

Bach & Sons

David Threasher
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'The largest and best-known work is the father's G minor English Suite, sensitively played, sparsely pedalled, tastefully ornamented and subtly inflected'





Rustem Hayroudinoff pf Onyx
ONYX4268

Programmes tracing influences on Bach via the music of his familial forebears – principally vocal and organ works – are not uncommon but this collection turns the telescope around and focuses on the fallout of the great JS’s impact on the works of four of his sons. It’s something of a departure for Rustem Hayroudinoff, hitherto most closely associated (on records, at least) with the music of the Romantic Russians, but this release comes at a fulcrum point in his career, following his recovery from focal dystonia, a condition that can so often be disastrous for musicians. Earlier this year he recounted for *Gramophone* online the onset of the disorder and how he found ways to beat it. This return to the piano, then, is the belated result of a long-cherished project to explore this repertoire.

The largest and best-known work is the father’s G minor *English Suite*, sensitively played, sparsely pedalled, tastefully ornamented and subtly inflected. Then the two eldest composer sons show how they imported the Baroque in which they would have been immersed into a new generation, a new era and a new range of styles. Well-learned counterpoint informs a tortuously chromatic fugue by Wilhelm Friedemann (*b1710*), while the *Fantasia* that follows alternates fingery brilliance with austere French *ouverture*-style dotted rhythms and encloses a fugue on a subject dad would have recognised. The discontinuities and subversive juxtapositions between fiery virtuosity and melancholy lyricism in a pair of sonatas by Carl Philipp Emanuel (*b1714*) prove that while the form would find its first perfection way south in Vienna, its elements were alchemised in a north German crucible.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is the youngest apples that fell furthest from the tree. Parity between hands cedes to melody and accompaniment in a sonata deceptively labelled ‘leichte’ (‘easy’) by Johann Christoph Friedrich (*b1732*), which the innocent ear might easily mistake for Haydn. Johann Christian (*b1735*) was the sole son to escape not only north Germany (for Italy) but also the family’s Lutheran faith. Settling in London, he embraced the fast-forming Classical style in refined, melodious works that would soon catch the ear of the visiting Mozarts.

Presented roughly chronologically and played with obvious affection on a fine-sounding instrument, this is an album that enlightens as surely as it entertains. A heartfelt welcome back to a fine artist.



Bach & Sons
Rustem Hayroudinoff

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Bach, J S: English Suite No. 3 in G minor, BWV808
Rustem Hayroudinoff

- I. Prélude
- II. Allemande
- III. Courante
- IV. Sarabande
- V. Gavotte I - Gavotte II (ou la Musette)
- VI. Gigue

Bach, W F: Eight Fugues Without Pedal

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