

A portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach, showing him from the chest up. He has a large, powdered wig and is wearing a dark, buttoned coat over a white cravat. He is holding a small sheet of music in his left hand.

Johann Sebastian Bach



Das Wohltemperierte
Klavier II



The Well-Tempered Clavier
Book 2

Andrew Rangell



STEINWAY & SONS

Johan Sebastian Bach

The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2 (BWV 870 - BWV 893)

DISC 1

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Prelude No. 1 In C major,
BWV 870 3:00 | 17 | Prelude No. 9 in E major, BWV 878 4:22 |
| 2 | Fugue No. 1 in C major (a 3), BWV 870 1:48 | 18 | Fugue No. 9 in E major (a 4), BWV 878 2:25 |
| 3 | Prelude No. 2 in C minor, BWV 871 2:34 | 19 | Prelude No. 10 in E minor, BWV 879 4:06 |
| 4 | Fugue No. 2 in C minor (a 4), BWV 871 2:04 | 20 | Fugue No. 10 in E minor (a 3), BWV 879 3:16 |
| 5 | Prelude No. 3 in C sharp major, BWV 872 2:07 | 21 | Prelude No. 11 in F major, BWV 880 2:45 |
| 6 | Fugue No. 3 in C sharp major (a 3),
BWV 872 2:21 | 22 | Fugue No. 11 in F major (a 3), BWV 880 1:52 |
| 7 | Prelude No. 4 in C sharp minor, BWV 873 3:41 | 23 | Prelude No. 12 in F minor, BWV 881 3:17 |
| 8 | Fugue No. 4 in C sharp minor (a 3),
BWV 873 2:22 | 24 | Fugue No. 12 in F minor (a 3), BWV 881 2:06 |
| 9 | Prelude No. 5 in D major, BWV 874 3:46 | 25 | Prelude No. 13 in F sharp major,
BWV 882 3:03 |
| 10 | Fugue No. 5 in D major (a 4), BWV 874 3:11 | 26 | Fugue No. 13 in F sharp major (a 3),
BWV 882 2:37 |
| 11 | Prelude No. 6 in D minor, BWV 875 1:57 | | |
| 12 | Fugue No. 6 in D minor (a 3), BWV 875 2:13 | | |
| 13 | Prelude No. 7 in E flat major, BWV 876 2:27 | | |
| 14 | Fugue No. 7 in E flat major (a 4),
BWV 876 1:54 | | |
| 15 | Prelude No. 8 in D sharp minor, BWV 877 3:36 | | |
| 16 | Fugue No. 8 in D sharp minor (a 4),
BWV 877 3:52 | | |

Playing Time: 72:56

DISC 2

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|------|----|--|------|
| 1 | Prelude No. 14 in F sharp minor, BWV 883 | 3:23 | 17 | Prelude No. 22 in B flat minor, BWV 891 | 3:21 |
| 2 | Fugue No. 14 in F sharp minor (a 3),
BWV 883 | 4:54 | 18 | Fugue No. 22 in B flat minor (a 4),
BWV 891 | 6:03 |
| 3 | Prelude No. 15 in G major, BWV 884 | 2:28 | 19 | Prelude No. 23 in B major, BWV 892 | 2:03 |
| 4 | Fugue No. 15 in G major (a 3), BWV 884 | 1:19 | 20 | Fugue No. 23 in B major (a 4), BWV 892 | 4:01 |
| 5 | Prelude No. 16 in G minor, BWV 885 | 2:18 | 21 | Prelude No. 24 in B minor, BWV 893 | 2:42 |
| 6 | Fugue No. 16 in G minor (a 4), BWV 885 | 2:58 | 22 | Fugue No. 24 in B minor (a 3), BWV 893 | 1:48 |
| 7 | Prelude No. 17 in A flat major, BWV 886 | 4:07 | | | |
| 8 | Fugue No. 17 in A flat major (a 4),
BWV 886 | 3:13 | | Playing Time: 72:03 | |
| 9 | Prelude No. 18 in G sharp minor,
BWV 887 | 4:08 | | | |
| 10 | Fugue No. 18 in G sharp minor (a 3),
BWV 887 | 5:23 | | | |
| 11 | Prelude No. 19 in A major, BWV 888 | 2:05 | | | |
| 12 | Fugue No. 19 in A major (a 3), BWV 888 | 1:28 | | | |
| 13 | Prelude No. 20 in A minor, BWV 889 | 5:12 | | | |
| 14 | Fugue No. 20 in A minor (a 3), BWV 889 | 1:56 | | | |
| 15 | Prelude No. 21 in B flat major, BWV 890 | 4:16 | | | |
| 16 | Fugue No. 21 in B flat major (a 3),
BWV 890 | 2:45 | | | |

