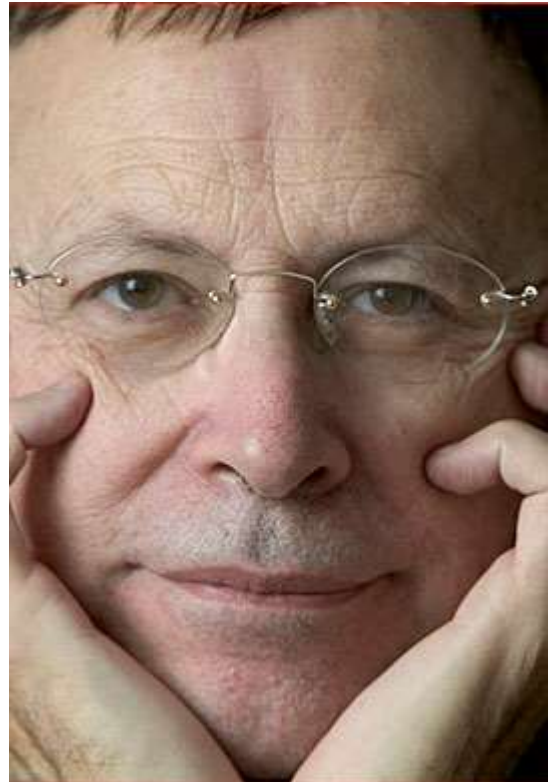


# Anthony Newman



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# Anthony Newman - Biography

Anthony Newman is without question America's foremost Baroque interpreter. Described by Wynton Marsalis as "**The High Priest of Bach**", and by *Time Magazine* as "**The High Priest of the Harpsichord**", Newman has maintained a 40 year career as America's leading **organist, harpsichordist** and **Bach specialist**. His prodigious recording output includes more than 170 CDs on such labels as **CBS, SONY, Deutsche Grammophon, and Vox Masterworks**. In 1989 *Stereo Review* voted his original instrument recording of Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto as "**Record of the Year**". His collaboration with **Wynton Marsalis** on Sony's "In Gabriel's Garden" was the **best-selling classical CD** for 1997.

As a keyboard artist he has performed more than 60 times at **Lincoln Center** in NYC, and has collaborated with many of the 'greats' of music including **Kathleen Battle, Itzhak Perlman, Eugenia Zukerman, John Nelson, Jean-Pierre Rampal, James Levine, Lorin Maazel, Mstislav Rostropovich, Sieji Ozawa** and **Leonard Bernstein**.

As a conductor he has worked with the greats of chamber music orchestras including **St Paul Chamber, LA Chamber, Budapest Chamber, Scottish Chamber, and 92nd St. Y Chamber Orchestras**. Larger symphonic groups include **Seattle** (over 40 appearances), **Los Angeles, San Diego, Calgary, Denver, and NY Philharmonic Orchestras**.

No less prodigious a composer, his works have been heard in **Paris, Vienna, Budapest, Krakow, Warsaw, New York** and **London**. His output includes **4 symphonies, 4 concerti, 3 large choral works, 2 operas: Nicole and Massacre** (in collaboration with Charles Flowers), **3 cds of piano music, and a large assortment of chamber, organ and guitar works**. Complete works are published by **Ellis Press** (TD EllisMusic.com). Newman has received **30 consecutive composer's awards** from ASCAP.

Antony Newman is the **music director** of "Bach Works," New York's all Bach association, and **Bedford Chamber Concerts**. He is also on the Visiting Committee for the Department of Musical Instruments at the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** and on the board of the "**Musical Quarterly Magazine**".

As a person committed to outreach he was a volunteer for Stamford Hospital, a member of Hospice International from 1995 to 2004, and **music director** of St. Matthews Episcopal Church in Bedford NY.

***In 2015 Mr. Newman will return to the Disney Concert Hall as part of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Organ Series.*** Anthony Newman is a **Yamaha Artist**.

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## Anthony Newman - Reviews

Anthony Newman's immense physical talent for playing keyboard instruments is certainly basic to his prolific ventures in the music business. On Sunday afternoon at Holy Trinity Church, Mr. Newman roared through six Mendelssohn organ sonatas and three Preludes and Fugues as if the effort were barely worth mentioning. It is perhaps this easy fluency and high energy level that allows him to pursue so many things – piano, fortepiano and harpsichord performances, conducting, composing and editing...The sheer kinetic force of the playing had its visceral charm, and Sunday's large audience reacted enthusiastically to the frequent bursts of power.....Mr. Newman is simply an organist for our time – hard-hitting, action-packed, hugely skilled...these are star qualities... a star he most certainly is.

**-The New York Times, 1990**

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The bird collection, which opened the program, included Messiaen's richly inventive "Chants Oiseaux," sandwiched between two Baroque works, Rameau's "Poule" and Daquin's "Coucou." These scores are not just bird-song mimicry, of course: Rameau, Daquin and Messiaen wove their birdcalls into their more abstract musical discourses, offering moments of evocative imitation here and there. Mr. Newman balanced these works' sinews and pictorial frills sensibly, and drew fully on the coloristic resources of the church's Aeolian-Skinner organ.

His inventiveness with color was evident elsewhere, too, most notably in his alternation of flute and reed timbres in Bach's Prelude and Fugue in E (BWV 548) and an unusually brisk account of the Bach Passacaglia and Fugue in C (BWV 582), which closed the concert.

**-The New York Times**

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That may be taking purity beyond the limits of practicality, but Mr. Newman's performances were certainly vivid. They were also played more briskly than one often hears them; but Mr. Newman supported his tempos by citing the writings of Charles Tournemire, one of Franck's students. More crucially, he approached Franck's registrational contrasts with virtuosic fluidity, drawing easily on a wide, contrasting timbral palette. Even such comparatively modest works as the Fantasies in A major and C major, the "Prière" and the Cantabile in B minor became wonderfully textured and sometimes dramatic essays.

The combination of the organ's attractively transparent coloration and Mr. Newman's vibrant approach made for an especially lovely rendering of the popular Prélude, Fugue et Variation. And the splashier, more openly picturesque works – the "Pièce Héroïque" and the "Grand Pièce Symphonique," for instance – benefited from unflaggingly robust performances and an almost cinematic variety breadth.

**-The New York Times**

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## **Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.**

The first part of the recital Newman ended with his own delicate composition in a style of the French organ music of the XX century: Adagio and Toccata from the II Symphony. In the second part of the recital, he brilliantly played Grande Piece Symphonique op. 17 by Cezar Franck; in the end, he returned to Bach. I must admit that I have never heard such a monumental and ravishing performance of Passacaglia and Fugue c-minor BWV 582 played live.

**-Music in Old Krakow, Gazeta Krakowkoska**

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These four music cassettes, which have just come out from Newport Classic, can only be described as "incredible"...these organ recordings so thoroughly overturn the way we are used to hearing Bach's organ music played, and not in an eccentric sense that they should not be taken seriously, but rather they are quite serious ...the organist Anthony Newman...possesses unbelievable technical skills, and not only in the sense that he can play incredibly fast. What now makes this recording so interesting is that it is so passionately gripping, it is so musical and played in such a way that it does even not bother with traditions as we know them....rather it seems to go its own new way...they are always sparkling, inspiring, musical and never boring ...the recording is so inspiring, so exciting, that you will want to listen to it for hours on end. This recording has doubtlessly upped the bidding as to where the limits of performance are.

**-Plattenumschau, Record Review**

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Ears more attuned than mine to the fine specifics of organ building will have to judge just how well Rieger has met the challenge, but Mr. Newman's demonstration of the instrument's versatility was stunningly convincing. He exploited its responsiveness of touch to the utmost. He has the virtuoso command of fingerwork to achieve brilliant distinctness at high speed (runs played too smoothly will blur together). His flair for theatrical, propulsive rhythms is exciting; his ornamentation is unusually fluent and unmannered. His pedalwork in the F major toccata, S. 540, was spectacular: If one insisted on counting along, it was evident that he played a bit slower than when the corresponding fast passages came around on the manuals, but the impression was of unbroken velocity, headlong yet fully under control.

