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All music was recorded live with no studio overdubs.

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Produced and Engineered by: *Rob Martens*

Mixed and Mastered by: *Rob Martens*

Recorded at: *Solid Sound, Inc. Ann Arbor, MI*

Duplication: *World Class Tapes, Ann Arbor, MI*

Art Direction & Graphic Design: *Marc Kempf*  
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"Mr. Nagel's interpretation of the Bach shows not only his fine command of the piano, but his constant searching for the true expressive possibilities of this music. His abilities as a pedagogue, as a performer and as a scholar are all synthesized to produce a very convincing result."

*Murray Perahia ~ Concert Artist*

"Hurrah for Louis Nagel who brings to this CD not only a harvest of refreshing repertoire, but an exciting musical intelligence combined with a brilliant technique."

*David Dubal ~ Professor of Piano Performance*  
*The Juilliard School, Author of the*  
*"The Art of the Piano"*

## Thank You

During my student days at The Juilliard School, I had the pleasure of studying piano literature with Joseph Bloch. His enthusiasm for all music was inspirational to me. Many of the pieces recorded here I first heard, or heard about in his classes. Now, thirty plus years later, may I say Thank You to him with this CD.

I wish to express my appreciation to the University of Michigan School of Music and Office of the Vice President for Research for providing the funding to make this CD possible.

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*Louis Nagel*  
Pianist

*Louis Nagel* was born in Louisville, Kentucky. He earned three degrees at the Juilliard School where he studied piano with Rosina Lhevinne and Josef Raieff and piano literature with Joseph Bloch. After graduation he coached with Vladimir Ashkenazy. He has concertized and lectured throughout the United States and abroad including performances in New York, Washington, D.C., Jerusalem, Sydney, Taiwan, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Budapest, Poland, and Italy. Since 1969 Louis Nagel has served on the piano faculty at the University of Michigan.

# Louis Nagel

Pianist

## FOUR Centuries of

# J.S. BACH



1 **Girolamo Frescobaldi:** [4:06]  
Toccatà

2 **Johann Sebastian Bach:** [12:24]  
Toccatà in D Major

3 **Johann Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer:** [1:54]  
Prelude and Fugue in F Major

4 **Johann Sebastian Bach:** [2:01]  
Prelude and Fugue in F Major

5 **Johann Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer:** [1:59]  
Prelude and Fugue in E Major

6 **Johann Sebastian Bach:** [8:54]  
Prelude and Fugue in E Major

7 **Johann Sebastian Bach:** [5:14]  
Prelude and Fugue in C Major

8 **Felix Mendelssohn:** [9:37]  
Prelude and Fugue in E Minor

9 **Paul Hindemith:** [2:17]  
Fuga Tertia in F (from the *Ludus Tonalis*)

10 **Dmitri Shostakovich:** [12:50]  
Prelude and Fugue in D Minor

### No, Johann Sebastian Bach did not live for four hundred years!

However, he occupies a pivotal position in the history of keyboard music. The works on this unusual CD span four centuries, exploring the influence of earlier composers upon Bach, Bach's own music, and his influence on later composers. Although some of these pieces were originally composed for the harpsichord, all of the works on this disc are performed on the modern concert grand by Steinway artist Louis Nagel.

**Girolamo Frescobaldi:** 1583, Ferrara - 1643, Rome  
Toccatà Number 1, *Book 2 of Toccatas*, 1627

This short but imaginative piece illustrates the stylistic freedom of Frescobaldi's toccatas. Although bound by no formal restrictions, the music is clearly structured. Many brief sections, some only a few measures in length, with wildly different characteristics are juxtaposed. An improvisatory feeling pervades the score, and the composer urges the performer to take certain liberties of tempo and ornamentation in his performance.

**Johann Sebastian Bach:** 1685, Eisenach - 1750, Leipzig  
Toccatà in D Major, *BWV 912*, 1710

Although this work comes nearly a century after the Frescobaldi Toccatà, the relationship seems clear. Again there is no pre-determined form. The five sections are very different from one another. Rapid changes of character occur, a sense of improvisation is ever present, but now the sections are much larger, the ideas are developed, and a sense of unity is great. A work of extreme virtuosity, it crackles with good humor and vitality. In both toccatas, I take liberties with the printed page.

**Johann Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer:** 1670 - 1746, Rastatt  
Ariadne Musica, 1695, Preludes and Fugues in F Major  
(*Number 10*) and E Major (*Number 8*)

These two embryonic pieces clearly were known to Bach, as can be seen by a comparison of the fugue subjects. The collection itself is a forerunner of the Well-tempered Clavier. Consisting of twenty (equally brief) preludes and fugues it employs nineteen of the twenty-four keys. The long pedal points in both preludes (not easy to achieve on the piano) indicate that the music was to be performed on the organ.

**Johann Sebastian Bach:** Preludes and Fugues in F Major *BWV 856*  
(*Book 1*), E Major *BWV 878* (*Book 2*) and C Major *BWV 846* (*Book 1*)

These are of course much more elaborate treatments of Fischer's materials. Rhythmic and melodic details are changed and the counterpoint, especially in the E Major Fugue, is much more complex. The Prelude and Fugue in C Major looks back to the older style of improvised arpeggiated prelude and ricercare. It anticipates the first prelude of Chopin's set, Opus 28, the first of Chopin's Etudes, opus 10, and perhaps the E Minor Prelude from the Mendelssohn also heard on this CD. The fugue looks ahead to the great stretto fugues of Beethoven and Brahms, and possibly the concluding lines of the Shostakovich Prelude and Fugue, the final work heard here.

**Felix Mendelssohn:** 1809, Hamburg - 1847, Leipzig  
Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, Opus 35, Number 1, 1837

Mendelssohn was profoundly influenced by the music of Bach. In addition to his historic presentation in 1829 of the St. Matthew Passion, he performed the Three Keyboard Concerto in D Minor with Clara Wieck and Louis Rakemann in 1835. At about this same time he introduced the four orchestral suites to concert audiences. He played the entire Well-tempered Clavier. It seems hardly surprising therefore, that he would write preludes and fugues, both for piano and organ. This one in E Minor, the first of a set of six, fuses the strict discipline of the Baroque with the brilliant virtuosity of the Romantic Era. Very close to the end, the Fugue bursts into a chorale reminiscent of "A Mighty Fortress." After this moving climax, the music quietly concludes.

**Paul Hindemith:** 1895, Hanau - 1963, Frankfurt  
Fuga Tertia in F (from the *Ludus Tonalis*)

The entire collection of twelve fugues and interludes framed by a prelude and a postlude (a mirror inversion of the prelude) is a monumental set of pieces. Hindemith's homage to Bach. The pieces are arranged according to Hindemith's own approach to tonality. The short, flowing Fuga Tertia, in F is especially clever, proceeding up to measure thirty, at which point it simply repeats itself in retrograde.

**Dmitri Shostakovich:** 1906, St. Petersburg - 1975, Moscow  
Prelude and Fugue in D Minor, Opus 87, Number 24

Shostakovich was inspired to compose this huge series of preludes and fugues after attending the Bicentennial commemorating Bach's death, in Leipzig. The final one is a long and difficult double fugue whose opening subject is foreshadowed in the prelude, a practice sometimes encountered in the Well-tempered Clavier. The fugue's two subjects each are developed individually, then together. Impelled by a tragic, demonic power, the fugue grows to an intense, almost agonizing conclusion; the effect for both performer and listener is shattering.