

STAIRWAY BACH

ROCK CLASSICS WITH A HINT OF BACH



01	LIGHT MY FIRE	The Doors.....	7:03
02	PIÈCE D'ORGUE (Très vite)	Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 572	1:10
03	BYEN VÅGNER / The City Awakes.....	Savage Rose	6:02
04	STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN	Led Zeppelin	6:44
05	BOURÉE.....	J.S. Bach, BWV 996, arr. Jethro Tull	5:09
06	PRELUDE IN G MINOR.....	Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 535	3:13
07	FUGUE IN G MINOR.....	Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 535	4:36
08	SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND.....	Pink Floyd	9:40
09	BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY	Queen	6:08
10	PEOPLE ARE STRANGE	The Doors	3:12
11	HOMBURG.....	Procol Harum	4:31
12	WACHET AUF, RUFT UNS DIE STIMME.....	Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 645	4:06
13	REPENT WALPURGIS.....	Procol Harum	7:26
14	AIR.....	Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 1068	3:00
15	A WHITER SHADE OF PALE.....	Procol Harum	2:58

TOTAL: 75:25

All organ arrangements by Sven-Ingvar Mikkelsen

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by Sven-Ingvart Mikkelsen

The organ has been regarded as an orchestra from its earliest beginnings, and over the years many composers have transposed vocal and orchestral works for the instrument.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries we find many interesting examples of organ transcriptions, such as Max Reger's organ arrangements of the piano parts in a number of Hugo Wolff's songs. Sigfrid Karg-Elert arranged a number of passages from Wagner's operas for harmonium, while Charles-Marie Widor gave several Bach movements a loving organ treatment in the collection "Bach's Memento", demonstrating the ability of composers and other musicians to be inspired by the compositions of other masters and to "re-compose" them for their own instrument.

These transcriptions and adaptations were all made at a time when music could only be experienced by hearing it in live performance. In the case of the orchestral pieces, in particular, very few people would have had the opportunity to hear all these marvellous works. Orchestral concerts were rare and costly, which is one of the reasons why orchestral works were transcribed for piano and organ. The piano transcriptions could be played at home, while the organ transcriptions could be played in churches and concert halls where organs were available. Several of the great concert hall organs of the 19th and 20th centuries were thus directly justified by the fact that they could play the orchestral repertoire when an orchestra could not be afforded.

Today, we can all listen to good recordings of the great classical works, but a real concert with real musicians is still something special. That is why it still makes sense to perform selected works in transcription for smaller ensembles, so that many more can



have the opportunity to experience the music in real concerts. The more intimate and transparent expression of the transcriptions also emphasises different nuances and elements of the music, by comparison with the original versions.

As part of my work with artistic research at *The Royal Danish Academy of Music*, I have had the opportunity to take a closer look at organ transcriptions and the use of the organ as an orchestral substitute, both from a historical and a practical perspective.

This work has resulted, amongst other things, in an elaborate practical transcription of Richard Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* for soprano, violin and organ, as well as Ernest Chausson's *Poème for violin and organ*.

As a further development of this work, I have taken a stylistic leap and worked out a number of organ transcriptions of symphonic rock classics from the 1960s and 1970s.

The background to this has been a long-standing musical collaboration with my good friend the violinist Jochen Brusch, with whom I have for a number of years played adaptations of rock classics on our classical instruments, violin and organ, in recognition of the fact that we like to play good music that we care about – irrespective of style, as long as it is good music!

But the organ is such a large and versatile instrument that it can also cope with the task alone.

The symphonic rock music of the 1960s and 1970s largely drew its inspiration from classical music, and in particular from the composer Johann Sebastian Bach, sometimes using direct Bach quotations, at other times simply using musical phrases that are reminiscent of "old Bach". It is therefore interesting to examine what happens when you add even more Bach, and play symphonic rock classics on a classical instrument: the organ.

In these arrangements, the connection between Bach and Rock is underlined by a direct interweaving of rock music with quotations from Johann Sebastian Bach, with the result that the music flows together in a patchwork of baroque organ, Bach and symphonic rock "STAIRWAY to BACH – Rock classics with a hint of Bach".

The programme will be presented on the large Marcussen organ in the Concert Hall of *The Royal Danish Academy of Music*.