**-The New York Times**

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## **Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.**

Newport Classics series of recordings of Bach organ works is in several ways a revelation. First, there's this organist, Anthony Newman, who rolls even Bach's most difficult works off his fingers (and beneath his feet) as if he were born to it. There's something indescribably comforting and reassuring about listening to a performer who you know is in total control. Newman never presumes to conquer Bach – only to interpret him in the most tasteful but imaginative way possible. Newman convinces you with technical perfection and with some of the most inspired registration you're every likely to hear.

**-Digital Audio & Compact Disc Review**

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The way to get more people to the Allied arts organ series is to have more performances of the type Anthony Newman brought to Orchestra Hall Friday...serious, dedicated playing is no match for the excitement Newman generates. He revealed two very great advantages over the majority of his predecessors. First, he made superior use of the resources of the instrument. Newman obviously is a master of registration; he blends organ sounds with acute skill...he projects his energy and insight. His strong commitment to the music shows in his playing and sweeps you along. Everything he does seems to capture the imagination. Here were two of the greatest works revealed in their fullest glory ...Newman the composer was heard in two ingenious and attractive improvisations and his variations on the 'The Battle hymn of the Republic'.

**-Chicago Sun-Times**

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The first half of the concert was devoted to French organ works of the late 19th century, the second to J.S. Bach. French composers, including those heard Tuesday, Charles-Marie Widor, Cesar Franck and Louis Vierne, exploited the massive symphonic sound available on organs of their time and Newman was not shy about letting loose his instrument's power. But sonic effects were carefully controlled, though the changes in volume in the opening work, the allegro movement of Widor's organ Symphony No. 6 seemed abrupt. The scherzo movement of Vierne's Organ Symphony No. 2 had a jaunty ragtime feel to it, the organ at times sounding like a hurdy-gurdy.

**-Chicago Sun Times**

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## **Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.**

Anthony Newman is an authentic virtuoso, and the key word there is authentic. His performances combine a deep and wide-ranging scholarship, compelling musicianship, fluent technical skill and an “X” factor of presence that takes audiences on a trip back in time. Newman’s brief discourses were illuminating and entertaining, and flowed like his music from a lifetime of knowledge. And Newman plays them both with breathtaking pace and skill, doing all the mechanical business of organ playing with the aplomb of an Olympic athlete – pulling knobs, shoving keyboards, kicking pedals, wrestling with the gigantic Ahrend Baroque tracker organ in Beall Hall as if to throw the beast to the ground.

**-The Register-Guard**

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It was a midnight mass of the brightest colors, a celebration of music itself. Anthony Newman played Bach on the Kennedy Center’s much neglected Concert Hall organ as Saturday turned to Sunday, and well over 1,000 people stayed up and cheered. It was a celebration of the organ, an instrument that not even the human voice can surpass in its power to envelop all the senses. Organ and organist both were models of commanding clarity and authoritative splendor. Newman was particularly majestic in the double-pedaled chorale and prelude of “An Wasserfluessen Babylon,” as well as in the famous Prelude and Fugue in D Major. And the serenity that settled on ‘Schmuecke dich, o liebe Seele’ never left him throughout the morning.

**-The Washington Post**


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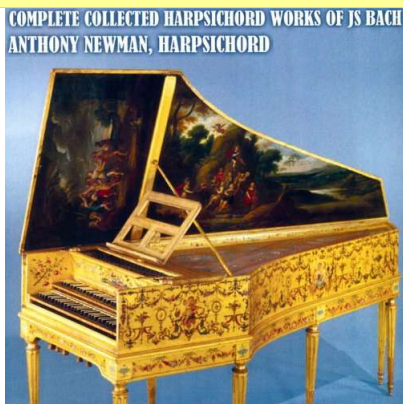


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**FEATURE REVIEW** by [Dave Saemann](#)

 **BACH Collected Solo Harpsichord Works** (complete). **Harpsichord Concerto No. 1**, BWV 1052. **BULL *Walsingham Variations*** • Anthony Newman (hpd, org) • 903 RECORDS 8550 (10 CDs: 678:40)

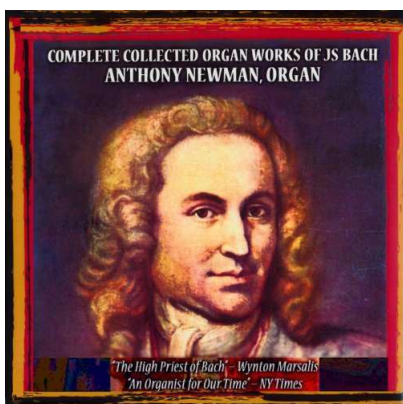
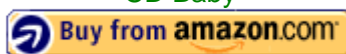
 **BACH Collected Organ Works** (complete) • Anthony Newman (org, pedal hpd) • 903 RECORDS 12128 (9 CDs: 636:38)



**Complete Collected Harpsichord Works J.S. Bach**

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## Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.

For those of us who discovered Bach in the 1970s, Anthony Newman was the man of the hour. His LPs of Book One of *The Well Tempered Clavier* came out in 1973, when I was 12, and immediately became part of my regular weekend listening (Menahem Pressler's brother Leo, on seeing my record collection in these years, said to my father, "Alfred, this is serious. *The Art of Fugue!*"). Soon I was able to convince my mother to take a subscription for us to two years of Anthony Newman and Friends at Alice Tully Hall, one of the most charming concert series I ever have had the privilege of attending. My high school music teacher, Nicholas Tino, was an organist and harpsichordist with a special interest in Bach, so we spoke about Newman frequently. We both felt Newman was one of the few artists whose keyboard technique rivaled Horowitz's. Nick thought Newman's rapid tempos were appropriate for the harpsichord but not for the organ. I've had 40 years to think this over, and I side with Newman. He believes that true Baroque organ playing style disappeared around 1760, and that the way we generally hear Bach on the organ is a fantasy of the 19th century. Given Bach's reputation as Germany's supreme keyboard virtuoso, it requires an artist of Newman's ability to recreate what the composer may have been capable of as a performer. What we have on the present CDs is a rare document of an artist entering the mind and spirit of a composer with results that are truly unsurpassed.

Newman's organ box is played on a number of different organs, all of which are relatively small yet powerful. For many listeners, the core of the set will be the three CDs devoted to the Preludes and Fugues. All of the works are enjoyable, and the best are memorable—with superb imagination on Newman's part. The Prelude and Fugue in E Minor, BWV 548, has a rustic quality. A sublime drama inhabits the Prelude and Fugue in D Major. The Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 550, is like a walk beside a majestic lake. In the Prelude and Fugue in G Minor there resides the dark-hued dignity of a Rembrandt self-portrait. The prelude of the Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 547, sounds like a peasant dance. Next comes *Jesus, meine Zuversicht*, sounding like a tune by The Moody Blues. Newman's version of the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565, possesses a raw energy which makes it as transcendent a musical document as *The Rite of Spring*. The prelude of the Prelude and Fugue in F Minor is like a stroll on a Sunday afternoon. In the Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 545, we hear two philosophers conversing.

Other highlights of the first three CDs include a Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor with the imagery and grandeur of a medieval tapestry. The Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, in the second recording of it Newman has included, exhibits the majesty and opulence of Baroque architecture. A breeze on an autumn day is wafted by the Prelude and Fugue in D Minor. The Prelude and Fugue in E Minor offers the exotic, brooding colors of a Gothic novel. The Toccata and Fugue in F Major reveals a grand, dignified procession. Newman's penchant for quick tempos does not preclude him from being a sensitive interpreter of Bach's chorales. Of the *18 Varied Chorales (Leipzig Chorales)*, my favorites start with *Adorn Yourself, Dear Soul*, which flows like a gently moving stream. Newman offers miraculously light, feathery playing in *Lord Jesus Christ, Turn*

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## Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.