The Long Unfolding of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier

It may be said that any meaningful discussion of WTC, book two is, simply and inescapably, a further discussion of WTC, book one. We begin, therefore, at the beginning. In 1722, at age 37, and at the end of a richly productive tenure as Kappelmeister at the court of Cöthen, Bach completed a massive, ordered collection of keyboard pieces. It was to become an indispensable cornerstone of the literature, an enduring object of study, performance, and veneration. “Das Wohltemperierte Klavier”(translated as “The Well-Tempered Clavier”), a set of paired preludes and fugues in each of the 12 major and 12 minor keys, appeared that year in Bach's own beautiful calligraphic manuscript, following as many as 6 years of preliminary work and thoroughgoing revisions made in 1721. The clear antecedent, although more in symbol than substance, was J.F.C. Fischer's “Ariadne Musica”— 20 short preludes and fugues in as many keys, published in 1702 but probably noticed by Bach after its reissue in 1715. At a time when new systems of tuning were beginning to allow keyboard composers the unfettered use of previously inaccessible key-areas, it would have been an irresistible challenge for a composer of Bach's prodigious harmonic skills to demonstrate his mastery in all 24 keys. The adjective “well-tempered” in Bach's title is taken to mean a method of tuning whereby all keys would sound well. Whether this method was equal temperament, soon to become the norm, or a closely related system, is not known for certain. In Bach's subtitle, it is explained that the work is intended for the instruction of the young student and the pleasure of the advanced performer. But a large unstated aim of this project, it would seem, was nothing less than a new and comprehensive re-imagining of the long-familiar forms of prelude and fugue—and the bond between them.

Prior to the WTC, Bach's many preludes and fugues had been inseparable from the multi-sectional organ works and keyboard toccatas in which they were embedded: extroverted, extravagant, occasionally unruly vehicles for Bach, the organ virtuoso. On the other hand (so to speak) Bach also began to create, for pedagogical purposes, a number of miniature, self-standing specimens of both types: little preludes and simple abridged fugues (fughettas) appear in the 1720 notebook for Wilhelm Friedemann, his eldest son.

The 24 paired creations comprising the WTC, however, created an altogether new (and elevated) ground for these forms, partly as a result of years of assiduous cultivation of Italian concerto forms and French dance movements, studies helping to guide these preludes and fugues toward a heightened individuality, cohesion, and contrapuntal sophistication. Both separately and (importantly) in their pairings, these pieces establish new paradigms of design, form, and substance.

To clarify, all of the above pertains to Bach's 1722 collection, now referred to as WTC, book 1. In 1744 Bach would deliver a second such collection, a parallel universe of sorts, now referred to as WTC, book 2, and which is heard in this recording. Regarding these epic works - which share an identical format but are separated in their dates of completion by 20 years - the inevitable question arises: how do they compare? We can try to give partial answers, first in certain specifics, then in more generalized terms.

In both books all preludes are not merely introductory, but self-sufficient and distinctively so! (A significant fact too easily taken for granted.) Some are patterned, or figurational, pieces. Some are 2 and 3-part inventions. Some suggest dance forms. Some draw from the trio sonata or from the concerto grosso. Diverse in affect and design, the preludes, sometimes described as "free" (in contradistinction to the "strict" fugues they precede) are in fact quite rigorous in their