THE ORGAN

The organ in the *RDAM* Concert Hall was built by the venerable organ builders *Marcussen & Son* in 1946. It has 88 stops, divided into four manuals and a pedal keyboard. The console is mobile, with electro-pneumatic tracker action. It is a modern concert hall organ, built at a time when inspiration was drawn from the organ building techniques and acoustic ideals of the Baroque period. The organ thus contains sound elements which are unusual for a concert hall organ, but they all combine surprisingly well.

The facade of the organ was designed by the architect Wilhelm Lauritzen, who was also the architect for the entire building complex, which was originally built for *Danmarks Radio* (the *Danish Broadcasting Corporation*). Since 2008, these beautiful buildings and the unique concert hall have been home to *The Royal Danish Academy of Music*.

Sven-Ingvart Mikkelsen



THE ORGANIST

Sven-Ingvar Mikkelsen is one of the most versatile musicians on the Danish organ scene, and already at his debut in 1982 he attracted attention with a concert program with important German and French organ classics.

Sven-Ingvar is a graduate of the music conservatories in Esbjerg and Copenhagen, and he has supplemented with studies in Vienna with Prof. Michael Radulescu, and in Paris with the organists Marie-Claire Alain and André Isoir.

Sven-Ingvar's work as an organist is characterized by a great curiosity to try out new ways of composing a concert program and to find new ways of playing together with other musicians, and this curiosity and musical joy he wants to pass on to the next generations of organists through his teaching. In addition, he has a great interest in organ building, historical organs and in general a penchant for narrow, unexplored topics in organ history, which is expressed in his research and publications.

Sven-Ingvar Mikkelsen is Professor and Head of Department for Organ and Church Music at *The Royal Danish Academy of Music*. He has previously been employed as an organist at *Løgumkloster Church* and *Frederiksborg Castle Church* and as a teacher at music conservatories in Esbjerg and Copenhagen. He has also held courses, lectures and masterclasses at conservatories and music colleges in Denmark and abroad.

Sven-Ingvar has an extensive concert activity with concerts in a large number of European countries as well as North and South America and Asia. His musical curiosity, has led to the discovery of J.A. Scheibe's organ sonatas, which he has documented with both a CD recording and the release of the sheet music. He has composed concert programs of a more experimental kind, such as music for organ and the Breton folk music

instrument *Bombarde*, and he has played a large number of concerts with violin and organ with a constellation of classical music and "classical" arrangements of symphonic rock classics.

The French baroque music and its liturgical place side by side with Gregorian chant has fascinated Sven-Ingvar to such an extent that he has researched a stylistic performance of the Gregorian chant in polyphonic baroque style. This work is documented in CD releases with organ works by Couperin, Guilain and de Grigny as well as the book *Plainsong and French Baroque*.

www.si-mikkelsen.dk



THE PROGRAMME



The Doors presented their song LIGHT MY FIRE on their debut album in 1967, with a Bach-inspired organ introduction that is reminiscent of the third movement of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto no. 2*, BWV 1047. I have therefore chosen to begin with quotations from this piece, and I have also used fragments of it in the middle solo sections.



BYEN VÅGNER (THE CITY AWAKES), the iconic rock song from Savage Rose's ballet music for *Dødens Triumf (The Triumph of Death)* from 1971, with its characteristic recurring Hammond organ theme, is almost a kind of re-composition, in a minor key, of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Pièce d'Orgue*, BWV 572. This is therefore presented with the first section of *Pièce d'Orgue* first, leading directly into *Byen Vågner*, followed by a slightly rewritten concluding part of *Pièce d'Orgue*.



The 1971 song STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN begins in classical style with simple chord arpeggios accompanied by four recorders, which can therefore easily be transferred to the organ. The movement develops in a long crescendo to the huge rock guitar solo, which is here conveyed using the organ's most powerful registers. The classical introduction can evoke associations with the theme of the movement *Badinerie* from Bach's *Orchestral Suite no. 2*, BWV 1067. This theme can therefore be found interwoven with both the classical introduction and the more rock-oriented conclusion.



In 1969, *Jethro Tull* used the first part of Bach's *Bourrée for lute*, BWV 996, as the basis for their very own BOURÉE. The opening and closing parts are clearly Bach, whereas the middle part is a long improvisatory part in several sections, including a bass guitar solo, which in my organ arrangement has become a solo for double pedal.