*to Us. Come Now, Savior of the Heathen*, BWV 659, exhibits profound religious feeling, while the same tune in BWV 661 has shattering intensity in Newman's hands. *Come, God Creator, Holy Ghost* presents a foretaste of the resurrection. A healthy, extroverted sensibility permeates the fifth *Schübler Chorale, Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ*. Karl Richter thought that the *Orgelbüchlein* was at the center of Bach's creative output, and Newman imbues this microcosm of the composer's world with tremendous understanding. *In dir ist Freude* reminds me of Virgil Fox's comment about playing a "he-man" Bach. *O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde* Gross portrays a simple, humble piety. *Christ ist erstanden* possesses the dark, rich palette of a Pre-Raphaelite painting. *Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ* is like a view from a window on a winter's day. I also enjoy Peter Hurford's quite different version of the *Orgelbüchlein*. Newman offers an exceptionally lucid performance of the *Canonic Variations on "Vom Himmel Hoch."* From the *Catechism Chorales, Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir*, BWV 686, is like storm clouds building. An impish spirit informs *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland*, BWV 688. The second Duetto can be compared to a game of chess, with each player taking his turn.

Newman gives the "Gigue" Fugue a roguish air. *Sheep May Safely Graze* is so lacking in solemnity that you can dance to it. In the *Concerto in D Minor after Vivaldi*, one is struck by how natural this sounds as organ music, through Newman's phrasing and registrations. The play of shifting textures in the *Fantasia in G Major* is quite remarkable. The second of the three versions here of the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor* is on pedal harpsichord, which permits Newman to realize its figurations with uncommon sensitivity and elegance. He plays the outer movements of the trio sonatas on the organ, but the central movements on pedal harpsichord. This makes the second movement of No. 3 truly *Dolce*, even employing a lute stop. For a more conventional performance of these sonatas solely on organ, I would recommend John Butt's CD. The final CD in Newman's set is devoted to his 1968 debut on Columbia Records, dubbed from a slightly noisy LP. Its highlight for me is the *Prelude and Fugue in B Minor* on pedal harpsichord, with the stark lines of an etching instead of an organ's watercolors. The sound engineering throughout this collection varies from fair to very good. If you are looking for audiophile sound in a complete box of the Bach organ works, I am quite happy with Wolfgang Rübsam's set on Philips.

I always have considered *The Well Tempered Clavier* to be at the center of Newman's repertoire. One of my most cherished memories of Anthony Newman and Friends is the intermissions, when Newman would take off his jacket, sit at the harpsichord, and play parts of it for whoever would care to stay and listen. Toscanini said that fugue is an artificial form, but Bach was a passionate man. I'm not sure that we would view fugue this way today, but Newman certainly finds the passion in these works. I enjoy Vladimir Ashkenazy's clear and sensible version of *The Well Tempered Clavier*. Newman's renditions are just as lucid and quick in tempo, but where Ashkenazy is Apollonian, Newman is on fire. His renditions are as informed by period performance

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## Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.

practice as one could wish and are totally attentive to structure, but there is an added ecstatic dimension I have heard from no other harpsichordist. Indeed, in spirit Newman's account has less in common with Ashkenazy's than with João Carlos Martin's wild and woolly recordings of Book One on Tomato and Book Two on Concord Concerto. When Newman first recorded *The Well Tempered Clavier* in the 1970s, he used three different harpsichords for Book One, and harpsichord, clavichord, and positif organ for Book Two. Prelude No. 8 of Book Two on organ in the present collection appears to have been dubbed from that old LP, but the rest of the set is on harpsichord. This is playing of depth and imagination.

Newman's Six Partitas are the fastest version I've ever heard. I enjoy Maria Tipo's recording, which is exquisite and refined, where Newman is trenchant and earthy. His is blood-and-guts Bach, the man who kept his wives pregnant and fought with his employers. Newman's First Partita is every bit as soulful as Dubravka Tomsic's, but with a reminder that a sarabande is meant to be danced. In the repeat of its first Menuet, Newman's use of the lute stop for variety is particularly apt. The Overture of the Fourth Partita has French grandeur, and the subsequent Allemande offers melismatic beauty. The Sarabande here is a great moment, encapsulating the Baroque attitude of personal self-possession. I wish Decca would reissue Thurston Dart's LP of the *French Suites* on clavichord. Newman's performance on harpsichord shares clarity and sensitivity with Dart's. The First Suite in Newman's hands has a gentle, ruminative quality. No. 2 constitutes a philosophy of life in musical form. No. 3 is filled with brilliance, while the Sarabande of No. 4 is exquisite. In comparison with the Partitas, the *French Suites* show how Newman is able to create differences in attitude without ever compromising the rigor of historic performance practice.

The *Goldberg Variations* receives a great performance. It has tenderness, brilliance, and humor. Newman's virtuosity is stunning, and while it certainly is striking, it never draws attention to itself for its own sake. Newman finds in Bach's variation form a way of encapsulating all experience, all aspects of the world. At Newman's quick tempos and with his fluid phrasing, the illusion of legato on the harpsichord is created, while he releases great washes of sound worthy of Debussy. Bach's personality is so vibrant in Newman's interpretation that the composer almost appears high. My favorite rendition of the *Goldbergs* on piano is András Schiff's first recording for Decca, a reading of great plastic qualities and warmth. Where Schiff is like lyric poetry, Newman is like dramatic poetry. Newman reveals himself to be a great actor, infusing each variation with a rich, unique personality. The only recording I know that realizes all the technical aspects of the work to the same degree is the 1942 Claudio Arrau account. The lute stop in the third variation almost is like having a continuo instrument accompany the harpsichord. No. 16 nearly prefigures Liszt, while No. 28 is cosmic in its suggestion of whole universes. This recording ranks as one of the peaks of Newman's accomplishment as a Bach performer.

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## Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.

I prefer Angela Hewitt to Newman in the Toccatas. She makes a strong case for the modern piano's euphoniousness and for more spacious tempos, besides benefitting from better sound engineering. Not that Newman's account is without merit. The opening of his D-Major Toccata has a breathless vigor. In the C-Minor he establishes a rhythm that really rocks. The G-Minor possesses the style and poise of the English virginalists. But in the D-Minor Toccata, Newman's tempo really is too fast for the majesty of Bach's rhetoric. I have no reservations about Newman's English Suites. They are a magnificent accomplishment. Robert Levin, in the notes to his excellent recording, writes that these works make technical demands on the player similar to Liszt and Rachmaninoff. It is a measure of Newman's astounding virtuosity that his version requires less than two-thirds the time of Colin Tilney's, also on harpsichord. The Allemande of No. 1 has a wistful quality, while its Sarabande evokes a highly ornamented, gold-trimmed Baroque room. The Prelude of No. 2 sounds very contemporary, as if depicting a cityscape. Newman finds a dark, dangerous feeling in its Sarabande, almost like a tango. The Sarabande in No. 3 sounds like an entire orchestra. In No. 6, the Prelude is mighty in scope, while the gavottes possess the air of music for the theater. In sum, Newman proves that the *English Suites* can be played quickly, but without any loss of subtlety.

The shorter works are generally engaging, The Inventions and Sinfonias receive a performance that is clear and frequently exciting. In the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* and the *Italian Concerto*, Newman's virtuosity is compelling. The Partita in B Minor exudes French pomp. The First Harpsichord Concerto gets a solid performance in good monaural sound with an uncredited orchestra. Perhaps as a *jeu d'esprit*, Newman has included what appears to be his old Columbia recording of John Bull's *Walsingham Variations*, a rousing accomplishment marred only by a brief silence in the master. The sound engineering throughout the set ranges from fair to good, with a noticeable number of the tracks dubbed from less than ideal LPs. As Jerry Dubins has pointed out to me, both the harpsichord and organ boxes are advertised as the complete "Collected Works," meaning that they are complete only with respect to the works Bach placed into collections. Listeners hoping for absolutely complete versions of Bach's organ and harpsichord music will find gaps. That said, I can think of no performer whose reflections on Bach are more essential than Anthony Newman's, and I include Karl Richter and Glenn Gould in that statement. I was fortunate enough to hear Richter in concert four times, but Newman's concerts have been just as enlightening. Don't be dissuaded by my reservations about the presentation of these two boxes. Newman is a great artist, and for him, Bach is the heart of the matter.