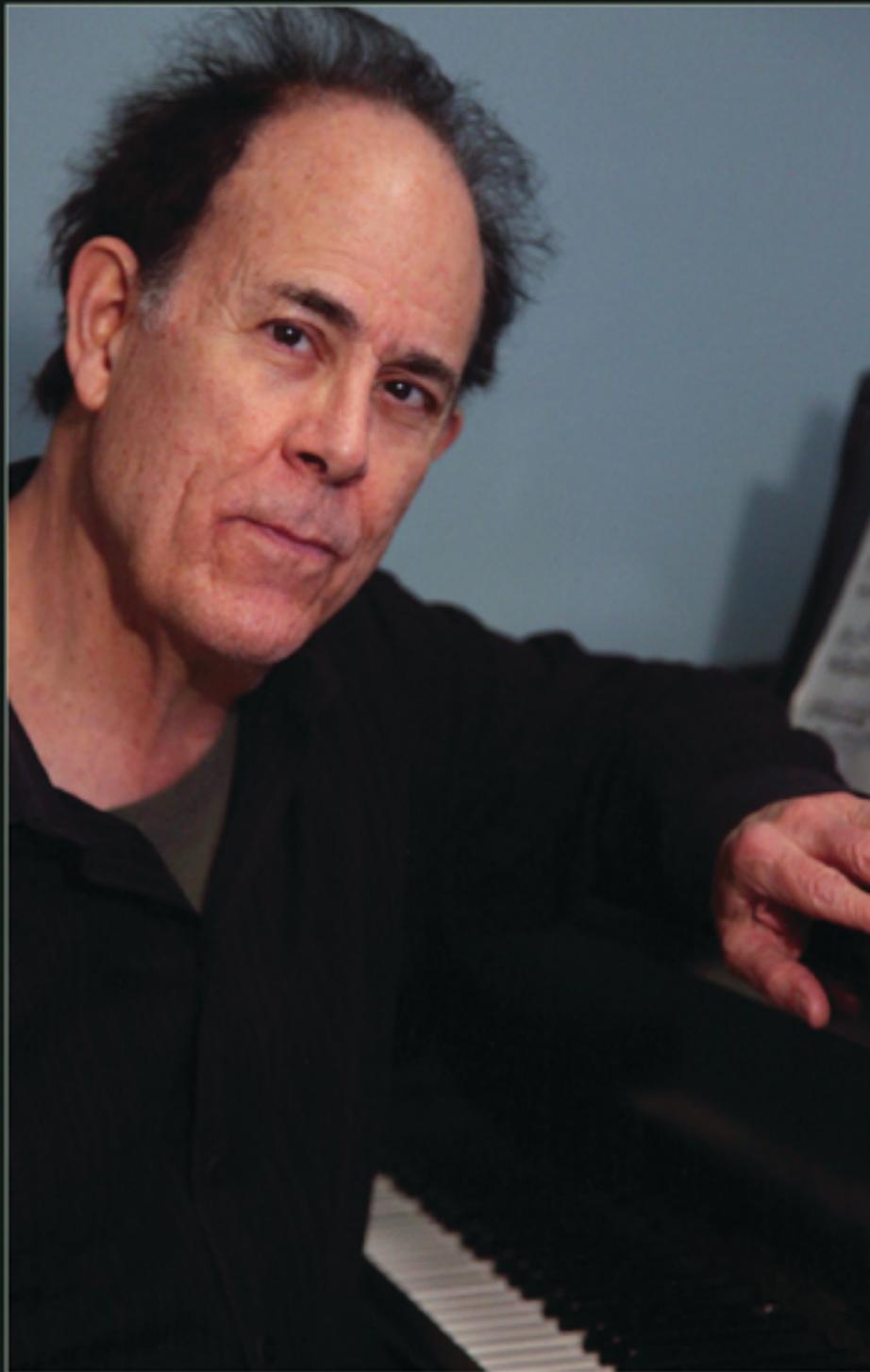
own terms, each undergoing a unique journey of development and resolution. The Friedemann notebook of 1720 happens to contain early versions of a number of preludes, and it is fascinating to note the ways Bach modified and enlarged (in effect, upgraded) these pieces for them to gain the necessary stature for inclusion in the large masterwork!

A few new features do appear, perhaps inevitably, in the preludes of book 2. One is a predominance of binary dance forms (two sections, both with repeats), the format also suggesting a possible familiarity with Scarlatti sonatas. In a nod to progressive fashion, some preludes exhibit the lighter homophonic texture of the “galant” style (also employed by Scarlatti, as well as Bach’s sons...). Generally speaking, but with exceptions, the preludes of book 2 are of a considerably larger scale than their earlier counterparts.