Like symphonic rock music, Johann Sebastian Bach's PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN G MINOR, BWV 535, consists of a combination of fixed elements and free, improvisational sections. The prelude contains a long sequence of echo effects, which provides an opportunity to use all four manuals of the organ.



Pink Floyd's SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND is a large work in nine parts with a playing time of around 25 minutes. In my arrangement, I have compressed the work and focused on the first and final sections. The piece includes several calm and meditative parts, in which one feels that the difference between rock and classical music has almost been erased. The music has its own timeless character, which can stand completely by itself. Nonetheless, if you listen carefully, you will be able to recognise small quotations from the *Jesu bleibet meine Freude* movement of Bach's *Cantata* BWV 147.

THE PROGRAMME



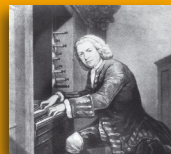
BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY, Freddie Mercury's fantastic 1975 composition for his rock band *Queen* is, like *Pink Floyd's Shine on ...* written in a form and style that is far from the usual rock music format of the day. The piece consists of six parts: introduction, ballad, guitar solo, opera section, hard rock and coda. In my organ arrangement, I have attempted to capture the work's various dramatic characters, and only in one place – in the rock section – has “old Bach” sneaked in, with a few bars of his *Prelude in E flat major*, BWV 552.



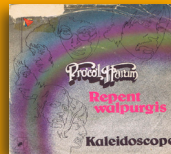
The *Doors'* song PEOPLE ARE STRANGE is, in all its simplicity, crafted as a slightly reserved cabaret-like song with a consistently laid-back character. In one verse, elements of Bach's chorale prelude *Ich ruf zu Dir ...*, BWV 639, can be recognised. The concluding seventh chord provides a completely natural transition to:



Procol Harum's HOMBURG is from 1967. With the classical character of the piece and the all-dominating Hammond organ sound, it is quite obvious to rearrange the piece for pipe organ, and the classical roots are emphasised in this arrangement, with a link to the *Largo* movement from Bach's *Harpsichord Concerto* BWV 1056.



WACHET AUF, RUFT UNS DIE STIMME, BWV 645, is a fine example of how Johann Sebastian Bach worked with organ arrangements. The music is derived from the cantata *Wachet auf ...* BWV 140, and in his organ version, Bach condensed the music to the three main voices. The organ version is part of the collection *Schübler Chorales*, which consists of six transcriptions for organ of cantata movements.



REPENT WALPURGIS, composed by *Procol Harum* organist Matthew Fischer in 1967, is a unique piece of music. The first and third parts are built up as variations on an ostinato bass figure (variations on a ground), a widely-used technique of the Baroque era, and the same principle that is used in a *chaconne* or *passacaglia*. In the middle part Bach's *Prelude in C major* BWV 846 has been inserted, supplemented with a new melody (following the same principle as Gounod's *Ave Maria*). The last part is a continuation of the first part, into which quotations from Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto no.1* have also been interspersed.

In order to link the music even more closely with the Bach tradition and the organ chorale *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, the *Wachet auf* melody is interwoven into the middle section, while in the two outer parts the characteristic recurring theme from *Wachet auf* has been added – but changed from major to minor.

THE PROGRAMME



Procol Harum's A WHITER SHADE OF PALE (1967) is undoubtedly the most famous classical-influenced rock song. Although it is not a direct copy, the inspiration from Bach's *Air (Orchestral Suite no. 3, BWV 1068)* is unmistakable. The music is uniquely beautiful, both as written by Bach and as written by *Procol Harum*. It therefore seems quite natural to begin with the *Air* and then allow the music to go directly into *A Whiter Shade of Pale*.

Recorded on the concert hall organ by *Marcussen & Son* at *The Royal Danish Academy of Music*, Copenhagen January 12, 13 and 14, 2024 with generous support from *The Royal Academy of Music, DOKS Dansk Organist og Kantor Samfund, Solistforeningen af 1921, Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansens Fond and Marcussen & Son.*



