

Texte français inclus/Beiliegend deutscher text

Produced by Glenn Gould
& Samuel H. Carter

This record is playable on all record
playback equipment.



Bach-Goldberg Variations, BWV 988-Glenn Gould (Aria & 30 Variations/Veränderungen)

Side/Seite/Face 1

Aria & Variations 1-15

Side/Seite/Face 2

Variations 16-30 & Aria

In 1955, a young Canadian pianist made his first recording for what was then Columbia Masterworks. At that time he was not well-known to concert audiences and was completely unknown to the record market. But after the recording sessions of June of that year, in Columbia's famous 30th Street Studios in New York City, and after the release of his first album, Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, Glenn Gould became world-famous. His performance of Bach's 1742 collection of "key-board exercises" created an international recording sensation and achieved the unique distinction of becoming an album that, from its original release date to the present, was never absent from the active catalog of Masterworks recordings.

In 1970, Glenn Gould completed a recording session at the 30th Street Studios and decided that in future he would record exclusively in Toronto, where his television and film activities were centered. He did not again return to this musically historical building until 1980, when he began making his first digital recordings for CBS Masterworks—the Six Last Sonatas of Haydn and the *Goldberg Variations*.

Why did Glenn Gould, who seldom records a piece twice, choose to re-record a work that had received a definitive performance at his hands 27 years ago? Gould has offered only the explanation that new technology plus his own desire to re-examine the work in terms of its "aesthetic correspondence between theme and variation" led him back into the studio for this recording. Any more complete explanation of this new approach would, according to Gould, entail a complete written analysis, in an almost book-length essay, of the "thirty very interesting but independent-minded pieces" that make up the *Variations*—a fascinating prospect, to be sure.

*Samuel H. Carter, who co-produced the Last Six Sonatas of Haydn, also worked on the new Goldberg Variations. Following are some of his observations of the last recording sessions: Sometime past midnight on Saturday, May 27, 1981, the doors of CBS's famous 30th Street Recording Studios in New York closed on the last official recording session to be held there by CBS Masterworks. Out of those doors walked a man—amusedly only after a "cool down" period and change of shirt—a man whose illustrious recording career began there a little over a quarter century before. With an appropriateness that is usually found only in fiction, the last notes played by Glenn Gould that night were from the same work of Bach—the *Goldberg Variations*—with which he had first transcribed the music world in the summer of 1955.*

Now the Studio, once a kind of mecca for some of the world's greatest musicians, was to be sold, victim of the changed fortunes of an industry that has become as multi-national as any other and as competitive. For Glenn Gould and for those of us whose association with "Columbia" covers a long span of years, the old church is a place where many ghosts walk in an atmosphere so laden as to be almost claustrophobic, in spite of the soaring reaches of the ceiling.

Glenn Gould may have quietly come out by the same door wherein he entered but while he had been inside he stirred things up more than a little. Pablo Casals once said that Bach is "a volcanic," speaking of course of the emotional content of the music that traditionalists tried so hard for so long to deny. Gould, too, is

something of a volcanic force. He is the embodiment of musical sophistication in that he seems always to know what he intends the music to do. He almost never lets the music happen to him—he happens to it. That is what made many musicians who nominally "knew" the *Goldberg Variations* feel that they had just discovered them when the 1955 album appeared. May I suggest that, with this new recording, many additional "discoveries" will be made. The nature of these will doubtless be as many and various as the number of listeners.

I think of Glenn Gould as an artist of strong intentionality. He shapes and molds a musical line in its breadth and in its detail with breathtaking awareness. As he has often told interviewers, he will try to make each performance different, yet this firm intention is always present so that however different the "take" there is never any tentativeness or absence of character.

This new digital recording of the *Goldberg Variations* was made, in the main, simultaneously with a video-taping. Make-up sessions were held on April 25 and May 29 for the purposes of the recording. Having worked extensively in both mediums as performer and producer, Glenn was almost instantly aware, in seeing and hearing a playback, of what takes or portions of takes were suitable for the film and recording and which for the film only. I often felt that he was being excessively nit-picking, only to discover in the intensive listening and editing sessions that followed that he had known precisely the difference he wanted in every case. He is a man who is very reluctant to accept anything short of the absolute attainment of his artistic goal.

Engineers: Stan Tonkel, John Johnson, Ray Moore, Martin Greenblatt. Digitally recorded using the Sony System. Mastered from the original digital recording in the CBS Recording Studios, New York on the CBS Dac Computer System.

Bach The Goldberg Variations Glenn Gould



Johann Sebastian Bach 1685–1750

Aria with 30 Variations “Goldberg Variations”

BWV 988

Air avec 30 variations « Variations Goldberg »

1981 Digital Recording

[1] Aria	3:05
[2] Variatio 1 a Clav.	1:10
[3] Variatio 2 a 1 Clav.	0:49
[4] Variatio 3 a 1 Clav. Canone all'Unisono	1:31
[5] Variatio 4 a 1 Clav.	0:50
[6] Variatio 5 a 1 ovvero 2 Clav.	0:37
[7] Variatio 6 a 1 Clav. Canone alla Seconda	0:40
[8] Variatio 7 a 1 ovvero 2 Clav. Al tempo di Giga	1:16
[9] Variatio 8 a 2 Clav.	0:54
[10] Variatio 9 a 1 Clav. Canone alla Terza	0:59
[11] Variatio 10 a 1 Clav. Fughetta	1:04
[12] Variatio 11 a 2 Clav.	0:53
[13] Variatio 12. Canone alla Quarta	1:38
[14] Variatio 13 a 2 Clav.	2:38
[15] Variatio 14 a 2 Clav.	1:05
[16] Variatio 15 a 1 Clav. Canone alla Quinta in moto contrario. Andante	5:01
[17] Variatio 16 a 1 Clav. Ouverture	1:38
[18] Variatio 17 a 2 Clav.	0:54
[19] Variatio 18 a 1 Clav. Canone alla Sesta	1:03
[20] Variatio 19 a 1 Clav.	1:03
[21] Variatio 20 a 2 Clav.	0:50

[22] Variatio 21. Canone alla Settima	2:13
[23] Variatio 22 a 1 Clav. Alla breve	1:03
[24] Variatio 23 a 2 Clav.	0:58
[25] Variatio 24 a 1 Clav. Canone all'Ottava	1:44
[26] Variatio 25 a 2 Clav.	6:02
[27] Variatio 26 a 2 Clav.	0:52
[28] Variatio 27 a 2 Clav. Canone alla Nona	1:21
[29] Variatio 28 a 2 Clav.	1:03
[30] Variatio 29 a 1 ovvero 2 Clav.	1:02
[31] Variatio 30 a 1 Clav. Quodlibet	1:30
[32] Aria da capo	3:51

Total Time 51:23

Glenn Gould piano

Original LP: IM 37779 · Released September 2, 1982

Recording: Columbia 30th Street Studio, New York City,
April 22–25 & May 15/19/29, 1981

Producers: Glenn Gould & Samuel H. Carter

Recording Engineers: Stan Tonkel, Martin Greenblatt, Ray Moore & John Johnson

Cover Design: Henrietta Condak · Cover Photo: Don Hunstein

Liner Notes: CBS Records

LP Matrix: DAL 37779 [1–16], DBL 37779 [17–32] (digital)

In 1981, when Glenn Gould recorded his second set of the Goldberg Variations for Columbia, digital recording technology was new and still in its infancy.

As a precaution, many records were recorded simultaneously onto analogue tape at a time when professional analogue recording was at its peak. The remastered analogue version of the 1981 Goldberg Variations has been chosen for inclusion in this set.

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