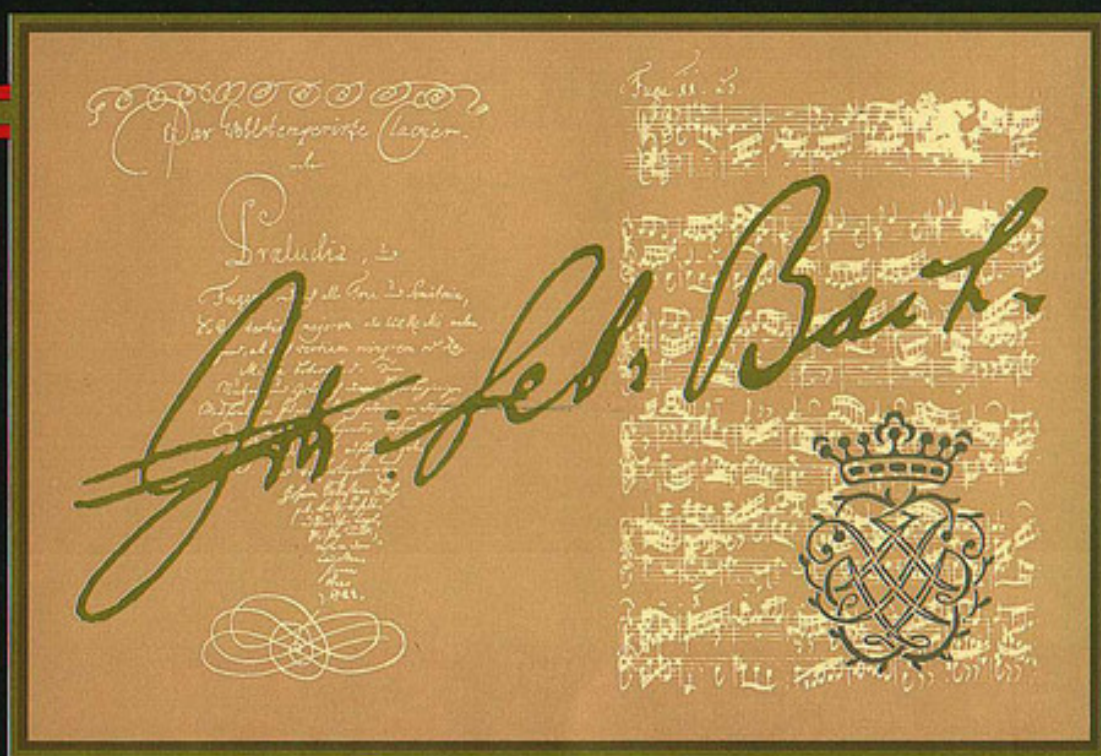




# J. S. Bach

Le clavier bien tempéré, livre II



André  
Volkonsky

clavecin



# JEAN SEBASTIEN BACH

Le clavier bien tempéré

Livre II

André VOLKONSKY, clavecin

*natural sound in a natural acoustic space*

Plutôt que privilégier l'analyse sonore par une technique sophistiquée et envahissante dont l'hyper-réalisme détruit l'atmosphère musicale, LYRINX a choisi de restituer, dans un espace acoustique naturel, toute la richesse et la plénitude du son, seul moyen de préserver l'ineffable émotion de la musique.

Techniquement, cela se traduit par l'utilisation d'un seul système microphonique sur une électronique mise au point par nos soins pour respecter totalement le dégradé harmonique donc la clarté, la cohérence et la subtilité des timbres, et pour éliminer toutes les duretés sonores, défaut fréquent des électroniques industrielles, que l'on prend à tort pour des qualités de précision et de dynamique.

*Rather than giving preference to tonal analysis by the use of sophisticated and overpowering techniques whose hyper-realism destroys all musical atmosphere, LYRINX has chosen to rehabilitate, in natural acoustical surroundings, all the richness and fullness of the sound : the only way to preserve the ineffable emotion of the music.*

*Technically, this is achieved by the use of just one microphonic system with our personally perfected electronics in order to wholly respect the harmonic graduations, and thus the clarity, coherence and subtlety of the timbres, and to eliminate any harshness of tone, a frequent weakness in industrial electronic recordings, which is often mistaken for qualities of precision and dynamism.*