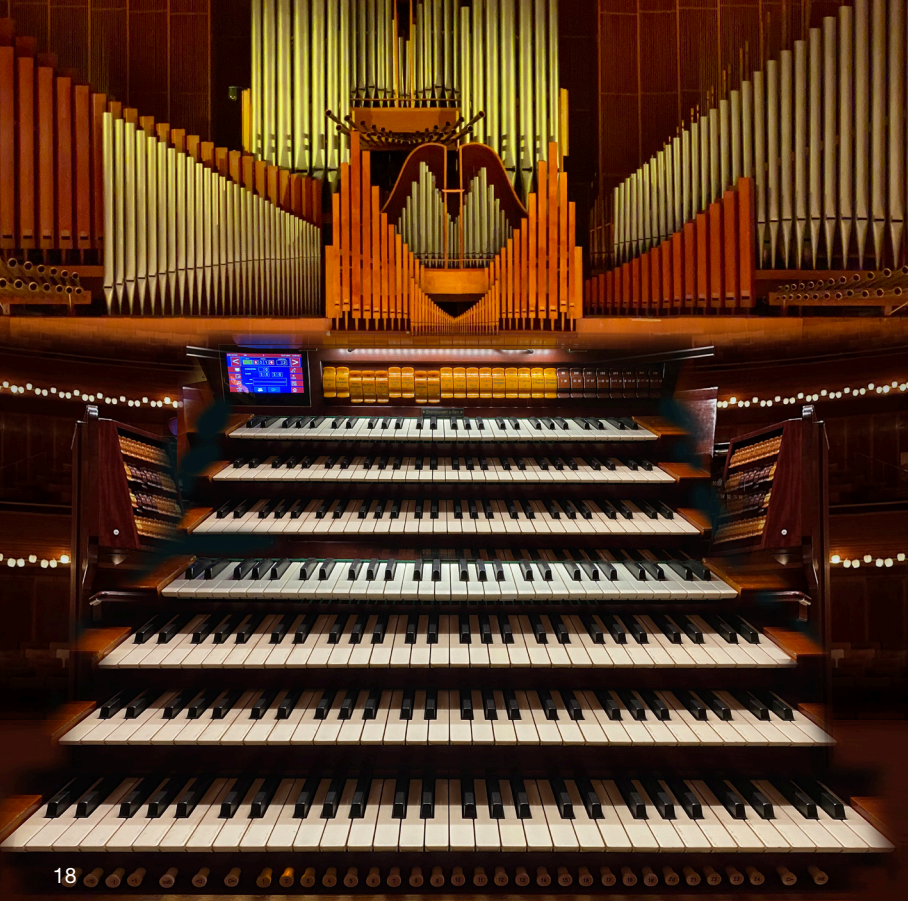
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Editing and mix: Ole Moesmann
Mastering: Preben Iwan
Executive producer: Lars Hannibal
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OUR Recordings

releases:

- OE** Orchestra/Ensemble
- PH** Petri/Hannibal Duo
- LP** Vinyl
- VG** Violin/Guitar
- EP** Digital only
- CR** Choir/Recorder
- OM** Organ music
- VE** Danish National Vocal Ensemble
- RH** Recorder/Harpsichord
- SW** Spoken words
- CH** Chinese
- RC** Recorder Concertos
- BJ** Borup-Jørgensen
- IS** Instrumental solo
- ID** Instrumental duo



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ID 8.226919



OE 6.220684



ID 6.220683



OE 6.220682



IS 8.226915
LP OUR-LP003



IS 6.220681



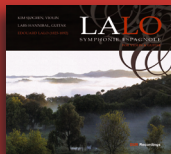
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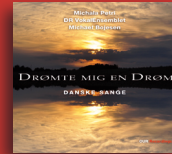
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VG 8.226902



VG 6.220602



CR 8.226907



CR 6.220615



OE 8.226918



PH 8.226914
LP OUR-LP002



PH 6.220619



PH 6.220604



PH 6.220601



PH 8.226900



EP 9.70895



LP OUR-LP001



OE 8.226916



OE 6.220679



OE 6.220674



OE 6.220673



OE 6.220618



OE 6.220570



RC 8.226912



RC 6.220614



OE 6.220680



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EP 9.70893



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VE 6.220671



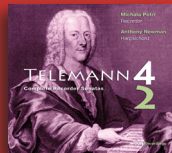
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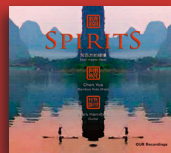
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RH 6.220611



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CH 8.226901



CH 6.220600



RC 6.220609



RC 6.220606



OM 6.220675



BJ 6.220672



BJ 6.220617



BJ 6.220616



RC 6.220531



RC 6.220607



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BJ 8.226910



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