



J.S. BACH
Partitas
Arr. for saxophone
Raaf Hekkema

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Partita II, BWV 1004

Arr. Raaf Hekkema

*Soprano Saxophone: Yanagisawa Elimona (ca. 1993),
mouthpiece Vandoren S27, reeds Légère Signature 3,5.*

[1] Allemanda	4:24
[2] Corrente	2:30
[3] Sarabanda	3:38
[4] Giga	4:17
[5] Ciaccona	13:23

Partita III, BWV 1006

Arr. Raaf Hekkema

*Alto Saxophone: Buffet Crampon Prestige (ca. 1984),
mouthpiece vintage Buescher (1920s), reeds Légère Signature 3,5.*

[6] Preludio	3:44
[7] Loure	3:57
[8] Gavotte en rondeau	2:41
[9] Menuet I – Menuet II	4:08
[10] Bourrée	1:28
[11] Gigue	1:43

Partita I, BWV 1002

Arr. Raaf Hekkema

Soprano Saxophone: Yanagisawa Elimona (ca. 1993).

[12] Allemanda	5:39
[13] Double	3:04
[14] Corrente	3:36
[15] Double-Presto	3:48
[16] Sarabanda	3:23
[17] Double	2:54
[18] Tempo di Borea	3:04
[19] Double	3:40

total time 75:23

I dedicate this CD to my comrades of the Calefax Reed Quintet, from whom I have learned so much, grateful for the many special Bach moments we have shared.

Even before I entered conservatory to study the saxophone, it was clear there was one composer who stood head and shoulders above the rest: Johann Sebastian Bach. During my studies I used movements from the violin sonatas and partitas as etudes, and realized I could spend endless hours on them without getting bored – and that for someone who hated practicing. Only much later did I learn that scales and etudes are futile if one approaches them with aversion. I therefore thank my present finger technique to the fact that I listened with gusto to recordings by Bach specialists from the 1980s, and whose tone, phrasing and articulation I did my best to emulate on my own instrument.

Thanks to Calefax I met my 'heroes of the authentic movement' in the flesh. Frans Brüggen, the brothers Barthold and Sigiswald Kuijken, the musicologist Kees van Houten, the string players Vera Beths, Anner Bijlsma, and later, Jan-Willem de Vriend. They were all happy to coach us on Bach, Mozart and Schubert. None one of them had (or at least expressed) misgivings about us performing 'their' music on modern instruments, not even the saxophone.

Meanwhile I had found another way to delve into Bach, namely by arranging his music for our quintet. Arranging begins with a thorough study of the notes and

the construction of the musical material as well as an awareness of the circumstances surrounding the music's origins, so I read books on Bach and his time, and musicological accounts of those of his works I was tackling. Soon enough I caught on that Bach's music did not just appear out of thin air. If I were to understand his work on a deeper level, I would have to bone up on the era that preceded him, the seventeenth century, and then on the eras before that. Calefax, as usual, kept its end up, and from the very beginning we had the music of De Machaut, Josquin, Ockeghem, Byrd, Gesualdo, Monteverdi and a smattering of more obscure composers on our music stands. With each new work to be rehearsed, we read about it, listened to recordings of respected performers and tapped the knowledge of specialized teachers.

One of them was Paul Van Nevel, who enthusiastically invited us to participate in concerts given by his Huelgas Ensemble at several early music festivals, such as in Saintes and at the Festival of Flanders. There I stood with my saxophone, a piece of musical farm machinery, amid the pommers, zinks and theorbos. We had a similar experience at the Early Music Festival Utrecht, where the artistic director Jan Nuchelmans (Calefax fan from day one) managed to smuggle us onto the programme. Of course it goes without saying that there are countless musicians whose Bach and early music expertise far exceeds my own, but as a saxophonist I feel quite privileged to be in such company.

Bach was a permanent feature of my music stand. As a good start to the day, to explore the finesses of articulation, to practice playing long phrases – even during the time I was immersed in the Paganini caprices, which eventually led to

the CD *Paganini Caprices for Saxophone* (MDG) and the accompanying printed music (Schott). For years Calefax had often played *Die Kunst der Fuge*, and even more often the *Goldberg Variations*, excerpts from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* and *Das Musikalisches Opfer*, a few organ works and the *Vom Himmel hoch variations*. The Paganini experience had honed my proficiency in arranging violin music for saxophone, as well as bolstering a sense of security in what long used to be a rather unsure finger technique.

