



Idil Biret

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

The Well-Tempered Clavier • 48 Preludes and Fugues

Ever since I was little, Johann Sebastian Bach has meant 'music' to me. My mother always played the first and second book of preludes from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* at home. The first time I met my teacher Mithat Fenmen in 1946, I played some of these pieces for him by ear. When the lessons started, it became a source of pleasure for me to work with him. Sometimes, as a reward, he made me listen to Bach's works. One of the most memorable performances was Edwin Fischer's, the 12th Prelude and Fugue, in F minor, from Book II. I had listened to the 78 rpm record after a lesson and was fascinated by this work. When I came home, I was able to play the prelude from memory, but although I could hear the different sounds of the fugue in my head, I could not play it well with my technique at the time

Idil Biret Notes on Bach 2015

The centerpiece of the Bach collection is a 2015 recording of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the so-called old testament of piano music, a series of 48 preludes and fugues in all of the piano's possible keys. A look at that monumental collection's recorded history could serve as a compendium of piano performance styles through the last 120 years. Unsurprisingly, Biret conforms to none, and perhaps the best way to describe her interpretations is orchestral. As the historically informed Baroque practitioners prescribe, each prelude and fugue certainly has a distinct character, but those long lines emerge with the definition of strings, brass or winds, lush and strident by turn. Trills are mellow and exquisitely shaped, and a wealth of detail is present but never exaggerated. Biret's Bach is a cliff wall to be scaled, a peak to be reached and an aspiration to be achieved.

Prof. Marc Medwin - American University, Washington DC *DUSTED Magazine* (US) 2017

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The Well-Tempered Clavier • 48 Preludes and Fugues

CD 1 Book I Preludes and Fugues, No.1-16

CD 3 Book II Preludes and Fugues, No.5-14

CD 2 Book I Preludes and Fugues, No.17-24

CD 4 Book II Preludes and Fugues, No.15-24

Book II Preludes and Fugues, No.1-4

Recorded: Chateau de Flawinne, Namur, Belgium on 26 April, 12-15 July, 25-26 Sept. 2015 • Piano Steinway

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mastering: Ozan Sarier • Cover photo: Idil Biret at Woolsey Hall of Yale University by Sefik B. Yüksel, 2012

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Playing time
4:46:31



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