

A portrait of Ignaz Friedman, a pianist, wearing a large white powdered wig and a dark blue coat with gold buttons. The background is dark and textured.

LARS BOYE JENSEN

Toccata

Ignaz Friedman:
The Piano Transcriptions
on Music by J.S. Bach

»Der findes god og dårlig musik,
men ikke moderne eller forældet musik.

Jeg kender ikke en mere moderne
komponist end J.S. Bach.«

IGNAZ FRIEDMAN

Mit første møde med J.S. Bach var ikke i skikkelse af den store kirkekomponist fra baroktiden. Årstallet var 1971 og stedet var en skolestue i det mørke Vestjylland, hvor vores musiklærer fik hele klassen til at lytte forbløffet til synthesizer-fænomenet *Walter Carlos*' udgave af den tredje »Brandenburger Koncert«.

Hvor revolutionerede det end kunne virke på os teenagere, da Carlos satte strøm på barokken, var det egentlig blot et led i en lang kæde, som kunne føres helt tilbage til den gamle mester selv. I årenes løb har et hav af kunstnere med baggrund i næsten lige så mange musikalske genrer transskriberet hans udødelige musik til andre instrumenter med vidt forskelligt resultat. Og Bach selv bearbejdede talrige af sine egne og andres værker, lige fra han som dreng sad i måneskinnet og skrev noder af. På den måde blev

han fortrolig med tidens musikalske tonesprog. Der var nemlig ikke noget odiøst i at lære af andre i en tid, da der blev lagt mere vægt på godt musikalsk håndværk end på originalitet.

Walter Carlos spillede på *Moog-synthesizer*, et af rumalderens nye musikinstrumenter. Hans barokhits øgede ikke bare interessen for Bach, men også for de nye elektroniske udtryksmidler. Næsten 300 år tidligere havde en italiener dog opfundet et musikinstrument, der havde de samme grænseoverskridende egenskaber.

Med sit *gravicembalo col piano e forte* havde *Bartolomeo Cristofori* skabt forløberen for det moderne koncertflygel, der rammende er blevet kaldt den største skuespiller blandt musikinstrumenterne. I hvertfald var 1800-tallets klaverløver ikke sene til at til at udnytte klaverets enestående evne til at imitere: Under deres kløer blev tidens toner fra balsal, opera og koncerthus forvandlet til overflødheds-horn af klangbrus og forførende melodier. Også Bach blev taget under kærlig behandling af pianisterne. Særlig i klaverets gyldne dage

var Bach-transskriptionerne uundværlig ammunition hos hæren af klavervirtuoser, der talte så fornemme navne som *Franz Liszt*, *Karl Tausig*, *Ferruccio Busoni*, *Leopold Godowsky*, *Percy Grainger* og *Ignaz Friedman*.

Bach-transskriptioner på klaver kan deles op i to kategorier, der begge er repræsenteret på denne CD. Den ene kategori forsøger så nøjagtigt som muligt at genskabe det originale værk tone for tone. Det er hævdet, at denne type havde større berettigelse før i tiden. Da havde kun de største byer faste orkestre, og koncertpianisterne var en slags omrejsende musikalske ambassadører for komponisterne. Det er imidlertid forkert at opfatte disse pianistiske spejlbilleder som en billig erstatning. Tværtimod kaster klaverets transparente klang et nyt lys over Bach-musikkens mange strukturer og lag. Næsten på samme måde som et sort/hvid foto af og til bedre kan tydeliggøre et billedes konturer end et farvefoto.

Den anden kategori af transskriptioner bruger det originale tema som et afsæt for

yderligere improvisation og komposition: Originalens særkende er bevaret, men hertil er der føjet nye mellemstemmer, senromantiske harmonier og pianistiske ornamentter. Disse musikalske gendigtninger er en væsentlig kilde til belysning af de romantiske pianisters spillestil, der i udstrakt grad forlod sig på øjeblikkets inspiration.

I dag er transskriptionerne en næsten uddød kunstart, der er kommet i klemme i tomrummet mellem elite og folkelighed.