Fewer distinctions separate the 2 books of WTC fugues, each exhibiting a characteristically encyclopedic range of fugal styles, emotional terrains, and contrapuntal techniques, such as stretto, double and triple counterpoint, inversion, and augmentation, all employed at the highest level of compositional mastery and expressive purpose. (Book 2 adds diminution to this list). The two 5-voice fugues in book 1 exemplify a deliberately archaic vocal style, echoed in book 2 by a tryptich of stretto fugues (D, E-flat, E) with a similar type of antique vocal polyphony. (Book 2 contains no 5-voice fugues). In book 2 the F-sharp minor (triple) fugue matches the C-sharp minor of book 1, both developing and combining 3 separate subjects. Throughout both books we find a great range in fugue subjects, varying in character and also in actual length. Many fugues in both books achieve an unprecedented intimacy and interiority. A few, of unusual breadth, are able to add a dimension of profound drama; the great among the great! We must remember that in Bach’s final decade the WTC, book 2 stands together with those august monuments of counterpoint: The Art of Fugue, Goldberg Variations, and Musical Offering. Which makes the following modest observation all-the-more noteworthy. While

the closing fugues of each half of book 1 (that is, F minor and B minor) are among the set's weightiest, their counterparts in book 2 opt for grace and forceful concision over depth or profundity. Bach didn't need to insist. He could do it all. (I am reminded of the brilliantly understated rondo movement Beethoven provided as an optional replacement for his massive, original fugal conclusion of the Op.130 string quartet. The Gods can do these things.)

In truth, despite their chronological separation, one cannot consider WTC books 1 and 2 apart from one another. It is certain that both of these collections grew, to some extent at least, by accumulation, while Bach composed other works. Therefore we may speculate that despite the "distractions" of two hugely creative decades separating the WTC's twin installments, it seems probable that the idea for a sequel to Book 1 was never really absent from Bach's mind. Comparative differences and distinctions are trivial in view of what binds them together: a consistently astonishing force of technical and imaginative brilliance in the creation, and forging together of 48 linked pairs, each dyad unlike any other! A bird's-eye view reveals a few interesting anomalies, blurrings of the presumed boundaries separating preludes from fugue! Here is a fugue in 2 voices (E minor, book 1)! Here is a prelude containing a double fugue (E-flat major, book 1)! Here is a fugue decked out as a French overture, that is, a fancy species of prelude (D major, book 1)! Bach indulged in the fancies and challenges of such hybridization throughout his creative life: consider the "Italian Concerto", a brilliant solo keyboard work in concerto-grosso style. Suggestions of such solo-ripieno alternation appear in the large A-flat and F-sharp major preludes of book 2. Several extended 2-part inventions (E minor and A minor, book 2) morph into binary dance forms. The final fugue of the 48, B minor, comes across as a brusque gigue... But, reader, these "anomalies" or "hybridizations" only point toward the blendings and fusion of "borrowed" elements forming the essence of all these newly-forged creations, in their dazzling variety. As Kurt Vonnegut's mythical prophet "Bokonon" might have put it: "Nice, nice, very nice: so many voices in the same device!"



Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier waited until 1801 to be published! After Bach's death in 1750, C.P.E. Bach and others took an active role in its dissemination (in manuscript form). Thus it came to the attention of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven (who performed these pieces as a young teenager). In the 19th century Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms—all studied the work deeply, and with significant consequence. The 20th century is replete with its own homages. The returns for the 21st are not in yet, but here's hoping....

— *Andrew Rangell*

Pianist **Andrew Rangell**'s debut recording—released thirty years ago—featured Bach's Goldberg Variations, F-sharp minor toccata, and the two Ricercars from "A Musical Offering". Over the course of many years, the verve, beauty and originality of Mr. Rangell's Bach playing have been evidenced in a steady progression of interpretations: The Partitas, French Suites, Well-Tempered Clavier (bk.1), The Art of Fugue, English Suites, Inventions, Sinfonias, and many other individual pieces. This second book of the WTC now brings to completion a journey and survey which was never firmly planned as such. This is because the pianist's embrace of Bach has run parallel with other deep involvements, beginning with Beethoven, but also exploring repertoire ranging from Sweelinck, Gibbons, and Farnaby to Ives, Nielsen, Enescu, Schoenberg and a host of other 20th century voices. Schubert, Haydn and Chopin also receive special attention within the artist's rich discography.