In 2012 I recorded, purely for personal use, all the Bach solo arrangements I had made up until then, including the first four movements of the second partita. After listening to them I realized that my self-imposed decree to keep my hands off the chaconne from that partita, suddenly no longer seemed etched in stone. So I took a stab at producing a convincing version of it. Following my Paganini formula, I first made an 'analytical' version: one that would do justice to the construction of the music, disregarding all thoughts of what might be fun to play. An important step, because otherwise you end up taking the instrumental route too soon. Bach's music is implicitly polyphonic: a melody usually contains more than one voice, played in turn and together forming the melodic curve as a whole. The register and relationship between the voices largely determine the buildup of tension in the music. This applies to nearly all of Bach's music, but in the violin works he often uses multiple strings simultaneously to explicitly underscore the polyphony. So first I had to find a credible solution for the issue of polyphony. After that the other me would get his chance: the saxophone player who had free rein to determine what sounded good and, perhaps more importantly, where the advantages of the saxophone over the violin (arpeggios,

for instance, are easier to play on the saxophone) could be put to good use. In this inner collaboration, the analyst constantly had the upper hand, for we were talking about a meticulously-constructed work by the greatest musical architect ever.

The resulting version satisfied both my identities: the analyst and the instrumentalist. With a sense of liberation I set to work on the remaining movements of the partitas, which went with hardly a hitch. Of course, now – nearly a year after completing the work – not one of the nineteen movements is the same. This is one of the great benefits of arranging for your own instrument: you are free to tinker with the notes whenever and however it suits you.

It's inevitable that while preparing a recording like this one occasionally gets cold feet. Building castles in the air is one hazard of working in the security and solitude of the practice studio. To combat this I took a number of lessons from the Baroque violinist Lucy van Dael, who has herself issued a stunning recording of all the Bach solo violin works. Her tips and corrections were invaluable to the end result and also confirmed to me that my saxophone version could hold its own. My gratitude to Lucy is great!

I still revel in the privilege of touring with Calefax. Shortly before making this recording we played two concerts at the Thüringer Bachwochen, the Bach mecca par excellence. We played my arrangement of the *Goldberg Variations* in the Nikolaikirche in Bach's birthplace Eisenach. I stayed there with my family, strolled about town soaking up the Bach atmosphere, visited the Wartburg

castle, hiked for four days in Bach's Thüringer Wald, spoke to (former) East Germans and ate Bach's food (or its modern-day variant).

Thanks to Calefax I feel closer to Bach than ever.

Raaf Hekkema, May 2014

translation: Jonathan Reeder

The sheet music of this arrangement is available via Schott Music.
See www.schott-music.com.



Raaf Hekkema

Multiple prize-winner Raaf Hekkema has an adventurous spirit: whether he plays Paganini's violin concerto with orchestra, explores microtones on the saxophone, unravels the inhumanly complex mathematical musical puzzles that Conlon Nancarrow wrote for the pianola – Hekkema doesn't bat an eye. Performing mainly his own arrangements, he gives approximately 100 concerts a year the world over. Hekkema has appeared as soloist with numerous orchestras and has given many international masterclasses. The solo CD 'Paganini Caprices for Saxophone' (MDG, 2006) earned him the German Echo Klassik 'Instrumentalist of the Year' title. His compositions and arrangements are published by Schott Music.

Hekkema is co-founder of Calefax Reed Quintet (since 1985), for whom he has arranged hundreds of works, many of which have been recorded. Calefax's repertoire spans nine centuries, Western and non-Western, from improv to contemporary classical. Additionally, the quintet has initiated projects with distinguished artists from the theatre, dance, film, animation worlds as well as those with diverse musical backgrounds. Calefax has taken lessons from, or worked with, experts in the field of early music, including Paul Van Nevel, Bartold and Sigiswald Kuijken, Jan-Willem de Vriend and Frans Brüggen. The ensemble plays at prominent concert venues worldwide, from South America to Japan, appears regularly on international radio and television, and has issued an impressive collection of CD recordings. Calefax has also been the recipient of various prizes and distinctions. Thanks to the decades-long co-operation with the

members of Calefax, all of whom studied with prominent wind players from the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Hekkema's playing has taken on a musical character unlike any other saxophonists.

On 'Paganini Caprices for Saxophone':

'Raaf Hekkema is insane. Thank goodness. Otherwise we would never have heard Paganini's renowned caprices on the saxophone (...) He plays the caprices in such a way that your attention never flags. Hekkema is insane, but it's brilliant insanity.' (Luister)

'Recording of the month.' (MusicWeb International)

'Highest ranking.' (Classics Today)

www.raafhekkema.com | www.calefax.nl

This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



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www.northstarconsult.nl

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