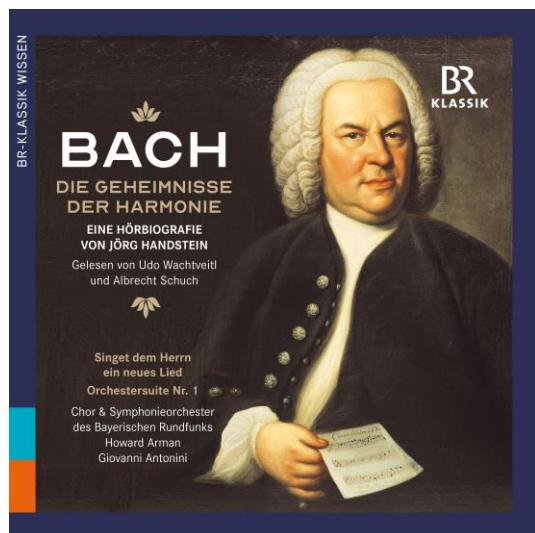


SALES-INFORMATION MAY 2023



**Johann Sebastian Bach –
THE SECRETS OF HARMONY**
An audio biography by Jörg Handstein
Narrator: Udo Wachtveitl
J. S. Bach: Albrecht Schuch
(CD 1 – 3) – in German

BONUS WORKS on CD 4:
"Sing to the Lord a New Song" Motet BWV 225
Bavarian Radio Chorus, Howard Arman

Orchestral Suite No. 1 in C major, BWV 1066
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Giovanni Antonini
(first release)

- **Booklet:** in German
- **4 CDs midprice / Multicase**
- **Product Number: 900936**

Street Date: 5 May, 2023

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH - THE SECRETS OF HARMONY

An audio biography by Jörg Handstein

You don't have to like every composer - but there's no getting around J. S. Bach. The successful series of BR-KLASSIK audio biographies is now devoted to this central star of the musical firmament. His sparsely documented life leaves plenty of room for the imagination in works of fiction, but the authentic sources – well narrated – are just as captivating in every way.

"If ever a tone artist brought the hidden secrets of harmony into the most artistic execution, it was undoubtedly our Bach." (from the Necrology published by C.P.E. Bach in 1754)

Son of a town piper, organist, concertmaster, Kapellmeister, then Thomaskantor in Leipzig for 27 years. Married twice, 20 children. Active in Thuringia and Saxony. When compared with the spectacular biography of Handel (BR-KLASSIK 900911), this one seems rather short on excitement – yet Bach's biography also provides a fascinating insight into an age that is very distant and foreign to us today. An age of proud, aspiring cities, magnificent courts, simple-minded town councillors, music-loving but unpredictable princes, church music that was already somewhat antiquated, and fashionable instrumental music from France and Italy. Bach moves confidently in the field of tension created by these opposing worlds – while creating music that surpasses that of all his contemporaries in terms of its artistry, depth and expressiveness.

In Leipzig, Bach intends to raise church music to a completely new level and place it on a par with theology; he wants it to be multi-layered and speak directly to the faithful. Only a few years later, however, this initial enthusiasm wanes. Headstrong and uncompromising by nature, he now becomes restless and dissatisfied due to his frustrating battles with the petty town authorities. He composes a lot of secular music once again, seeks contact with the Dresden court, and finally retreats into his very own world to fathom the final "secrets of harmony".

For all its modesty, therefore, the story of Bach's life is nevertheless magnificent, moving, and sometimes even shocking. This audio biography gets as close to the protagonist as the sources allow, also bringing his environment to life – the princes, churchmen and town councillors, and his friends and adversaries. In addition, we are introduced to the frequently bizarre everyday world of the 18th century: not always edifying church services, terrible transportation, lavish dining and drinking, or the horrors of an eye operation.

At the centre of it all, however, is the music. "He should not be called brook (in German: Bach) but sea," Beethoven once apparently said, "because of his infinite inexhaustible wealth of tone combinations and harmonies." The numerous musical examples in this audio biography are densely interwoven with the narrative, and literally immerse the listener in this boundless abundance.

Famed as an actor in the popular German detective series "Tatort", Udo Wachtveitl is also a music lover and long-time narrator of the BR audio biographies. He regards the "structure behind music" as highly important, so Bach's life and work are a special source of inspiration to him. The Jena-born and currently highly regarded actor Albrecht Schuch ("All Quiet on the Western Front" plays the role of Johann Sebastian Bach, and several other outstanding BR narrators also shine in a wide variety of roles – making this audio biography a real treat!

The audio biography at a glance:

- Excitingly narrated biography in 9 chapters on 3 CDs
- Large cast of well-known speakers
- With numerous original quotations by Bach, and historical documents from his life.
- 140 musical examples from Bach's great works as well as several rarely-heard pieces.
- Bonus CD with BR recordings of one large choral work and one orchestral work respectively.

NARRATOR Udo Wachtveitl

BACH Albrecht Schuch

QUOTES Folkert Dücker, Adam Gaigl, Anna Greiter, Stefan Hunstein, Shenja Lacher, Florian von Manteuffel, Katja Schild

AUTHOR Jörg Handstein

EDITOR AND DIRECTOR Bernhard Neuhoff

Music examples featuring Peter Dijkstra, John Eliot Gardiner, Reinhard Goebel, Glenn Gould, Emma Kirkby, Dorothee Miels, Viktoria Mullova, Trevor Pinnock, Sibylla Rubens, Masaaki Suzuki, Café Zimmermann, and many others.



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