## COMPACT-DISC 1

56'33

1	PRÉLUDE N° 1 EN DO MAJEUR BWV 870	1'47
2	FUGUE N° 1 EN DO MAJEUR BWV 870	1'46
3	PRÉLUDE N° 12 EN FA MINEUR BWV 881	2'27
4	FUGUE N° 12 EN FA MINEUR BWV 881	2'38
5	PRÉLUDE N° 21 EN SI BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 890	3'03
6	FUGUE N° 21 EN SI BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 890	2'44
7	PRÉLUDE N° 7 EN MI BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 876	1'47
8	FUGUE N° 7 EN MI BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 876	2'28
9	PRÉLUDE N° 18 EN SOL DIESE MINEUR BWV 887	1'52
10	FUGUE N° 18 EN SOL DIESE MINEUR BWV 887	3'41
11	PRÉLUDE N° 4 EN DO DIESE MINEUR BWV 873	4'18
12	FUGUE N° 4 EN DO DIESE MINEUR BWV 873	2'05
13	PRÉLUDE N° 13 EN FA DIESE MAJEUR BWV 882	3'04
14	FUGUE N° 13 EN FA DIESE MAJEUR BWV 882	2'21
15	PRÉLUDE N° 24 EN SI MINEUR BWV 893	3'44
16	FUGUE N° 24 EN SI MINEUR BWV 893	2'00
17	PRÉLUDE N° 10 EN MI MINEUR BWV 879	1'42
18	FUGUE N° 10 EN MI MINEUR BWV 879	2'44
19	PRÉLUDE N° 19 EN LA MAJEUR BWV 888	2'09
20	FUGUE N° 19 EN LA MAJEUR BWV 888	1'49
21	PRÉLUDE N° 6 EN RÉ MINEUR BWV 875	1'45
22	FUGUE N° 6 EN RÉ MINEUR BWV 875	1'51
23	PRÉLUDE N° 15 EN SOL MAJEUR BWV 884	1'24
24	FUGUE N° 15 EN SOL MAJEUR BWV 884	1'25

1	PRÉLUDE N° 2 EN DO MINEUR BWV 871	1'25
2	FUGUE N° 2 EN DO MINEUR BWV 871	2'25
3	PRÉLUDE N° 11 EN FA MAJEUR BWV 880	2'14
4	FUGUE N° 11 EN FA MAJEUR BWV 880	2'02
5	PRÉLUDE N° 22 EN SI BÉMOL MINEUR BWV 891	2'15
6	FUGUE N° 22 EN SI BÉMOL MINEUR BWV 891	3'06
7	PRÉLUDE N° 8 EN MI BÉMOL MINEUR BWV 877	1'46
8	FUGUE N° 8 EN MI BÉMOL MINEUR BWV 877	5'10
9	PRÉLUDE N° 17 EN LA BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 886	3'37
10	FUGUE N° 17 EN LA BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 886	2'36
11	PRÉLUDE N° 3 EN RÉ BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 872	1'23
12	FUGUE N° 3 EN RÉ BÉMOL MAJEUR BWV 872	2'31
13	PRÉLUDE N° 14 EN FA DIESE MINEUR BWV 883	3'15
14	FUGUE N° 14 EN FA DIESE MINEUR BWV 883	3'56
15	PRÉLUDE N° 23 EN SI MAJEUR BWV 892	1'36
16	FUGUE N° 23 EN SI MAJEUR BWV 892	4'01
17	PRÉLUDE N° 9 EN MI MAJEUR BWV 878	1'42
18	FUGUE N° 9 EN MI MAJEUR BWV 878	3'06
19	PRÉLUDE N° 20 EN LA MINEUR BWV 889	2'15
20	FUGUE N° 20 EN LA MINEUR BWV 889	1'56
21	PRÉLUDE N° 5 EN RÉ MAJEUR BWV 874	2'57
22	FUGUE N° 5 EN RÉ MAJEUR BWV 874	1'55
23	PRÉLUDE N° 16 EN SOL MINEUR BWV 885	2'00
24	FUGUE N° 16 EN SOL MINEUR BWV 885	4'01

## Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

"To live is to uphold a form."

Hölderlin

Twenty-two years separate the first book from the second! Contemporaneous with the '*Goldberg Variations*' and the '*Musical Offering*', the second book belongs to the last period of the master. A succinct analysis will permit the evaluation of the distance covered.

### HARMONIC LANGUAGE :

Book I : Opposition between the chromatic and the diatonic worlds. Composition of pieces in all the tonalities.

Book II : Integration of the chromatic world into the diatonic world. Hierarchy of the chords no longer based on major or minor modes in the true meaning of the words, but on the tension provoked by the intervals, resulting from total chromaticism – consequently, incursions into the outer regions of the tonal pole.

It suffices to compare the Preludes in C major from the two books – the difference leaps to the eye.