**-Dave Saemann**

**This article originally appeared in Issue 37:6 (July/Aug 2014) of *Fanfare Magazine*.**

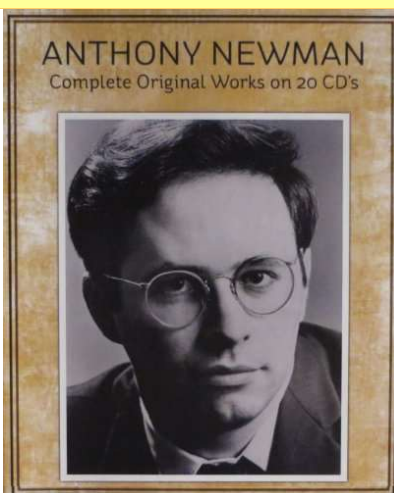
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**FEATURE REVIEW** by [Colin Clarke](#)

**A. NEWMAN** Complete Original Works, including: *American Classic Symphonies* Nos. 1 and 2.<sup>1</sup> *Violin Concerto*.<sup>2</sup> *Requiem*.<sup>3</sup> *Piano Quintet*.<sup>4</sup> *Nicole and the Trial of the Century*.<sup>5</sup> *12 Preludes and Fugues in Ascending Key*.<sup>6</sup> *Organ Symphonies* Nos. 1–3.<sup>7</sup> *Fantasia on Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex"*.<sup>7</sup> *Angel Oratorio*<sup>8</sup> • Various artists; Orso Str Qt; <sup>4</sup>Wiersma Str Qt; <sup>2</sup>Yoon Kwon (vn); Anthony Newman <sup>4</sup>(pn); Anthony Newman <sup>7</sup>(org); Anthony Newman, <sup>1,3,5</sup>cond; <sup>8</sup>Mary Jane Newman, cond; <sup>3,8</sup>Ars Antiqua Ch; <sup>1,3,8</sup>Bach Works O; <sup>2</sup>Bedford CO; <sup>5</sup>Susan Lewis, <sup>5</sup>Malinda Haslett (sop) • 903 RECORDS 1948 & 2004 (20 CDs: 1, 431:26)



**Anthony Newman: Complete Original Works on 20 CDs**

AUDIO CD; BOX SET

903 Records



Taken from the interview above: “The reason you’ve never heard of me as a composer is that I was pegged from the start as a performer of Bach and Baroque music. That’s what people associate with me, not new music.” He says also about his time at Harvard with Berio, “I did write a lot of music in that style, but I threw it most of it away.” Newman’s music is clearly the result of a composer with a terrific sense of style, of what makes music internally logical, consistent, and finely constructed whatever musical vernacular one uses. Take the Second String Quartet (CD 9). The second movement “Chaconne with Variations” is fabulous in its scope, and the whole quartet is very well recorded. In the interview, Newman talks about the quality of “joyousness” in his music, and how he picked that up from Stravinsky: One can certainly hear that in the finale of this quartet.

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## Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.

The piano quintet is somewhat more rugged (the recording is a little distanced, unfortunately) and the second (and central) movement traverses a great deal of territory (the three sections of that movement are *Largo, Furioso, Largo*). There seem to be hints of Rachmaninoff in some of the melodic turns (and in their harmonic underpinning), but there is a distinctly post-Rachmaninoff edge to the *furioso* section before magical piano scales encrust the final *Lento* section. It is the finale that really impresses, though: entitled “Variations on a Easter Tune,” so timely as I review this with less than a week to go to Good Friday, it holds passages of real beauty alongside passages which exemplify Newman’s trademark flirting with the boundaries of tonality. Possibly the most impressive achievement is the Requiem (CD 2, performed by the Bach Works Chorus and Orchestra). Here Newman succeeds in the remarkable feat of juxtaposing moments of unbearable tenderness with times of real, raw power. The slow, cumulative tread of the opening “Requiem Aeternam,” with its tolling bell of sadness, gives way to a buoyant, active Kyrie, clearly indebted to Newman’s beloved Bach. Perhaps the performance is not the neatest one could imagine, but there is so much to enjoy—Newman’s deft way with woodwind writing, for example, surely there indebted to Stravinsky again. The *Dies irae* of course poses a huge challenge to any composer, and Newman’s reaction is at first predictable in its largesse. But the ensuing rhythmic shiftings and the sense of underlying disquiet is both unpredictable and fascinating and certainly had this reviewer smiling at the ingenuity of it all. There is also a magnificent virtuosic organ toccata between the “Domine Jesu Christe” and the Sanctus that I assume is played by Newman himself (he is also conducting the performance).

There is even an opera here: *Nicole and the Trial of the Century* (1999, mentioned in the interview above). Newman’s trademark skill in scoring is everywhere in evidence. Once again, he has a particularly deft and delicious way with wind writing: try the overture, which seems to bristle with a sense of the theater. The Trial Scene is, apparently, taken from actual transcripts of the trial itself. Again, Stravinsky is in evidence: There is an underlying debt to *Oedipus Rex* here. I take it the 18 tracks on offer here are from the Albany recording. This is a shortened version, with the Trial Scene curtailed. The scoring used is light and minimal. The work apparently awaits a first staging, and one hopes an enterprising opera company (not necessarily in the States, as this would surely find an appreciative audience in the UK) finally finds the *cojones* to put it on. A scheduled New York performance failed to materialize. Another aspect of Newman’s music is its tender lyricism: listen, for example, to the slow central movement of the Violin Concerto in D (part of CD 12, *Complete Works for Violin*). The sheer variety of Newman’s output is highly impressive, partly because his aural imagination seems to know no bounds. The buzzing vibrancy of the opening Prelude in C of the *12 Preludes and Fugues in Ascending Key* (CD 13) seems to sum up not only the internal energy of much of Newman’s music but also of this piece itself; after the prelude, the fugue launches itself off in unstoppable fashion in a sterling performance by the composer himself. At the heart of the work is an *Adagio*

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## Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.

*lachrymae*, the prelude to the F# Fugue. Somehow it crystallizes Newman's debt to Bach, while harmonically it speaks of Newman's own sorrows. It is beautifully, sensitively played here. The fugue that follows is arguably the most inspired fugue of this set, its subject fluid and treated with great flexibility, but always within the confines of the fugue method.

The symphonic music provides much joy. The *American Classic Symphony* No. 1 (Bach Works Classical Players/Newman) opens with a happy, bright, rhythmic toccata, although the sound seems to zoom in and out somewhat. The neoclassical Tango is Newman at his most unbuttoned. Unfortunately the end of the performance is not the tightest. The *American Classic Symphony* No. 2 seems a slightly more complex piece.

There are three whole discs devoted exclusively to the organ (CDs 16–18, all played, of course, by Newman himself). There is a sense of homecoming here, of Newman absolutely reveling in the extravagance of his own music for his own instrument, and the evident joy it gives him to play it. The playing is stunning, particularly the clarity of the fingerwork. The third disc of organ works (CD18) is in many ways the most rewarding: three fully fledged organ symphonies followed by the *Fantasia on Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex."* Each of the symphonies lasts in excess of half an hour and each reveals a composer capable of much depth (try the *Largo mesto* of the first). The Second Organ Symphony includes a transcription of the *Adagio* from the Viola Concerto (CD 10) as its fourth movement, while *Largo* of the Third Organ Symphony is entitled "Mother Teresa" and is presented in two versions, one for organ and one for piano, the one right after the other (the rather festive toccata finale returns to the organ). The nine-minute *Fantasia on Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex"* is astonishing. The invocation of the power of the orchestra at the opening is truly astounding; the use of stops to create changes of orchestration is truly skilled. For lovers of the Stravinsky, this will surely appear as a labor of love.

The two sets are crowned by the *Angel Oratorio*, a work of radiant beauty. Who, after all, doesn't like angels? There is drama as well as beauty here, and some virtuoso singing, not least from the unnamed soprano soloist in the penultimate movement, "Blow your trumpets, Angels."

I wouldn't recommend listening to the *40 Great Hymns* straight through unless you're really devout (CD5: I did, and I'm not) but they contain much to celebrate if taken in small chunks.

