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C.P.E. BACH | W.A. MOZART

Keyboard Variations

Ewald Demeyere harpsichord



SUPER AUDIO CD

To my dad

C.P.E. BACH | W.A. MOZART
Keyboard Variations
Ewald Demeyere harpsichord

C.P.E. BACH (1714-1788)

[1] **9 Variations on an Arioso in C Major, Wq 118/10** **21:10**

W.A. MOZART (1756-1791)

[2] **12 Variations on "La belle Françoise", KV 353/300f** **18:06**

C.P.E. BACH

[3] **12 Variations on "Les Folies d'Espagne", Wq 118/9** **9:54**

W.A. MOZART

[4] **12 Variations on "Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman", KV 265/300e** **14:19**

Total time 63:32



Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) are not composers whose works are regularly included in the same concert or recording program. One reason for this is probably of a stylistic nature: Bach wrote in the *empfindsame Stil* and in the *Sturm und Drang* style, while Mozart used a language that today is described as classical. For me, however, it is precisely this stylistic difference between the two composers, whose four works on this album were written between 1777 and 1782, that makes such a musical encounter so fascinating. Another reason why compositions by Bach and Mozart are not often programmed together seems to have to do with the choice of instrument. Today, in the context of historically informed performances, Bach's solo keyboard repertoire is mainly played on the clavichord and that of Mozart on the fortepiano. Both men, however, also played the harpsichord frequently, a fact which I found so interesting as to choose precisely that keyboard instrument for this recording in works that I believe are just as convincing on that instrument as they are on their respective instrument of reference.

Within the broad repertoire that Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach composed for keyboard, variation sets have a rather modest place; in his long career he only wrote twelve such cycles.

Bach's Arioso in C Major with nine variations Wq 118/10 is an adaptation of the one-movement Sonata Wq 91/4 from the *Claviersonaten mit einer Violine und einem Violoncell zur Begleitung, Zweyte Sammlung*. The original composition, published in 1777, is a set of variations for which Bach later—we do not know

exactly when—wrote varied repeats. As a result of this intervention, the varying in Wq 118/10 takes place not only at the level of the theme as a whole, but also at the level of every half of the theme and the variations. This was not the first time that Bach employed such a fascinating compositional technique. In 1760, he published his *Sechs Sonaten mit veränderten Reprisen*, the sixth of which is also a set of variations *mit veränderten Reprisen*. (Wq 50/6 and Wq 91/4, by the way, show that it was not uncommon at that time to give a set of variations the title 'Sonata'.) The theme underlying Wq 91/4 and Wq 118/10 is a slightly earlier composition by Bach: the first of his *Sechs leichte kleine Clavier-Stücke* Wq 116/23, a collection written in 1775 but not published during his lifetime.

The twelve variations on *Les Folies d'Espagne* Wq 118/9 were composed in 1778, but they were only published posthumously in 1803. A possible explanation for this is that Bach composed this piece for personal use. It may seem somewhat strange that Bach chose to write galant variations on *La Folia*, an old-fashioned musical idiom used by countless composers before him. (Arcangelo Corelli wrote what is probably today's best-known set of variations on this theme in 1700). In my opinion, it is precisely this tension between old and new, between the somewhat archaic character of *La Folia* and Bach's unique and 'modern' language, that makes Wq 118/9 so exciting.

Mozart's keyboard variations span almost his entire life, resulting in fourteen sets of variations that have been transmitted to us. His two earliest sets—the variations on *Laat ons juichen, Batavieren!* KV 24 and the variations on an old

version of the Dutch national anthem KV 25—date from January and February 1766, respectively. His last set of variations—the variations on *Ein Weib ist das herrlichste Ding* KV 613—was written in March 1791, the year he died.

For this recording, I chose two of Mozart's sets of variations on a French song: the variations on *La belle Française* KV 353/300f and the variations on *Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman* KV 265/300e. Initially, it was thought that both cycles were written in 1778 in Paris, where Mozart stayed from the end of March until the end of September. However, research by Wolfgang Plath has shown that the two works did not originate in Paris in 1778, but rather in Vienna in 1781 or 1782.

For a long time, the source of the theme of Mozart's variations on *La belle Française*, variations that are among the finest he composed, remained unclear. In the 1930s, however, Georges de Saint-Foix unravelled this mystery. In a potpourri (by a certain Mrs. Kamermann, *maîtresse de clavecin*) for harpsichord or fortepiano *sur le Départ, et la Mort de M. Malbrough...*, he found the title *Les Adieux de M. à Mme Malbrough*. In this piece, the hero addresses his wife with the words *Adieu donc, Dame française*, to almost the same melody that Mozart uses in KV 353/300f. Mozart's variations on *La belle Française* were first published in Vienna in 1786.

Like the variations on *La belle Française*, Mozart's variations on *Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman* contain twelve variations following the theme, a structure often used in southern Germany and Austria at the time. As far as we know, the famous melody first appeared in 1761 and became one of the most beloved themes in

Paris in the 1770s. In 1774, the song was published for the first time under the title *Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman*. The set of variations was first published in Vienna in 1785 and is dedicated to Josepha Auernhammer, a student of Mozart.

*Since a musician can only move an audience if he himself is moved,
it is necessary that he can empathize with all the moods that he wants
to convey to his audience.*

- Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach



Ewald Demeyere

Harpichordist Ewald Demeyere believes that conveying the emotional content of a composition is a musician's most important task. Since each period has its specifics, however, he intends to combine emotion with historical keyboard technique and performance practice in such a way as to obtain as captivating an interpretation as possible. Demeyere's research, which, among others, resulted in a PhD and the publication of a book *Johann Sebastian Bach's Art of Fugue—Performance Practice Based on German Eighteenth-Century Theory* (2013), is never an end in itself but always has to serve the eloquence of the musical performance.

Demeyere has taken part in more than 100 CD recordings, many of which with chamber and solo repertoire.

As a player of chamber music, Demeyere works with, amongst others, Barthold Kuijken and Vinciane Baudhuin (*Duo Capricornus*).

He was a jury member for the *Paola Bernardi International Harpsichord Competition* in 2013 in Bologna. In 2018, he won the *CPEB: CW Counterpoint Contest*, with a unanimous verdict from the jury that his *Ricercar a 5 per Cembalo* was "the most accomplished and natural in its flow".

Demeyere leads the section of baroque music at the *Institut Supérieur de Musique et de Pédagogie* in Namur, where he also teaches harpsichord, partimento, improvisation and basso continuo. At the *Royal Conservatory of Antwerp* he teaches partimento, improvisation, oratorio and historically informed performance practice.

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This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic & Musikelectronic Geithain monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



**NORTHSTAR
RECORDING**
by **BERT VAN DER WOLF**



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deSingel

deSingel, a site of grandeur and adventure

deSingel is an impressive architectural project on the outskirts of Antwerp, designed by Léon Stynen (1899-1990) and Stéphane Beel (°1955) with love and respect for the arts. Thanks to their brilliant architecture, scale and experiment encounter one another here in music, theatre, dance and architecture, in performances, concerts and exhibitions, in art education and research. deSingel is a place for the contemporary, critical and cross-border canon and a breeding ground for artistic creation, new trends and insights.

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