Andrew Rangell made his New York debut as winner of the Malraux Award of the Concert Artists' Guild, and has since performed and lectured throughout the United States, and in Europe, Israel, and China. He has also taught on the faculties of Dartmouth, Middlebury, and Tufts University. In the 1980s, already recognized as a distinctive recitalist and collaborative artist, Mr. Rangell gained national attention – and the award of an Avery Fisher Career Grant – for his vivid traversals of the complete Beethoven sonata-cycle in New York, Boston, Cleveland, Rochester, Denver, and other U.S. Cities. A hand injury sustained in 1991 forced Mr. Rangell to gradually alter the trajectory of his career, and eventually to place his highest priority on recording. In recent years he has created several DVDs for children – integrating his special talents as author, illustrator, narrator, and pianist. These DVDs are included in his albums, *Bach 4 Kids* and *Beethoven 4 Kids, Volumes 1 and 2*.

Johan Sebastian Bach | The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2

This collection is for my dear and lifelong friend, Jerri Witt.

Recorded April 2021 at the Shalin Liu Performance Center, Rockport, Massachusetts.

Producer: Andrew Rangell

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Editor: Luke Damrosch

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Piano: Steinway Model D #586518 (New York)

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Johan Sebastian Bach

The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2 (BWV 870 - BWV 893)

Andrew Rangell, piano

DISC 1

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------|----|------------------------------|------|----|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Prelude No. 1 in C | 3:00 | 11 | Prelude No. 6 in d | 1:57 | 21 | Prelude No. 11 in F | 2:45 |
| 2 | Fugue No. 1 in C (a 3) | 1:48 | 12 | Fugue No. 6 in d (a 3) | 2:13 | 22 | Fugue No. 11 in F (a 3) | 1:52 |
| 3 | Prelude No. 2 in c | 2:34 | 13 | Prelude No. 7 in E flat | 2:27 | 23 | Prelude No. 12 in f | 3:17 |
| 4 | Fugue No. 2 in c (a 4) | 2:04 | 14 | Fugue No. 7 in E flat (a 4) | 1:54 | 24 | Fugue No. 12 in f (a 3) | 2:06 |
| 5 | Prelude No. 3 in C sharp | 2:07 | 15 | Prelude No. 8 in d sharp | 3:36 | 25 | Prelude No. 13 in F sharp | 3:03 |
| 6 | Fugue No. 3 in C sharp (a 3) | 2:21 | 16 | Fugue No. 8 in d sharp (a 4) | 3:52 | 26 | Fugue No. 13 in F sharp (a 3) | 2:37 |
| 7 | Prelude No. 4 in c sharp | 3:41 | 17 | Prelude No. 9 in E | 4:22 | | Playing Time: | 72:56 |
| 8 | Fugue No. 4 in c sharp (a 3) | 2:22 | 18 | Fugue No. 9 in E (a 4) | 2:25 | | | |
| 9 | Prelude No. 5 in D | 3:46 | 19 | Prelude No. 10 in e | 4:06 | | | |
| 10 | Fugue No. 5 in D (a 4) | 3:11 | 20 | Fugue No. 10 in e (a 3) | 3:16 | | | |

DISC 2

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------|----|-------------------------------|------|----|------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Prelude No. 14 in f sharp | 3:23 | 9 | Prelude No. 18 in g sharp | 4:08 | 17 | Prelude No. 22 in b flat | 3:21 |
| 2 | Fugue No. 14 in f sharp (a 3) | 4:54 | 10 | Fugue No. 18 in g sharp (a 3) | 5:23 | 18 | Fugue No. 22 in b flat (a 4) | 6:03 |
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| 8 | Fugue No. 17 in A flat (a 4) | 3:13 | 16 | Fugue No. 21 in B flat (a 3) | 2:45 | | | |



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