The Amazon listing (at least at the time of writing) cites Billy Joel and Lukas Foss praising Anthony Newman's music. That it can appeal equally to both is telling. Although references to other composers have been sprinkled through this review, Newman remains his own man, fierce in his belief in what music is and what it means

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## **Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.**

to him. His staunch avoidance of atonality, yet his ability to skirt around it, seems perfectly natural as he is so assured in what he wants, and has such a keen ear and sterling compositional technique that he knows exactly how to get it, too.

A word of warning: The discs (at least in my sets) are tightly attached and my copy of the Requiem (CD 2) split pretty much into two on about its third outing and was unplayable thereafter. Luckily I had heard the piece through (and it is also available on Spotify) but do be aware of this hazard. Documentation is a little inconsistent, as some disc labels include performer information while others do not, while gleaning performers from the booklet is a more a challenge for some works than for others. Nevertheless, this assignment has been a source of great joy for this reviewer. This is bracingly invigorating music that deserves investigation.

**-Colin Clarke**

**This article originally appeared in Issue 37:6 (July/Aug 2014) of *Fanfare Magazine*.**

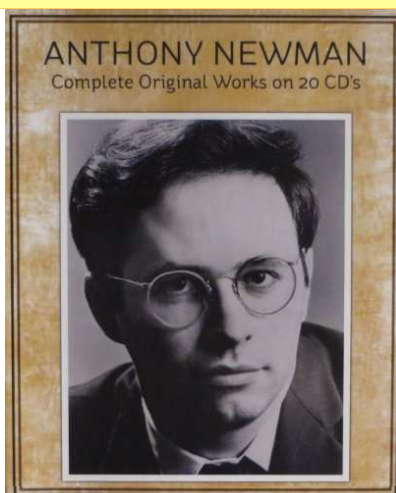
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**FEATURE REVIEW** by [David DeBoor Canfield](#)

**A. NEWMAN** Complete Original Works, including: *American Classic Symphonies* Nos. 1 and 2.<sup>1</sup> *Violin Concerto*.<sup>2</sup> *Requiem*.<sup>3</sup> *Piano Quintet*.<sup>4</sup> *Nicole and the Trial of the Century*.<sup>5</sup> *12 Preludes and Fugues in Ascending Key*.<sup>6</sup> *Organ Symphonies* Nos. 1–3.<sup>7</sup> *Fantasia on Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex"*.<sup>7</sup> *Angel Oratorio*<sup>8</sup> • Various artists; Orso Str Qt; <sup>4</sup>Wiersma Str Qt; <sup>2</sup>Yoon Kwon (vn); Anthony Newman <sup>4</sup>(pn); Anthony Newman <sup>7</sup>(org); Anthony Newman, <sup>1,3,5</sup>cond; <sup>8</sup>Mary Jane Newman, cond; <sup>3,8</sup>Ars Antiqua Ch; <sup>1,3,8</sup>Bach Works O; <sup>2</sup>Bedford CO; <sup>5</sup>Susan Lewis, <sup>5</sup>Malinda Haslett (sop) • 903 RECORDS 1948 & 2004 (20 CDs: 1, 431:26)



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While Anthony Newman the performer and recording artist has certainly overshadowed Anthony Newman the composer, the latter has been far from idle in his creative activity. In fact, here is a 20-CD set of almost his complete works (his two operas and certain other large-scale works are not included.) But there is certainly enough here to gain a good appreciation of Newman's compositional craft, which is considerable. Newman initially began composing in the 1960s, but when he found that his aesthetic (expressed in the accompanying booklet as "I believe that new music must have some kind of memorable melody and some kind of harmonic background to be truly worthy") was so far outside of the mainstream of the thought of composition teachers in the 1950s and 1960s, he became discouraged and largely stopped composing for some years. Only in the 1980s, by which time composers had

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## Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.

rethought their former eschewing of the traditional parameters of music composition, did Newman actively re-engage in composition.

I got to meet him in the early 1980s, when he was a professor of harpsichord and I was a graduate student here at Indiana University, and found out that he had an interest in what the composition majors were up to. He graciously accepted an invitation to come to my house so that I could play him a recording of my just-premiered piano concerto. Soon after that, he left IU, and I, as a serious record collector, began to become acquainted with his music, of which a certain number of works were recorded on LP. I always found Newman's music well-constructed, intelligently conceived and accessible to the listener, an opinion that is only reinforced by the present collection, which incorporates works in virtually all genres. Space herein does not permit a detailed analysis of each work included in this set (depending on how you count them, there are more than 100), but I shall attempt a brief overview. Newman's style is largely driven by neoclassical elements, with occasional lapses into neo-Baroque and neo-Romantic idioms. All of his music is quite tonal, and is written with considerable fluency in his chosen means of expression. Most of the music is upbeat, with lively figurations, joyous melodic utterances, and driving rhythmic figurations. The closest brief description that I can come up with is that Newman is the American Bohuslav Martinů. Of course, the Czech master was one of the most prolific composers of the 20th century, and Newman does not, even with 20 compact discs, come to that level. This is probably all for the better, since Martinů's output is uneven, ranging from potboilers to masterpieces. Newman is more consistent, and I believe that a number of his works may reside in the masterwork arena, and only a very few works (a couple of the Preludes for solo piano) seem to me to be infected with the strain of note-spinning. Almost everything else is composed at a high level of inspiration.

Some of my favorite works were his concerted and chamber works for flute and violin. All of these have a special *joie de vivre* that is simply infectious, and would be a good cure for anyone who is feeling down in the dumps. Much of his music, in fact, fits this description, being permeated with such devices as *coups d'archet* and whatever the wind equivalent would be. (Perhaps *coups de souffle*? You'll have to pardon my French, because it's next to non-existent.) Martinů is not the only influence in this music, however. The Concerto for Organ and Orchestra owes something to Poulenc, the first two symphonies are cousins to Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony, and the Requiem is influenced by Baroque rhythms, textures, and harmonies. Its Sanctus movement reminds me quite a bit of the overture to Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. One real oddity is *Nicole and the Trial of the Century*, the libretto of which deals with the O. J. Simpson trial. There is no libretto included in the set, but the piece seems very lightweight for the gravity of the subject matter. The overture is reminiscent of Menotti's overture to *Amelia al ballo*, while most of the remainder of the piece reminded me (in part because of the chamber forces employed) of Martinů's *La revue*

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## **Anthony Newman-Reviews Cont.**

*de cuisine*, the light and airy textures being interrupted only by a very somber setting of the Lord's Prayer. The singers in the work are also an exception to the generally excellent performers for most of the remainder of the works. Newman himself performs most of the keyboard music, whether for organ, piano, or harpsichord, and obviously plays his own music brilliantly and definitively. One has to hunt rather carefully for the names of the performers in this set: They are nowhere mentioned in conjunction with the listing of the contents, but most may be found nestled within the (regrettably brief) program notes.

The layout of the music is intelligently done, with separate discs devoted to all the violin music, the cello music, the piano music, and so forth. There is really only one outright dud in the entire set, and that is a computer realization of Newman's First String Quartet. For one thing, the piece is played back with a piano rather than a string sound, and the piano sound is one of the poorer computer realizations of a piano sound I've heard (certainly far inferior to the ones I get from my music writing program). The set didn't gain anything at all by including this, even though I imagine the music in this quartet would hold its own with the other works in the CD if it were rendered by human performers.

I like the idea behind the set, i.e., to present a composer's comprehensive *oeuvre* in one convenient package (actually the 20 CDs are contained in two boxes), and having now heard this survey, my admiration for Newman's compositional craft has grown a good bit from what it had been from the handful of his works that I'd previously encountered in the LP era. I hope he'll sell enough sets to be able to publish an addendum containing the First Quartet with a real string quartet, and the few missing works from his output not included herein. Definitely recommended.

