



J. S. BACH

Petteri Iivonen, violin

YARLUNG RECORDS
BOB ATIYEH, PRODUCER

180 Gram
Stereo 45 RPM Vinyl
YAR84177-787V



chaconnes for violin. Bach's final movement, *ciaccona* in Italian, from his Partita No. 2, may represent the culmination of this genre. Petteri has performed this work in illustrious concert halls, and also while on vacation with us on New Year's Eve, during a concert in the countryside with only kerosene lamps for illumination. Petteri plays with authority and freshness in any environment, and this recording reminds me handsomely why Johann Sebastian Bach remains among my favorite composers of all time.

This album proudly bears the seal and endorsement of the Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society. President **Mike Wechsberg**, Chairman **Robert Levi** and the Society's multi-year collaboration with Yarlung have enabled joint concerts and recordings to reach larger audiences; indeed many on Yarlung's technical team and board of directors are members of the Audio Society. Petteri joins me in expressing appreciation.

We owe hearty thanks to one of Petteri's biggest fans, executive producer **Elliot Midwood**, for underwriting this release. Elliot has not only underwritten numerous Yarlung vinyl releases in the past, including *Ciaramella Dances*, **James Matheson's String Quartet**, and *Te Amo, Argentina*, but he designs many of the most important components in Yarlung's recording and monitoring chains, including our one-of-a-kind vacuum tube microphone preamplifiers. Thank you! Your close friendship and relentless pursuit of sonic and musical perfection inspire us every day.

—Bob Attiyeh, producer

Recorded in Alfred Newman Hall, Los Angeles, June 9-16, 2008

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¹ We borrowed Orrin's lines from his writing for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, used with permission. Orrin was also the father of Yarlung musician David Howard, the Philharmonic's illustrious bass clarinetist.

The day **Petteri Iivonen** auditioned for Yarlung Records, I felt confident he would remain one of my favorite violinists in the world. I didn't yet know, but should have suspected, that he would also become a good friend. Petteri has spent vacations in the country with my family, somehow stealing time away from his career as a violin soloist, chamber musician and concertmaster to do so. After living a number of years in the United States, Petteri returned to Finland where he became concertmaster of the **Finnish National Opera** orchestra in Helsinki before moving to France where he now serves as concertmaster for **Paris Opera** in the Palais Garnier. Petteri's ability to play in many styles with sincerity and his natural lyrical facility with his instrument made him the ideal candidate to work with luminary conductors such as **Esa-Pekka Salonen** in Helsinki and now **Gustavo Dudamel** at Paris Opera. Petteri joked with me that he's still part of the "Los Angeles Philharmonic Family" playing for these two maestros, and he is happy to have been able to work with Esa-Pekka and Gustavo in Europe as well.

Petteri commands his instrument with ease. While much of his playing is exceptionally beautiful, it is not beautiful for the sake of being pretty. I have heard few violinists with Petteri's ability to control color and timbre, and even fewer who use this ability for such musical and appropriate ends. Petteri plays a Ferdinandus Gagliano violin in this recording, created in 1767, kindly loaned to him by OKO Bank Art Foundation. We recorded this performance during a live concert in June, 2008, in Alfred Newman Hall at the University of Southern California. Newman Hall exemplifies the warm yet transparent and lively sound of the concerts halls I favor for recordings, and its acoustics adjust easily to provide different lengths of decay. We chose a legendary Austrian AKG C-24 stereo microphone with the original brass surround CK12 tube, made available to us by our friend Jon Fisher at Gearworks Pro Audio. We used five-foot long Yarlung-Records-designed interconnects with a flat silver ribbon suspended in air for the dielectric, Midwood vacuum tube preamplifiers and no mixer recording to Agfa-formula 468 tape. The signal path was as short as we could make it, with as few electronics between performer and final product as we could manage. We hope you enjoy the results.

As my friend the late Orrin Howard¹ wrote, Bach composed his **Partita No. 2 in D Minor** "during the time he was conductor of the court orchestra at Anhalt-Cöthen, where his patron, young Prince Leopold, was a skilled musician. ...these bold works are difficult in ways that most other virtuosic string pieces are not: they demand not only unflinching facility in matters of digital and rhythmic dexterity and preciseness of pitch, particularly in the multiple stoppings, but also the keenest musical insights and inner-ear sensitivity to implied polyphonic and harmonic textures. In short, they strip a performer naked... forcing the executant to recreate incredibly diverse Bachian worlds with only a wooden box, four lengths of string, and a bow.

Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004

SIDE A ALLEMANDE
COURANTE
SARABANDE
GIGUE

SIDE B CIACCONA



*Johann Sebastian Bach, painting by Carl Jäger
photo courtesy of Rijks Studio, Rijks Museum, Netherlands*

"Of the six [solo] violin works, the present one stands alone on a lofty summit, and this by virtue of the towering chaconne that is its final movement. Preceding this finale are four dance suite: allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. Although they are splendid examples of their genre, they end by being an introduction to the monumental chaconne, which is a set of more than 60 variations on a simple bass theme."

The *chaconne* most likely originated as a dance in the New World which returned to Spain (along with much gold melted into blocks from irreplaceable Pre-Columbian art and jewelry) after the conquest of the Americas. This original *chaconne* offered a fast, sexy, syncopated rhythm. Composers treated this dance with increasing invention and gravity during the Baroque era. Henry Purcell wrote complex and chromatic