

## Steinway & Sons releases Andrew Rangell's Bach:The Art of Fugue Sept 25th

1 message

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Date: Monday, September 10, 2012 9:12:30 AM

Subject: Steinway & Sons releases Andrew Rangell's Bach:The Art of Fugue Sept 25th

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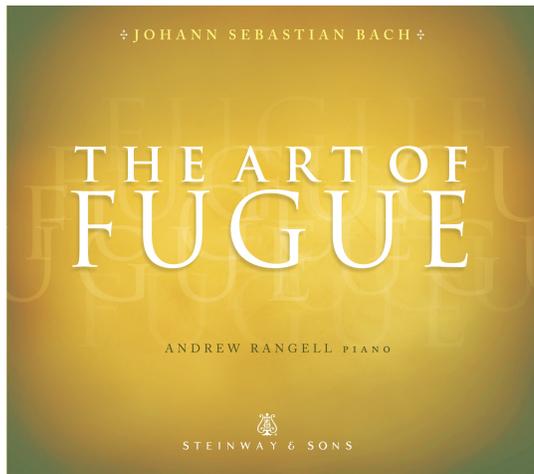


### **Andrew Rangell Surveys J.S. Bach's "The Art of Fugue," the Latest Entry in the Pianist's Acclaimed Journey Through the Composer's Greatest Works**

#### **Rangell's new Bach album will be released on CD September 25, 2012**

"Rangell does things with these towering works than no one has done before." — *All Music Guide* on the pianist's Steinway & Sons set of late Beethoven

Pianist **Andrew Rangell** has plotted an individual, ever-involving course in music, setting his virtuosic talents to illuminating the most profound music in the canon, from J.S. Bach to Janáček, from Haydn to Stravinsky. Rangell has, according to *All Music Guide*, "through his commanding technique, prodigious intellect and consummate artistry, created a series of recordings that stand comparison to the best ever released." Rangell's recording of ***Bach's The Art of Fugue*** will be released on **September 25, 2012** (with the digital release on September 4). Deeply attuned to the recording process – the pianist serving as his own session producer – Rangell recorded *The Art of Fugue* as the first commercially released album to be made at the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport, Massachusetts.



For Rangell, *The Art of Fugue* is the latest entry in an acclaimed journey through Bach's greatest works for the keyboard, with the pianist having previously recorded the Goldberg Variations, *The Well-Tempered Clavier Book I*, the Italian Concerto and the Six Partitas, among much else by the composer. Reflecting on his way with Bach, *International Record Review* called him **“a free-thinker among pianists – a master of graded dynamics and the long crescendo. Rangell's consistently provocative playing and ideas are so interesting that we can hardly keep ourselves from appreciating them.”** The *New York Times*

has said that Rangell's “free-spirited Bach is distinguished by its powerful drive and intensity and a remarkable articulation that illuminates contrapuntal intricacies with microscopic clarity.”

Rangell wrote his own penetrating album essay for *The Art of Fugue*, explicating the content and context of the work even as he underscores his emotional connection to it:

**The Art of Fugue is Bach's final major instrumental composition – and a farewell testament for the ages.** It is an ordered set of 14 fugues and four canons, all deriving from a single theme, and all sharing the same key of D minor. A unique and prodigious demonstration of contrapuntal craft and imagination, the work was not fully completed at the time of Bach's death. It had been begun some eight years earlier, around 1741-42, as two other keyboard masterworks were being brought to fruition: the second book of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* and the Goldberg Variations, both destined to reap a worldly popularity never to be accorded their more forbidding, inward-looking successor. In the last decade of his life, Bach withdrew from many of his longstanding activities as a composing cantor. And now, “alone with his genius,” Bach joyfully and purposefully immersed himself in one self-assigned project after another, the culmination of a life's work, intending to place his own indelible stamp on the already vanishing art of pure instrumental counterpoint. In *The Art of Fugue*, practically every movement is long, elaborate, even arduous. Texture is largely unchanging. The D-minor tonality is a constant. The language is austere, the tone serious – even through contrast. The “variations” unfold at a glacial rate. And yet! **Such is the triumph, and the mystery, of this impossible enterprise that its slow evolution yields not so much a drama as a vast and moving meditation. . .**

If the Goldberg Variations, with its overview of Baroque styles, is Bach's “most worldly” keyboard creation (as Charles Rosen has called it), *The Art of Fugue*, conceived at almost the same time, would seem to be his most unworldly. Or, otherworldly. . . It is doubtful to me that Bach constructed, or intended, *The Art of Fugue* for full performance. But he unquestionably regarded it as a summa of his art and had the highest hopes for its dispersion into the minds and ears of generations of musicians to come. Let us not forget that throughout his lifetime of composing for keyboard, Bach's guiding precept was always to combine instruction with delight. **I have been**

**moved and nourished in my study of these pieces; therefore, I have sought to lift them off the page – and to place them lovingly in the ears of those who would listen.**

Bach's "The Art of Fugue" on the Steinway & Sons label:  
interview with Andrew Rangell



no ratings yet

38 views

### **Andrew Rangell**

Pianist Andrew Rangell has recorded 25 albums on the Dorian, Bridge and Steinway & Sons labels. Some two decades ago, Mr. Rangell's recording debut featured performances of Bach's Goldberg Variations, F-sharp minor Toccata and the two Ricercars from The Musical Offering. More recently, the pianist's superlative recordings of The Well-Tempered Clavier Book I, Italian Concerto, Partitas, French Suites and other works have established him among today's most distinguished interpreters of Bach. His many other recordings reveal Mr. Rangell to be an artist of exceptional scope and affinity. These discs range from composers such as Sweelinck, Gibbons, Tisdale and Froberger across several centuries to Stravinsky, Enescu, Schoenberg, Ives, Nielsen, Fartein Valen and Christian Wolff. Recently, Mr. Rangell has created a new album for future release, featuring folk-influenced masterworks by Bartók, Kodály and Janáček.

Mr. Rangell made his New York debut as winner of the Malraux Award of the Concert Artists' Guild, and he has since performed and lectured throughout the United States and in Europe and Israel. He has also taught on the faculties of Dartmouth College, Middlebury College and Tufts University. In the 1980s, already recognized as a distinctive recitalist and collaborative artist, Mr. Rangell gained national attention – and the award of an Avery Fisher Career Grant – for his vivid, probing traversal of the complete Beethoven sonata cycle on stage in New York, Boston,

Cleveland, Rochester, Denver and other U.S. cities. A hand injury sustained in 1991 forced Mr. Rangell to gradually alter the trajectory of his career, and he eventually placed his highest priority on recording. In recent years, he has created several DVDs for children, integrating his special talents as author, illustrator, narrator and pianist.

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