Friedmans bearbejdelser for klaver giver et lille pust af forfriskende dekadence, og han kommer længere omkring i Bachs univers end mange af sine forgængere. Hvor andre af disse først og fremmest er interesseret i den intellektuelle side af Bach, fornemmer man hos Friedman en åbenlys interesse for det umiddelbart fængende. Hans transskriptioner er bl.a. inspireret af parykalerens danse-musik: »Gavotte«, »Sicilienne« og »Bourrée«. I kontrast hertil står orgelkoralerne »Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland«, og »Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme«, der er eksempler på Bachs mere indadvendte tonekunst.

Orkestermusikken er repræsenteret med den festlige første sats af »Brandenburger Koncert« nr. 3, mens arierne »Schafe können sicher weiden« og »Mein gläubiges Herze« begge stammer fra Bachs kantater. CD'en afsluttes med Bachs måske berømteste stykke, orgelimpromvisationen »Toccatà og Fuga« i d-mol. Den er spillet så meget, at en kendt organist sarkastisk har givet stykket tilføjelsen: »*Den epidemiske*«. Og lad os så for en stund glemme, at i følge nogle forskere er dette værk slet ikke komponeret af Bach...

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Pianisten *Lars Boye Jensen* (f. 1957) har oprindeligt baggrund i en bred vifte af genrer, der strækker sig fra jazz og underholdning til klassisk. Lige siden han hørte *Victor Borge* spille en lille vals af Ignaz Friedman, har han i stigende grad interesseret sig for de såkaldte klavertransskriptioner. Hans diskografi omfatter udover denne CD en indspilning med virtuose klaverparafraiser over wienervalse af *Johann Strauss*. For tiden arbejder han på en ny CD med musik af *George Gershwin*. Den vil udkomme i forbindelse med Gershwin's 100 års dag i 1998.

Ignaz Friedman (1882-1948) hørte til blandt det 20. århundredes største klavervirtuoser. En omfattende koncertvirksomhed bragte ham også til Danmark, hvor han boede under 1. verdenskrig. Desuden komponerede Friedman en lang række værker. Han fandt også tid til at bearbejde andre komponisters musik for klaver, bl.a. de nærværende Bachtransskriptioner, der hermed indspilles for første gang.

*“There is good music and poor music,
but never modern and antiquated music.
I know no composer more modern than J.S. Bach.”*
IGNAZ FRIEDMAN

On my first encounter with *J.S. Bach* he did not appear as the great church music composer of the baroque period. The year was 1971, the place a lecture room in dark West Jutland where our music master made us all listen in astonishment to the synthesizer phenomenon, *Walter Carlos’* interpretation of the third “Brandenburg Concerto”.

Although the effect on us teenagers was rather revolutionary when Carlos electrified baroque music, it was in fact merely a link in a long chain leading back to the old master himself. Over the years many artists with backgrounds in almost as many different musical genres have transcribed his immortal music for other instruments with varying results. Bach himself arranged numerous works by other composers as well as his own, and already as a child he used to sit copying other composers’ music by moonlight. In that way he became familiar with the musical language of the day. Learning from others

was not considered unusual at a time when greater weight was placed on good musical craftsmanship than on originality.

Walter Carlos played on a *Moog synthesizer*, one of the new musical instruments of the space age, and his baroque hits developed our interest in Bach and also in the new electronic media. Nearly 300 years earlier an Italian had invented a similarly innovative musical instrument.

With his *gravicembalo col piano e forte*, *Bartolemeo Christofori* had created the forerunner of the modern concert grand which aptly has been named the greatest actor among the musical instruments. Anyhow, the piano lions of the 19th century were quick to take advantage of the piano’s outstanding ability of imitation. Their deft fingers changed ballroom, opera, and concert-hall tunes into pianistic horns of plenty overflowing with intoxicating and seductive music. Bach himself was also dealt with in this way. Especially in the golden age of the piano, the Bach transcriptions were indispensable ammunition for the army of piano virtuosos, which included such prolific

transcribers as *Franz Liszt, Karl Tausig, Ferruccio Busoni, Leopold Godowsky, Percy Grainger, and Ignaz Friedman.*

Bach transcriptions can be placed in two categories, both represented on this CD. One category attempts to recreate the original work, tone by tone, as accurately as possible. It has been argued that this type was more justified in a period when only the largest cities had permanent orchestras and concert pianists were a kind of musical ambassadors for composers. However, it is a mistake to understand these pianistic reflections as simply cheap substitutes. On the contrary, the piano's transparent sound throws new light on the many structures and layers of Bach's music, in nearly the same way as a black-and-white photograph can sharpen the outlines of a subject better than a coloured one.

