



DDD

8.550960

J. S. BACH

**Inventions and Sinfonias
(Complete)**

Wolfgang Rübsam, Piano



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Inventions Nos. 1 - 15, BWV 772 - 786

Sinfonias Nos. 1 - 15, BWV 787 - 801

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach in 1685, one of a large family of musicians. After the death of his parents he moved, at the age of ten, to Ohrdruf, with his 13-year-old brother Johann Jacob, to live with the eldest of their brothers, Johann Christoph, an organist. Bach's own early career was as an organist, from 1708 until 1717 in the service of Duke Wilhelm Ernst, elder of the two brothers ruling the duchy of Weimar. From 1717 until 1723 he was Court Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, with different musical responsibilities, largely secular. Thereafter he served as Thomas-Kantor in Leipzig, with responsibility for music in the principal city churches, continuing there until his death in 1750. This final period of his life involved him in activity with the Collegium musicum of the University, for which he arranged earlier instrumental concertos for solo harpsichord or harpsichords, and in the assembly and publication of a number of his compositions, in particular a series of four volumes of keyboard music, the *Clavierübung*.

Bach's *Inventions* and *Sinfonias* were written about the year 1723 in Cöthen, included in a collection of pieces designed for the education of his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, later employed as an organist in Dresden and then in Halle, before his final years in Berlin. It has been suggested that Bach derived the title *Invention*, for the fifteen two-part compositions, BWV 772 - BWV 786, from the work of the Italian priest and composer Bonporti, a set of *Invenzioni* for violin and keyboard published in 1712 and known to Bach. The term, however, was not new to Bonporti, as it occurs from the sixteenth century onwards to describe a variety of instrumental compositions. Originally Bach used the title *Praeambulum* for the first set of pieces and *Fantasia* for the three-part *Sinfonias*, BWV 787 - 801. While in *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the 48 *Preludes and Fugues*, Bach used all possible keys, major and minor, in the *Inventions* and *Sinfonias* he avoids keys with more than four sharps or flats.

The first four *Inventions*, in C major, C minor, D major and D minor, and *Invention No. 8* in F major, open with a direct imitation of the upper part an octave lower, the opening subject providing the basis of the *Invention*. *Inventions Nos. 5, 6 and 7* have both parts starting simultaneously. *No. 5*, in E flat major, is based on the opening figure in the upper part, and *No. 6*, in E major, each half repeated, makes use of syncopation between upper and lower parts, the second section opening with a transposed inversion of the opening. In *No. 7*, in E minor, the lower part continues in imitation of the upper, while in *No. 9*, in F minor both parts start at the same time, the lower later imitating the upper. The compound rhythm subject of *No. 10*, in G major, has imitation at an interval of a compound fourth in the lower part. The remaining *Inventions* have both parts starting simultaneously, with *No. 14*, in B flat major, offering rhythms of greater elaboration, at times in consonant intervals between upper and lower parts, moving together.

The fifteen *Sinfonias*, BWV 787 - BWV 801, using the same keys as the two-part *Inventions*, and often known themselves as *Three-Part Inventions*, are fugal in texture, although in each of them two parts start together, to be followed by the third voice.

Eleven of the *Sinfonias* open in otherwise standard fugal form, an accompanied subject is followed by an answer in another part and a later entry of the subject in a third part. *Sinfonia No. 2*, in C minor, and *No. 15* in B minor have only two entries, and these at the octave, while *No. 5*, in E flat major, uses two upper parts in imitative counterpoint over a repeated bass figure. The *Sinfonias*, in spite of their apparent clarity of texture and simplicity, conceal technical contrapuntal devices often of some considerable ingenuity.

© 1995 Keith Anderson

Performance of the Music of J. S. Bach on the Piano

This recording was produced to communicate, stimulate and encourage the interpretation of Bach's keyboard works on the modern piano. It is based upon recognized fundamental elements of performance practices of early music.

The interpretation of Bach's music on the modern piano remains a confusing issue in light of the fact that the instrument basically evolved with the romantic period. It is, therefore, no surprise that attempts frequently result in romantic readings, a direction which can be most musical at times but may be stylistically confusing if not actually foreign to the score. Musical preferences also favour a clean, mathematical and metronomic realisation - a safe but somewhat noncommittal solution to the communication of Bach's artistry.

On a different level, then, is the enjoyment of incorporating the often neglected elements of rhetoric, *inégalité*, the structures of the strong and weak within a given pulse and metre, and the fingering techniques of the time (shifting and sequential fingerings rather than consecutive scale fingerings). These components, which are strongly interrelated and directly influence choices of articulation and flexibility of rhythm, often answer automatically questions of style, especially when they are understood as basic elements of the musical language.