The development of the harmonic sequences attains an extraordinary density in the Fugue in e flat minor. Not before '*Tristan*' is there to be found such a conception of harmonic relationships based on ambiguity, relationships which, subsequently, were to lead to the suspension of tonality by Schönberg.

There is an evident kinship between certain Preludes (f minor, g sharp minor) with, for example, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's '*Prussian Sonatas*' particularly in the use of appoggiaturas! However, with Bach-the-father, it must be underlined that any novelties are always the generating force of the forms. Nothing of the like with the sons who, prisoners of fashion and style, were interested only by the effect that these novelties could produce, and inevitably foundered in sentimentality.

### GENERAL TECHNIQUE :

Book I : In a general manner, Bach displays his skills and abilities.

The Preludes are little developed, of a great concision – broken chords, two or three voice inventions, airs, pieces of the '*allemande*' or '*courante*' type. There is one exception however

– the Prelude in E flat major which could be a premonition of the technique of Book II (with a certain heaviness in the demonstration of the writing which is not to be found later.)

The Fugues are often erudite, with a very clear delimitation of the sections :

- a) Characteristic themes, thus easily recognized ;
- b) Episodes defined as contrasts, often simply sequences fulfilling a function of relaxation (in this respect, the Fugue in b minor – in which the tension created by the exacerbated chromaticism of the theme and its developments is resolved by a sequential diatonic episode – is exemplary.
- c) Audible manipulations of the theme – inversions, augmentations, strettos ; certain Fugues have several subjects.

Book II : The Preludes are much developed, often taking on as much importance as the Fugue itself, if not more (eg. c sharp minor). An amplitude evoking the first movements of the *'English Suites'* or the *Partitas* (eg. D major) ; bipartition (with repeats) occasionally with an allegro Sonata-form structure (g sharp minor).

Fugues : the themes are not particularly characterised, with a tendency to continuous and consistent development ; episodes conceived either as variations on the subject or on the countersubject (eg. Fugue in c minor).

To attain this result – the themes are no longer characteristic – their entries are no longer perceived. Exemplary in this respect is the Fugue in c sharp minor, based on an unique motion and in which the manipulations of the theme (inversions etc.) do not stand out at all.

The Fugue in c minor from the second Book may also be compared with that in g minor from the first : as much as the 'stretto' may be underlined in one case (see what I can do !), as much, in the other, it acts as a melodic-harmonic conclusion. Even more astounding is the Fugue in D major which is nothing but one immense 'stretto'.

In the Fugue in g minor, the countersubject is an emanation of the subject and so acquires the same importance. The unity of the vertical and the horizontal is also most striking : the theme is founded on a basis of thirds, a relationship which structures the whole Fugue.

With these examples one can see just how much Bach was turned

## *Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

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towards the future. Perhaps it was in order to underline this that he included a few pieces of an archaic character, like the Fugue in e minor for example.

The Book II, then, constitutes along with the *'Art of Fugue'* a veritable synthesis of all the evolution of the master : the domination of instrumental writing from his Köthen period, enrichment of the harmonic language by the introduction of chromatic thought into a diatonic structure (the great laboratory being the harmonisation of the chorales of Luther), the appearance of the development by variation and thus of the uninterrupted melody (in the Cantatas and, above all, in the Schübler Chorales), a tendency to absolute unity manifest in all his last works.

Evidently the attitude of the interpreter should be inspired by these ideas. The annoying habit some pianists have of always bringing out the theme is to be particularly avoided. It is the continuous flow of musical thought that must be at the base of all conceptions of interpretation, expression being at the service of the form.

For auditory commodity, the Preludes and Fugues have been recorded in a cycle of fifths, and not in chromatic order.

ANDRÉ VOLKONSKY

Translated by DAVID SABEY

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### ANDRÉ VOLKONSKY, CLAVECINISTE & COMPOSITEUR.

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Volkonsky. A name with Tolstoian remembrances: he belongs to the very family of the princes appearing in "War and Peace". He was born of emigrated parents, spent his youth in Geneva, completed his music studies at the academy of music, under the direction of Johnny Aubert, Dinu Lipatti. In 1947, as another six thousand Russians, the Volkonskys returned to their native land.

In 1950, Volkonsky attended the academy of music in Moskow, in the composition classes: in spite of his earlier formation, he was not keen on piano studies. He meant to go on with his composition studies, and, besides, managed to enter the sacrosanct "Composers' Union". Until 1962, it did not bring him too many problems, in spite of a growing tension due to the evolution of his

style of composition, less and less consistent with the admitted rule.

