

Andrea  
BACCHETTI plays  
**BACH**

THE TOCCATAS



CDS 658 - DDD  
DIGITAL RECORDING

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# JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

(Eisenach, 1685 - Leipzig, 1750)

## THE TOCCATAS

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ANDREA BACCHETTI

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## J.S. Bach - TOCCATAS BWV 910-916

<b>Toccatà in G Major BWV 916</b>	<b>07'43''</b>
1 - Without tempo indication	02'25''
2 - Adagio	02'20''
3 - Allegro e presto	02'58''
<b>Toccatà in E minor BWV 914</b>	<b>08'43''</b>
4 - Without tempo indication	00'45''
5 - Un poco allegro	01'32''
6 - Adagio	02'40''
7 - Fuga a 3 – Allegro	03'46''
<b>Toccatà in D minor BWV913 – Earlier version</b>	<b>16'10''</b>
8 - Without tempo indication	02'32''
9 - Without tempo indication	06'17''
10 - Adagiosissimo	02'49''
11 - Fuga	04'32''
<b>Toccatà in G minor BWV 915</b>	<b>10'29''</b>
12 - Without tempo indication	01'25''
13 - Allegro	02'57''
14 - Adagio	02'04''
15 - Fuga	04'03''

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<b>Tocatta in D Major BWV 912 – Later version</b>	<b>14'38"</b>
16 - Without tempo indication	00'51"
17 - Without tempo indication	04'00"
18 - Adagio	01'54"
19 - Andante	02'51"
20 - Con discrezione	01'23"
21 - Without tempo indication	03'39"
<b>Tocatta in F sharp minor BWV 910</b>	<b>09'12"</b>
22 - Without tempo indication	01'29"
23 - Without tempo indication	01'59"
24 - Presto e Staccato	02'23"
25 - Without tempo indication	01'13"
26 - Without tempo indication	02'08"
<b>Tocatta in C minor BWV 911</b>	<b>12'21"</b>
27 - Without tempo indication	01'07"
28 - Adagio	02'54"
29 - Allegro	03'01"
30 - Adagio – Allegro	05'19"
Total time	79'43"

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When we talk about Johann Sebastian Bach, the term “toccata” immediately brings to mind the most famous of all his compositions, the very icon of his music, the *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor* for organ BWV 565, one of those compositions of which even people who have never taken any interest in “classical” music have heard the memorable incipit at least once. The *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor* is merely the most famous of the many works that bear this title found throughout Bach’s impressive catalogue. Alongside the organ toccatas, the catalogue that Wolfgang Schmieder first published in 1950, source of the famous abbreviation BWV that traditionally accompanies all the works of the Kantor, included seven more toccatas for keyboard instruments (harpsichord or clavichord), numbered BWV 910-916. Bach scholars almost unanimously ascribe these works to Bach’s youth and believe that he wrote them during his years in Weimar (1708-1717) or perhaps even earlier, and that, unlike other works of his, he never collected them in an organic collection. No autograph manuscript of any of these works has come down to us; the main sources are therefore coeval manuscripts which are certainly reliable, and there are no doubts about the authenticity of the compositions, whose genuinely Bachian character is, indeed, evident at first listening. As Alberto Basso writes in his *Frau Musica* (vol. 1, Page 504), “the abundance of sources is a clear sign of the diffusion that these works enjoyed among Bach’s pupils and followers, also on account of the quality of the prototypes of

concerto form that the toccatas present, with their complex structure, mixture of different styles, based on contrasting rhythms and solutions and on marked dynamic oppositions. In fact, it is the concerto principle that dominates with its dialogue between *solì* and *tutti*, but with ample room for free invention in the style of the toccata “passeggio” or with strict respect for fugue style.”

The *Toccatas* BWV 910-917, however, are not particular popular with harpsichordists or pianists, and in terms of numbers of recordings stand well behind the *Two-part Inventions*, the *Sinfonias*, the *English* and *French Suites*. Generally little loved by soloists (with, as usual, the exception of the great, anti-conformist Glenn Gould, who also recorded them), they rarely feature in concert programmes. It may then be useful to listen to them here all together, if only to appreciate the wealth of aesthetic and formal solutions that the young Bach offers in the years when he most clearly sought to show off his own virtuoso talents. In Bach’s time the Italian word “toccata”, and the musical product it indicates, already had more than a century of history behind it, and had been illustrated in the works of some of the most famous composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, like Claudio Merulo, Girolamo Frescobaldi and Bernardo Pasquini. In the context of Bach’s work, the organ toccata, often of virtuoso, introductory character, is generally followed by a fugue; but in the *Toccatas* BWV 910-916, as we will see, the formal and stylistic solutions are many and varied. The “concerto principle” mentioned by

