

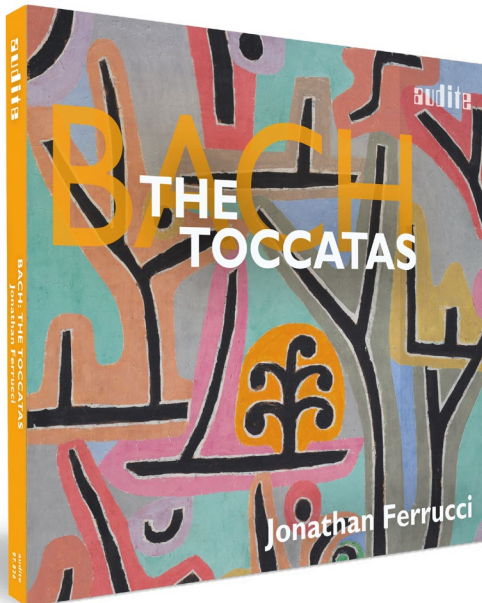
Bach's playground of ideas

„Music and Yoga are both tools of enquiry and introspection. They are practices of devotion.”

THE BACH TOCCATAS

Jonathan Ferrucci, piano

Johann Sebastian Bach's seven keyboard toccatas are among his "rebellious" youthful works: experimental in form, startlingly bold in expression, powerful in the design of the fugues. The Italian-Australian pianist Jonathan Ferrucci regards the pieces as a "musical laboratory" in which Bach ultimately found his own style.



Even their genesis seems mysterious: there are no surviving manuscripts of Johann Sebastian Bach's keyboard toccatas. Scholars assume, however, that they were written during Bach's time in Arnstadt and his early Weimar period, as he gradually made a name for himself as a renowned organist. And it comes as no surprise that he chose the toccata as his musical playground: ever since the Roman composer Girolamo Frescobaldi, the toccata served as a kind of musical laboratory in which anything could be tried out with impunity. There are glitteringly virtuoso improvisations alongside strict but extremely energetic fugues, expressive arias as well as lively, folksy dances: Bach compiled entertaining suites and potpourris with much freedom, but always allowing them to breathe within great dramatic arcs.

Jonathan Ferrucci is convinced that the toccatas rank among Bach's most interesting keyboard works. "He is bubbling over with ideas and always creates abrupt contrasts when you least expect them. There is this wild, youthful energy with which he explores all the affects and formal possibilities of the music of the time. And when I play it, I feel as though I were composing the music together with Bach in that moment – that's what creates this incredible sense of spontaneity and his delight in invention."

Born in Florence to Italian-Australian parents, Ferrucci's childhood was already characterised by the glorious history of the Renaissance and Baroque periods and the vast Australian landscape: he has played and loved Bach from a young age.

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