The other category uses the original theme as a take-off point for further improvisation and composition: The distinguishing features of the original have been preserved, but new inner voices, harmonies from late romanticism, and pianistic ornaments are

added. These musical reproductions are essential sources for throwing light on the musical style of the romantic pianists, which greatly depended on momentary inspiration.

Today the art of transcription is dying out, it is caught in no man's land between elite and mass culture.

Friedman's piano arrangements bring a touch of refreshing decadence, and he reaches further into Bach's universe than many of his forerunners. Others may in the first place be more interested in the intellectual aspects in Bach, whereas Friedman takes an undisguised interest in the immediately stirring qualities. His transcriptions include chamber music inspired by the dance music of the wiggled age: "Gavotte", "Sicilienne", and "Bourrée". In contrast to these are the choral preludes: "The Saviour of the Heathen Now Comes" and "Awake, the Voice is Sounding", examples of Bach's more introverted musical art. Orchestral music is represented by the festive first movement from the "Brandenburg Concerto" No. 3, whereas the arias "Sheep May Safely Graze" and "My Heart Ever Faithful" originate from

Bach's cantatas. The CD finishes with perhaps Bach's most famous piece, the organ improvisation "Toccatà and Fugue" in D minor. It has been played so often that a well-known organist added "*The Epidemic*" to the title. Let us then for a while forget that according to some scholars this work was not even composed by Bach...

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(Translated by Ruth Boye Jensen)



Ignaz Friedman

The pianist *Lars Boye Jensen* (b. 1957) has his background in a broad variety of genres from jazz and light music to classical. Ever since he heard *Victor Borge* perform a little waltz by Ignaz Friedman, he has taken a growing interest in so-called piano transcriptions. His discography includes, besides this CD, a collection of virtuoso piano paraphrases on Viennese waltzes by *Johann Strauss*. At present he is preparing a new CD of *George Gershwin's* music to be published in connection with Gershwin's centenary in 1998.

Ignaz Friedman (1882-1948) was among the greatest piano virtuosos of the century. Besides his extensive and widespread concert activities which also brought him to Denmark, where he lived during World War I, he created a large number of musical compositions. Friedman also found time to arrange music by other composers, including these Bach transcriptions recorded here for the first time.

IGNAZ FRIEDMAN (1882-1948):
The Piano Transcriptions on Music by J.S. Bach
Lars Boye Jensen, piano

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|-------|---|-------|
| [1] | Gavotte (Partita für Violine solo, BWV 1006)
Gavotte (Partita for Solo Violin, BWV 1006) | 3:38 |
| [2] | Sicilienne (Sonate für Flöte und Cembalo, BWV 1031)
Sicilienne (Sonata for Flute and Harpsichord, BWV 1031) | 2:25 |
| [3] | Bourrée (Partita für Violine solo, BWV 1005)
Bourrée (Partita for Solo Violin, BWV 1005) | 3:31 |
| [4] | Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (Choralvorspiel, BWV 659a)
The Saviour of the Heathen Now Comes (Choral Prelude, BWV 659a) | 4:41 |
| [5] | Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (Choralvorspiel, BWV 645)
Awake, the Voice is Sounding (Choral Prelude, BWV 645) | 3:44 |
| [6] | Brandenburger Konzert No. 3 (1. Satz)
Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 (1. Movement) | 6:50 |
| [7] | Schafe können sicher weiden (Kantate No. 208)
Sheep May Safely Graze (Cantata No. 208) | 5:43 |
| [8] | Mein gläubiges Herze, frohlocke, sing', scherze (Kantate No. 68)
My Heart Ever Faithful (Cantata No. 68) | 3:15 |
| [9] | Toccatà und Fuge, d-moll (BWV 565)
Toccatà and Fugue, D minor (BWV 565) | 10:11 |

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