The complex subject of ornamentation, both Bach's written out ornaments and the liberty given in repeats of movements, is most challenging and rewarding when there is the concept of freedom of execution and the manner is improvisational and imaginative.

Dynamic shadings within figurations, motivic material, and entire musical lines in any part of the polyphonic structure become particularly exciting and meaningful upon melodic (and harmonic) analysis. Important pitches, in the greater sense of the direction, can be pointed out by dynamic control and

nuance and by the effect of rhythmic flexibility within the structure of the melodic line. The degree of such bending in time is most personal and strongly communicative when applied with balance and refinement of taste.

The process of merging the “old” and the “new” in Bach’s keyboard works will be an ongoing pursuit for me as it will most likely be for pianists with an interest in early music who strive for reorganization of the ear before fingers are expected to reflect such inner feelings. Since such musical detail is best demonstrated by the music itself, it is my hope that this recording will be a helpful example in this process and that listeners and students alike will find it an enjoyable means of communication.

Wolfgang Rübsam

Wolfgang Rübsam

A native of Germany, Wolfgang Rübsam received his musical training in Europe from Erich Ackermann, Helmut Walcha and Marie-Claire Alain and in the United States from Robert T. Anderson. Living today in the Chicago area, he has held a professorship at Northwestern University since 1974, and since 1981 has served as University Organist at the University of Chicago. International recognition was established in 1973 when he won the Grand Prix de Chartres, Interprétation, and has grown through his recording career, with over eighty recordings, many of which have received awards. Wolfgang Rübsam performs frequently in major international festivals and concert halls, including the Los Angeles Bach Festival; Wiener Festwochen, Vienna; Lahti International Organ Festival, Finland; Royal Festival Hall, London; Alice Tully Hall, New York, and conducts master classes both in interpretation of early and romantic organ repertoire, and in interpreting the keyboard music of Johann Sebastian Bach on the modern piano.



Anfang der 1. Invention aus dem Autograph von 1723 (P 610) mit der nachträglichen Ausfüllung der Ternsprünge.
 The opening of Invention 1 from the autograph of 1723 (P 610), with the later filling-in of the thirds.



8.550960

STEREO

J. S. BACH

Inventions and Sinfonias (Complete)

Wolfgang Rübsam, Piano

DDD

 Playing
Time:
66'06''

Inventions (Complete)

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | No. 1, BWV 772 (1st version) | (1:36) |
| 2 | No. 1, BWV 772 (2nd version) | (1:43) |
| 3 | No. 2, BWV 773 | (1:55) |
| 4 | No. 3, BWV 774 | (1:27) |
| 5 | No. 4, BWV 775 | (1:12) |
| 6 | No. 5, BWV 776 | (1:56) |
| 7 | No. 6, BWV 777 | (3:11) |
| 8 | No. 7, BWV 778 | (2:02) |
| 9 | No. 8, BWV 779 | (1:05) |
| 10 | No. 9, BWV 780 | (2:22) |
| 11 | No. 10, BWV 781 | (0:51) |
| 12 | No. 11, BWV 782 | (2:23) |
| 13 | No. 12, BWV 783 | (1:23) |
| 14 | No. 13, BWV 784 | (2:08) |
| 15 | No. 14, BWV 785 | (1:32) |
| 16 | No. 15, BWV 786 | (1:54) |

Sinfonias (Complete)

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--------|
| 17 | No. 1, BWV 787 | (1:41) |
| 18 | No. 2, BWV 788 | (1:54) |
| 19 | No. 3, BWV 789 | (2:00) |
| 20 | No. 4, BWV 790 | (2:34) |
| 21 | No. 5, BWV 791 | (3:39) |
| 22 | No. 6, BWV 792 | (1:38) |
| 23 | No. 7, BWV 793 | (3:22) |
| 24 | No. 8, BWV 794 | (1:25) |
| 25 | No. 9, BWV 795 | (3:40) |
| 26 | No. 10, BWV 796 | (1:17) |
| 27 | No. 11, BWV 797 | (2:36) |
| 28 | No. 12, BWV 798 | (1:53) |
| 29 | No. 13, BWV 799 | (1:40) |
| 30 | No. 14, BWV 800 | (2:15) |
| 31 | No. 15, BWV 801 | (1:40) |

Produced, recorded and edited by RMC Classical Music.
Recorded at the Orum Hall, Valparaiso, Indiana, U. S. A.
in October and November 1993.

Piano: Bösendorfer
Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover Painting: J. S. Bach (Anon.)