**-David DeBoor Canfield**

**This article originally appeared in Issue 37:6 (July/Aug 2014) of *Fanfare Magazine*.**

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# An Interview with Anthony Newman



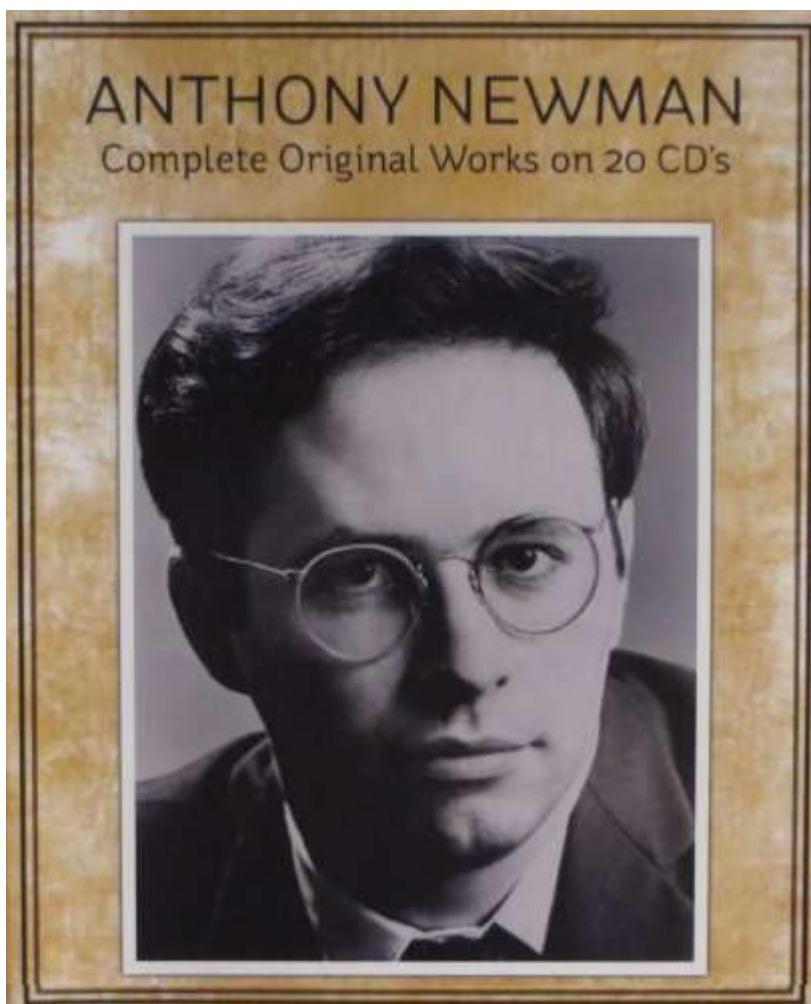
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Written by [Christopher Brodersen](#)

Thursday, 12 June 2014

An Interview with Anthony Newman

BY CHRISTOPHER BRODERSEN



**Anthony Newman: Complete Original Works on 20 CDs**

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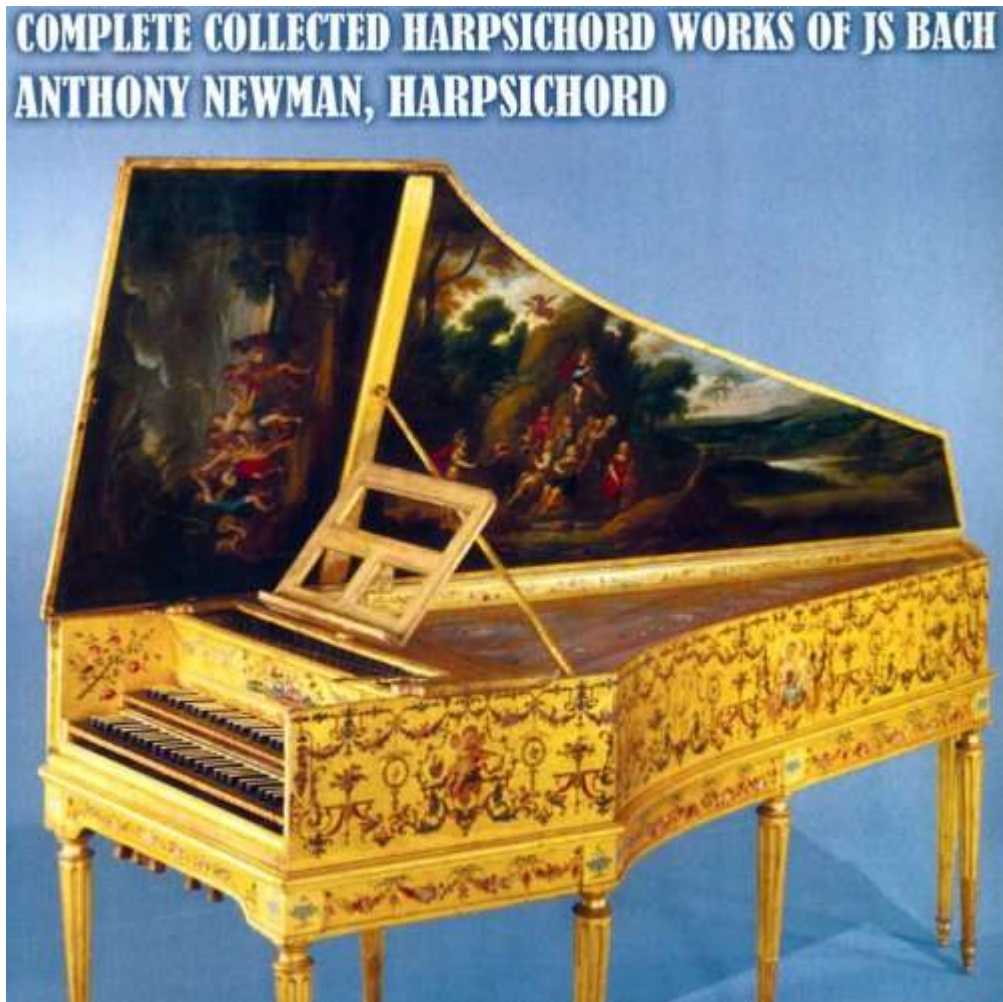


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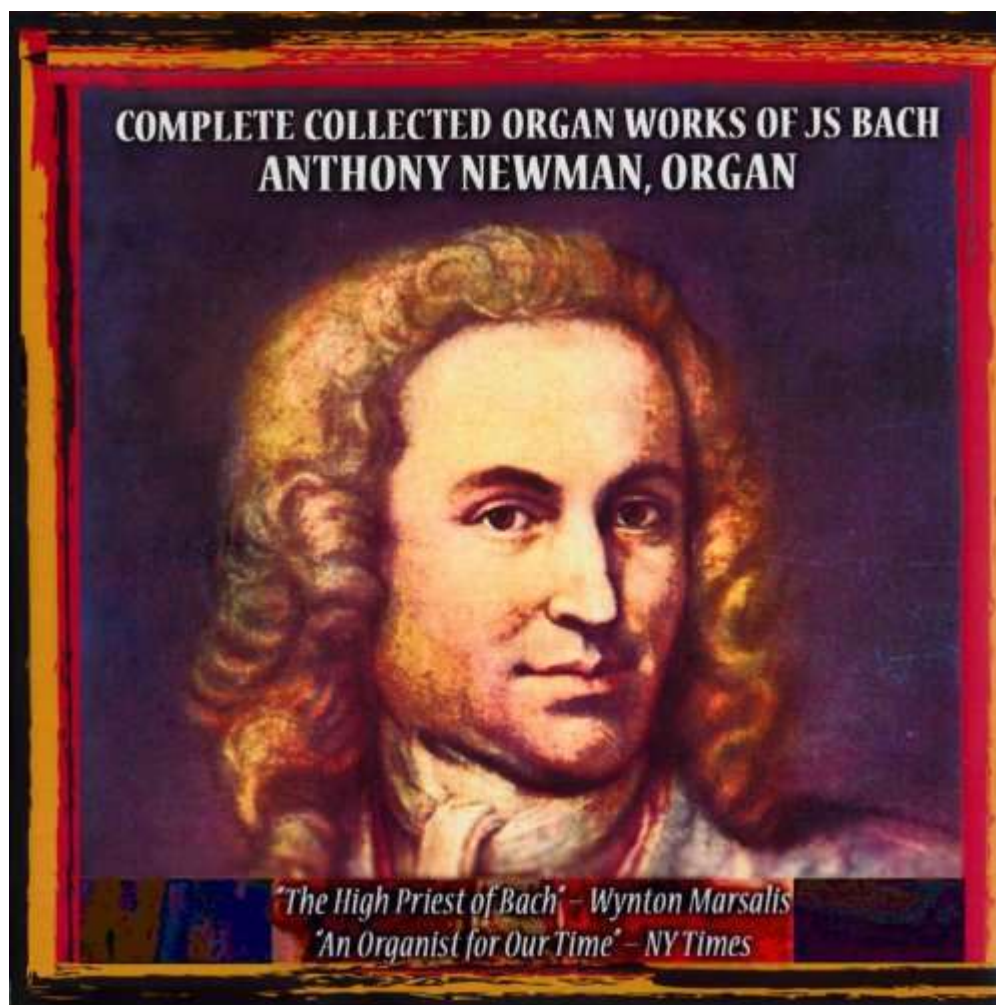
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*Q: Thanks very much for talking with me today—it's quite an honor.*

