec. 6, 1730, which is the oldest version only after the BWV 903a. However, the editor also includes in the score variants from different manuscripts. Interpretive markings are included, as well an appendix on the execution of the arpeggiated chords in the fantasy.

The Italian Concerto, BWV 971, original title: Concerto nach Italienischem Gusto (Concerto after the Italian taste), published in 1735 as the first half of Clavier-Übung II (the second half being the French Overture) is a three-movement concerto for two-manual harpsichord solo composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. The Italian Concerto has become popular among Bach's keyboard works, and has been widely recorded both on the harpsichord and the piano.

The Italian Concerto's two lively F major outer movements, in ritornello style, frame a florid arioso-style movement in D minor, the relative minor.

An Italian concerto relies upon the contrasting roles of different groups of instruments in an ensemble; Bach imitates this effect by creating contrasts using the forte and piano manuals of a two-manual harpsichord throughout the piece. In fact, along with the French Overture and some of the Goldberg Variations, this is one of the few works by Bach which specifically require a 2-manual harpsichord.

Bach also transcribed Italian concertos by Vivaldi and others for solo harpsichord (BWV 972-987), and for solo organ or pedal harpsichord (BWV 592-596).

Toccatà for keyboard in D major, BWV 912

Johann Sebastian Bach explored a wide variety of compositional models in the formative years before and during his first major tenure in Weimar (which began in 1708); this Toccata in D major is an excellent example of such experimentation. Falling loosely into the North German toccata style, it in fact embodies a potpourri of formal types. An early copy of the work confirms that it was intended for the organ, even though no pedal parts are in evidence. In fact, the Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV 532 for organ is remarkably similar in structure to this work, and, given Bach's propensity to reuse and recycle, probably was a reworking of sorts.

Like most toccatas, this one has several sections. The piece opens with brilliant yet almost crude scale and chordal passages, more idiomatic to the organ than to the harpsichord. The scales are interrupted by a rather jarring arpeggio which leads into a tremolo (rather atypical for Bach). This concludes and proceeds into a rather cheerful allegro. Though never modulating away from D major for long, the arrangement of voices and registers sustains this section until its end. The ensuing adagio passage is recitative-like in character until a dramatic interruption of descending scales, which remind the listener of the less structured opening. This section continues without pause into a fugue, which begins in F sharp minor. Unlike most of Bach's fugues, this one states the subject and countersubject simultaneously from the beginning. Certainly the most mature passage of this work, the fugue hints at many unusual harmonic regions and utilizes dense chromaticism throughout its development. This fugue proceeds, again without pause, into a freely composed quasi-improvisatory section, which explodes into a fast scalar passage with dramatic harmonic implications. Finally, without pause again, the piece bursts into a second, rather quaint, fugue for the end. Although it has a subject, it serves more as a harmonic grounding rather than a melody. Indeed, the piece is more of a vehicle for virtuosity than a display of compositional proficiency

Toccatà for keyboard in D major, BWV 912

The French Suites, BWV 812-817, are six suites which Johann Sebastian Bach wrote for the clavier (harpsichord or clavichord) between the years of 1722 and 1725. The suites were later given the name 'French' (first recorded usage by Friedrich Wilhelm Marpur in 1762) as a means of contrast with the English Suites (whose title is likewise a later appellation). The name was popularised by Bach's biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel, who wrote in his 1802 biography of Bach, "One usually calls them French Suites because they are written in the French manner." This claim, however, is inaccurate: like Bach's other suites, they follow a largely Italian convention.

There is no surviving definitive manuscript of these suites, and ornamentation varies both in type and in degree across manuscripts.

Two additional suites, one in A minor (BWV 818), the other in E-flat Major (BWV 819), are linked to the familiar six in some manuscripts. The Overture in the French style, BWV 831, which Bach published as the second part of Clavier-Übung, is a suite in the French style but not connected to the French suites.

J.S. Bach Harpsichord Recital

George Malcolm Harpsichord

1-Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 903) 12:25

2-Italian Concerto (BWV 971) 1st Movement (Allegro) 3:42

3-Italian Concerto (BWV 971) 2nd Movement (Andante) 4:58

4-Italian Concerto (BWV 971) 3rd Movement (Presto) 3:25

5-Toccata in D Major (BWV 912) 10:35

6-French Suite No. 5 in G Major (BWV 816) 16:09

*Recorded by Decca 1960 at West Hampstead Studio 2, London
January 1959 and March 1960 Transferred from a London LP CS6197*

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