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Alberto Basso in the passage quoted above, emerges with particular clarity in the *Toccatà in G major* BWV 916 with which our CD opens: in three movements, the composition opens with a movement in fast tempo (the toccata proper) in which the principle of alternation of *tutti* and *solì* is very clear, whilst the slow central movement is a delicate *Adagio* in E minor in Italian style. The fugue appears as the third and final movement (*Allegro e Presto*) and contains virtuoso passages and descending scales which look back to the opening movement. The rest of the compositions are all in four or more sections. The *Toccatà in E minor* BWV 914 opens with a brief prelude followed by a double four-part fugue (*Un poco Allegro*) of great beauty; a new slow movement (*Adagio*) of more fanciful and improvising character introduces a second fugue (*Allegro*), this time in three parts. The form, made up of two preludes followed by two fugues, is respected again in the *Toccatas in D minor* BWV 913 (of which we offer here the first of the two versions that have come down to us) and in *G minor* BWV 915. For the brilliant *Toccatà in D major* BWV 912 – with the BWV 914, probably the most famous in the whole collection – we have recorded the second, more extensive version realised by Bach, which presents quite a complex formal structure. The composition, in fact, opens with a sort of three-part fantasy [tracks 16-18], followed by the first of the two fugues, in F sharp minor. After a brief intermezzo (*Con discrezione*) the concluding fugue appears, a sort of gigue of great effect. In the *Toccatà in F sharp minor* BWV 910, structured in five dis-

tinct sections, there are two fugues, the first for three parts, the second for four. The *Toccatà in C minor* BWV 911, finally, presents an ample three-part fugue of 175 bars. As Alberto Basso writes, “the composition starts up with a freely-handled prelude episode [track 27], followed by an *Adagio* in archaic style [track 28] whose final part makes use of a rhythmic-melodic cell that has already appeared in the opening. The brief passage soon makes way for the fugue which brings two distinct expositions [tracks 29 and 30: the second may be considered a double fugue], both concluding with passages of free improvisation.”

Daniilo Prefumo

(Translated by Timothy Alan Shaw)



*"Played with elegance and zest, work wonderfully on piano"*  
(*The Observer*)

Born in 1977, **Andrea Bacchetti** received at an early age the counsel of musicians such as Karajan, Magaloff, Berio and Horszowski. He made his debut at the age of eleven with *I Solisti Veneti* directed by Claudio Scimone. Since then he has played several times in international festivals in Lucerne, Salzburg, Belgrade, Santander, Antibes, Bologna, Brescia and Bergamo, Turin, Milan (MI.TO), Como, La Coruña, Pesaro, Spoleto, Bellinzona, Ravenna, Ravello, Bad Wörishofen, Husum, Sagra Musicale Umbra; and in prestigious music venues: the Konzerthaus (Berlin); the Salle Pleyel, Salle Gaveau and Piano 4\*\*\*\* (Paris); the Rudolfinum Dvorák Hall (Prague); the Teatro alla Scala and Sala Verdi (Milan); the Teatro Coliseo (Buenos Aires); the Ateneo Romano (Bucharest); the Rachmaninoff Saal, The Moscow State Philharmonic Society, the Moscow Conservatory; Auditorium Nacional de España (great performers cycle), the Teatro Real and Teatro Monumental (Madrid); the Mozarteum Brasileiro (San Paolo); Sociedad Filarmonica (Lima); the Zentrum Paul Klee (Berne); the Gewandhaus (Leipzig); the Scarlatti Association (Naples); the Università La Sapienza and the Accademia Filarmonica (Rome); with leading conductors and orchestras such as: the Lucerne Festival Strings, the Camerata Accademica Salzburg, RTVE

Madrid, ONBA Bordeaux and the MDR Sinfonie-Orchester Leipzig. He has been on tours in Japan and South America. He works with Rocco Filippini,

Domenico Nardio, the *Pražák Quartet*, the *Ysaÿe Quartet* and the *Quartetto di Cremona*. Memorable among his international recordings are Bach's "English Suites" and the CD "Berio Piano Works" (DECCA); the DVD with the "Goldberg Variations" by Bach (Arthaus); the SACD with the "6 Sonatas" by Cherubini and the CD of Galuppi's Sonatas (RCA RED SEAL – Sony/Bmg). These recordings have all won numerous awards from the major specialist magazines and some of the world's leading newspapers. For Dynamic he recorded Bach's *Inventions and Sinfonias* last year. This is one of this recording company's most prize-winning publications. His concerts have been broadcast on radio by companies including: RadioTre (Italy), BBC Radio3 (UK), ORF (Austria), Radio France (also at the Roque d'Anthéron), RSI and DRS2 (Switzerland), New Zealand Radio, RNE (Spain), MDR Leipzig, and CBC Radio 3 (Canada).





**Also available:**

Andrea bacchetti plays Bach  
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