*A: It's my pleasure.*

*Q: I have to say that in preparing for this interview, I had a pleasant surprise. Fanfare sent me several sets of your CDs, including your recording of the complete works for harpsichord of Bach, which I had not heard before...*

*A: That's a fairly recent release—within the last two years.*

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*Q: Well, to my surprise, the harpsichord depicted on the cover is by Phillip Tyre.*

A: Yes. Is he a friend of yours?

*Q: Actually, he was one my reviewers when I was an editor at Continuo in the 1990s. Phillip was a brilliant writer, easily the most talented guy on our staff.*

A: Very interesting man. He had such unusual, even peculiar ideas about how music should be played and how it should sound. I knew his partner at one time, too—Keith Hill.

*Q: Right. He's quite well-known.*

A: Most of the works in that set were recorded on the Phillip Tyre harpsichord shown on the cover, except the disc that contains the toccatas. For that one I used the large triple-manual instrument that Phillip and Keith Hill built together.

*Q: Is that the one they called their "Magnum Opus"?*

A: That's right.

*Q: I remember when your first record came out on the Columbia label—I believe it was around 1968. It made quite a splash.*

A: It did stir things up a bit, yes.

*Q: Reading your bio on the web site, it says that the record was preceded by your debut recital at Carnegie Hall, on the pedal harpsichord. Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't Clive Davis of Columbia Records hear you and sign you up on the spot?*

A: No—here's how it went. I got a very good review, and the day after I was accepted by Young Concert Artists. The day after *that* there were two phone calls: one from Columbia and one from RCA Victor. The person from RCA Victor said, "We'd like to hear you first before we take you on." Columbia Records said they would sign me up sight unseen, or rather, unheard. My agent at the time advised me to take the offer from Columbia. Clive Davis ultimately was the

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person who pushed and encouraged me while I was at Columbia, but he did not attend the debut recital. The person who was there was—that was Susan Wadsworth from Young Concert Artists.

*Q: Reading further on the web site, it says, “Clive Davis, head of Columbia Records, taking his cue from the prevailing anti-establishment sentiment among young people and Newman’s long hair and interest in Zen meditation, marketed Newman as a counter-culture champion of Bach who could draw in young audiences”. Frankly, that never occurred to me at the time.*

A: I’m glad that didn’t occur to you! Actually, it’s odd because you never know what’s going to make you famous. In this case Columbia decided to market me as some kind of hippy. I’m actually nothing like that at all. I’m a quiet, meditative, and scholastic person, as you can tell if you’ve read through any of the book [ *Bach and the Baroque*, 2nd ed., Pendragon Press, 1995]. I’m much more interested in the intellectual aspect of things. But this marketing scheme seems to have been successful in making me known, because it led to all sorts of concerts and management opportunities. So you have to be grateful for anything that comes your way and allows you to survive, at least when you’re starting out.

*Q: Wasn’t it around this time that Columbia Records released a recording of the Symphonie fantastique conducted by Leonard Bernstein, which they captioned: “Berlioz takes a trip!”?*

A: Oh, my goodness, yes! Well, that certainly was the period. Even the new music of the time was going off the deep end, and yet very little of it has survived. I don’t know if the bio mentions this, but at the same time I was studying performance, I was also a teaching assistant to Luciano Berio at Harvard. So I got to be in the inner circle of the avant-garde of the time. I was very involved in the “crazy music” of the 60s: the Harvard scene, the Boston Symphony scene.

*Q: You certainly have extensive credentials in academia—Harvard, Julliard....*

A: Berio got me the job at Julliard in 1967. I also have a diplôme supérieure from the École Normale de Musique in Paris.

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*Q: Which makes the Columbia marketing decision all the more bizarre.*

A: Exactly. Although I'm certainly grateful to Clive Davis for what he did. After all, who is less likely to have a successful career, without some external help, than someone who specializes in playing Bach on the harpsichord?

*Q: With such an extensive background in standard musical academia—and of course, you studied organ from the age of 10—can you pinpoint the exact moment in your life when you were bitten by the early music “bug”? When you first heard the harpsichord, for example?*

A: Well, I was already deeply in love with music when I was four or five. All the greatest composers, especially the three towering figures: Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart. After I finished high school, I started to realize the disparity between how early music was notated, in this case Bach, and how it sounded. I listened to Landowska's recordings—of course, on a harpsichord that we now know had nothing to do with Baroque instruments at all—but at least it was a harpsichord rather than a piano, and that sounded so much better to me. As the original instrument movement started to catch fire, I would say in the early 1960s in places like Amsterdam and London, it became critical for me to study the source material, because many performances I had been hearing had nothing to do with how that music actually sounded, or should sound. Of course, all of that has proven true over the last 30 or 40 years; the historically-informed performance style is so radically different from the way people of the 1950s and early 60s performed the music of Bach and Handel, for example.

When I left Paris, that was really when I began to be interested in the possibility of performing on original instruments. While I was there, in 1958 and 1959, there was no period instrument activity to speak of. I remember once attending a five or six-hour performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*, with modern orchestra, and they played the music at such unbelievably slow tempos that you would fall asleep listening to it!

The trouble that I ran into, of course, is that, had I done this later on, I would have been far less controversial. Back then, I was often criticized for fast tempi, but my

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tempi aren't any faster than what people are used to nowadays. Not harpsichord or organ necessarily, but when you think of groups such as Musica Antiqua Köln, which play everything so madly fast....

*Q: Or Il Giardino Armonico.*

A: Or the Hanover Band, with whom I recorded the Beethoven concertos, in London. But the piece that got me in the most trouble was the Bach B-Minor Prelude, because I play it using dotted note values. I started doing this when I was 18 or 19, and for some reason people considered me dangerous. I became "the Black Beast of Boston"! [laughs]

In my book, I devote a chapter to the topic of overdotting. In French music you often see dotted notes at the beginning, but then they might all stop. And then they seem to resume every once in a while. I came to the theory that in fact when you approach the cadence, it's normal for the dotting to stop and then resume after the cadence. Exactly that happens in the Bach Prelude in B Minor. Because the organ world is very, very conservative, hence not to be influenced by any other spheres of music, my playing was considered controversial, even "dangerous" by the powers that be.

*Q: You seem to represent one extreme pole of organ playing, the other extreme being organists like Wolfgang Rübsam or Helmut Walcha, who favor slow tempos, never ornament, and in general take a rather unyielding approach to the music.*

A: In the book, I give several examples of the students of Bach, who added *tons* of ornaments to the master's music. So you're left with two possibilities: Either Bach didn't ornament, but when he left town his pupils went wild and added all sorts of ornaments to their copies of the music. Or ornamentation was such a routine matter that Bach didn't feel it necessary to write anything down. Obviously Number Two is the right answer.

Until the last five or 10 years or so, I've always received a fair amount of flak for my ornamentation.

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*Q: The tempos of your organ performances are pretty fast, too—I'll grant your critics that. But amazingly, it never sounds rushed.*

A: Thank you—I appreciate that.