*"Eventually, I was ousted in 1962. Ever since, until I left the country in 1973, I could not hear a single piece of my music.*

*What gave me an opportunity was the fact I could play the harpsichord: There was no playable instrument in U.S.S.R. until 1953. Very precisely until a concert given by Gunther Ramin, in which he performed a Passion by Bach. There was a harpsichord there, a really awful instrument, but a playable one, and I jumped on it. I was then the only one who could perform, and I did so rather successfully: a success due to the exoticism of the deed, if I may say so, because it was rather new. And also, I suppose, because officials liked to see me play the harpsichord better than if took to "ideological subversion" through my compositions.*

*"That was the origin of my activity on ancient music, first with Rudolf Barchai's orchestra – which I contributed to found – then with Moskow's Madrigal Ensemble, which I founded in 1964, and which is still working. With the second, we recorded a series of records, some of them were distributed in the West, and we went on several tours: we appeared in many concerts, up to 120 per season.*

*"Besides, I kept composing, with no opportunity at all of seeing my music played. I would occasionally send some pieces to the West: Boulez created one of my*

*works in Berlin, also the Domaine Musical played my works in Paris. I was even edited by Universal... But the most striking event, the most moving experience I have ever had was being dedicated a whole day during the 1975 Music Festival in La Rochelle: four concerts of my works were given. And that day, I could hear a production, extending over fifteen years, of works that I had never heard before..."*

It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. More or less absolutely cut off from European musical culture, Volkonsky was able to keep at a liberating distance from the fashions of the time. On the other hand, his long journeys to Caucasus, to Central Asia opened before him the gate to what has always been oriental music and genuine popular culture.

In 1973, he managed to leave U.S.S.R.

*"The Europe I came back to is different from the one I left. A Europe deprived of any systems of values, obsessed by the necessity of producing and consuming. A supermarket. Twice an exile, I am, after all, neither a Russian, nor an Occidental."*

He settled in Geneva, where he founded in 1981 the Hoc Opus Ensemble with whom he recorded for Lyrinx Frescobaldi and Sigismondo d'India. Then he settled in Aix-en-Provence where he composes, and plays ancient music.

*Extracts from interviews of André Volkonsky*



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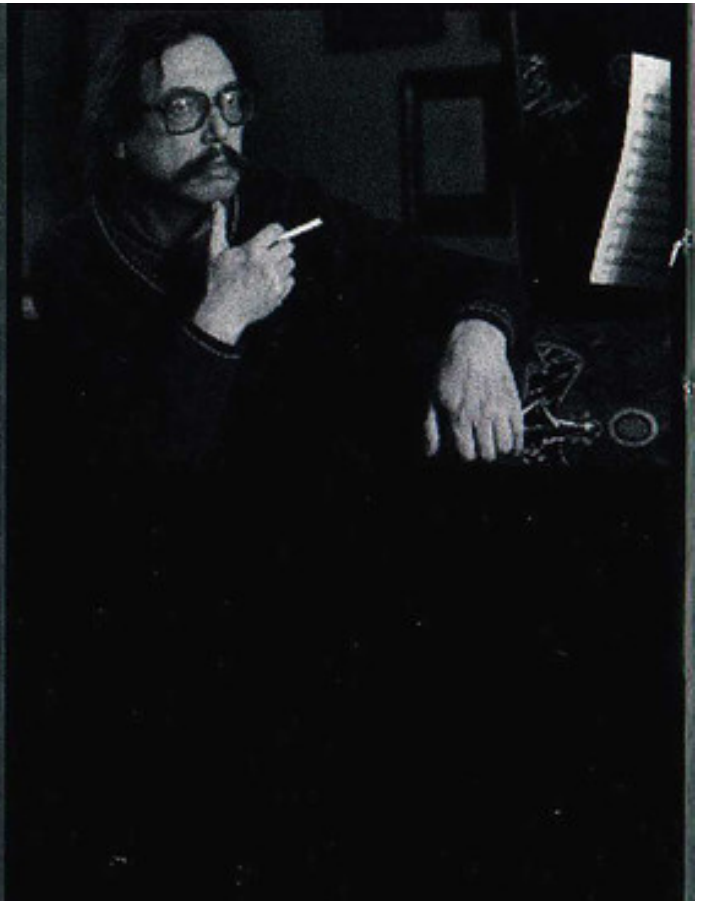


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Ce coffret a pu être réalisé grâce à la Fondation BELAIEFF M.P.



André Volkonsky joue une copie de Ruckers par Dobson.



Jean Sébastien

BACH

LE CLAVIER BIEN TEMPÉRÉ

LIVRE II



*André Volkonsky*

clavecin