*Q: There are a few others who play lickity-split like you do, but they don't make sense of the music the way you do. I can't think of a good example right now, but one will come to me. You know, back in the 1990s, I collected several of your Bach organ CDs on the Newport Classics label. I especially liked the sound on those CDs, because they had a really good low end that got my subwoofer shaking.*

A: Right! [laughs]

*Q: If I had to pick one piece that demonstrates what you're all about on the organ, it would have to be the Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C. The famous pedal passage in the Toccata—you play it faster than just about anyone, but also more cleanly than all the others, some of whom take it at half your speed. I'm not an organist, but you can just hear how often organists struggle with that passage. The unevenness robs the music of its effect; it's like air bubbles in the water pipes.*

A: Good analogy.

*Q: Getting back to the previous topic of early music and period instruments: When was the first time you encountered a harpsichord, and whose was it?*

A: That's a good question. It was in Los Angeles, where I was born. There was an organist in L.A. named Frank Owen who also built harpsichords and collected them. He was an AGO type, British, very well educated in music. He was the only guy in all of Los Angeles, I think, who had a harpsichord at the time. The instruments he built were rather inauthentic by today's standards, but they really were harpsichords, and it was such a joy to play them. He was a very friendly, agreeable sort, and he let me loose in the house to play for as long I wanted. This was in the early 1950s—I would have been about 12 years old at the time. He

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was maybe in his 70s.

*Q: It also says that you studied organ with one Richard Keys Biggs. Any relation to E. Power Biggs?*

A: No relation. He was the organist at St. Paul's Church in Los Angeles, and I was a student in the church's grammar school.

*Q: Reading the notes to the Complete Organ Works , there are several organs listed, the majority of them by Rieger. Is Rieger your favorite brand?*

A: It's one of my favorites, certainly. I was the consultant for the big Rieger organ in Holy Trinity Church, on which a fair number of the pieces were recorded.

*Q: Also listed is a von Beckerath organ in Mt. Kisco.*

A: That's a recent organ—built within the last five years. The *Clavierübung* was recorded on that instrument.

*Q: Let's talk about the set of the Complete Harpsichord Works of Bach . That one seems to be more "of a piece" than the organ recordings. Did you record that over a shorter period of time?*

A: Yes. The three sets of suites, the *French*, *English* and the *Partitas*, were all done within the last two years on the Tyre harpsichord. The *Goldberg Variations* I've recorded now four times, once on a piano. The version in the set is about eight years old, again on the Tyre harpsichord. The older recordings include the First Book of the *Well Tempered Clavier*—that's about 10 years old. The Second Book is mostly new, but I did borrow a few of the preludes and fugues from an older version I did in 1970 for Columbia. Those were taken off old vinyl—I hope it isn't too obvious. The harpsichord in those pieces was a big Model F with 16-foot by Eric Herz.

*Q: As you were saying, the harpsichord set is more recent—except for the Goldberg s and the borrowed pieces in WTC II —and more of a total concept, compared with the organ set.*

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A: But a lot of the organ pieces are recent, too: the *18 Great Chorales* , the *Clavierübung* , the *Orgelbüchlein* . Those were recorded within the last two years.

Q: *Phillip Tyre's double-manual harpsichord is what you might call a gravicembalo. It has a very imposing sound.*

A: It does, doesn't it?

Q: *I notice that you like to use the four-foot a lot, perhaps more than most.*

A: Yes. The four-foot on this instrument is very strong, more so than on any other harpsichord I've played. Recently, though, I had to have the instrument refurbished, because the soundboard was so thin that it had developed a number of cracks. Phillip loved that style of very thin soundboard, but that made it vulnerable to changes in the weather. So we had the soundboard repaired about a year ago.

Q: *Did you have the soundboard replaced, or was it just repaired?*

A: Repaired. I'm not sure exactly what they did—I assume they shimmed the cracks as you would do on a modern piano. After the restoration, that harpsichord was used on another, more recent recording, with Michala Petri. It's a recording of the Telemann recorder sonatas, the ones with obbligato harpsichord. There have been two reviews already. [ *Our Recordings 8226909—also reviewed in Fanfare issue 37:5; the review appears with the Michala Petri interview.*]

Q: *She's a terrific player. That brings me back to something that we talked about earlier, your 1967 debut recital in Carnegie Hall on a pedal harpsichord. There's a picture of you, seated at a pedal harpsichord, in Zuckermann's book, The Modern Harpsichord. Are you aware of that?*

A: Not at all.

Q: *The instrument is listed as a "Challis pedal harpsichord".*

A: Well, for Columbia I recorded the slow movements of the trio sonatas and the passacaglia on a Challis pedal harpsichord that's owned by the Metropolitan

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Museum.

*Q: Yup—I've seen it on display there. Evidently it's the same one that E. Power Biggs used for his pedal harpsichord recordings.*

A: Oh—I thought he owned his own pedal harpsichord, but I may be wrong. I knew him only slightly, when I was a student at Harvard.

*Q: They even have a placard on display that says, "This is the instrument that E. Power Biggs used for his recordings of Scott Joplin rags."*

A: That's interesting—I didn't know that.

*Q: So the question is—is that the instrument you played on your debut recital?*

A: No, that one was by Eric Herz. He brought it down from Boston for me.

*Q: Okay—that clears up that mystery. Let's talk about your new Bach book. Under the bibliographical info, however, it's listed as Second Edition, 1995.*

A: Yes. Well, a second edition that was thoroughly revised and enlarged. My publisher initially wanted to do a second printing, but I said I needed to go over the whole book and enlarge it. It has lots of new information about strong and weak bars, which almost nobody talks about. It's not that I'm current with everything—you probably know much better than I do what people are writing about these days.

*Q: There are some terrific topics in here. Strong and weak—that's certainly part and parcel of the whole period instrument movement, or at least it should be.*

A: Absolutely. You know, the first mention of strong and weak is in 1690—that's a long time ago.

*Q: You know why it isn't discussed, don't you? Because it was part of the everyday mode of performance, at least in the 17th and 18th centuries. It's like a fish swimming in the ocean; he doesn't realize that he's surrounded by water, doesn't give it a second thought. By the time we get to the 19th century and*

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*Romanticism, the “long line” takes over and strong and weak are relegated to the back seat on the bus.*

A: I couldn't agree more.

*Q: This book is rather unusual, because it's hard to figure out exactly who the target audience is. With all the musical examples and the level of detail, it doesn't seem like it's aimed at the casual listener or record collector.*

A: Not at all. It's really intended for serious students of performance practice.

*Q: I notice there are also exercises.*

A: Yes! [laughs] Of course, that sort of thing comes naturally to me, since I taught theory for 30 years at SUNY Purchase; I also taught classes in Baroque performance at Indiana University and at Purchase. I've written a 400-page book on music theory and counterpoint.

*Q: Have you ever used the Bach and the Baroque book in a classroom setting?*

A: Only at Indiana, because the student quality there was high enough.

*Q: That's right—they have a terrific early music program there.*

A: Absolutely.

*Q: Let's talk a bit about your compositions. I have to confess that prior to this assignment, I wasn't aware of your body of work—it's really quite impressive.*

A: Thank you.

*Q: I was amazed, for example, that you've written an opera titled Nicole and the Trial of the Century, based on the 1994 murder trial of O. J. Simpson.*

A: Yes, that's right. The reason you've never heard of me as a composer is that I was pegged from the start as a performer of Bach and Baroque music. That's what people associate with me, not new music.

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*Q: As I listened to your symphonies, for example, I tried to identify the overall style and what other music might have influenced you. There seems to be a prevailing tonal basis, but with a fair amount of dissonance thrown in to liven things up.*

A: First of all, I totally rejected atonal writing—I thought this kind of music will never survive. You have to remember that I was in the middle of it all while I was working with Berio at Harvard. I did write a lot of music in that style, but I threw it most of it away. I still have a few things tucked away in my closet, which I've never recorded and will never play. After I returned to composition in the 1980s, I would say that my major influence was the music of Stravinsky, up to about 1925 or so.

*Q: That makes sense—I can hear that in the music.*

A: I hope the symphonies give the impression of joyfulness, which so little music has nowadays. This is something that I picked up from Stravinsky—that you *could* write joyful music, even after the debacle of atonality in the 1950s and 60s. That's my point of view, at any rate.

Which composer would you say my music most resembles?

*Q: Well, to your credit, I don't think it sounds like any one composer in particular.*

A: I'm so happy to hear that—I'm going to quote you!

*Q: I hear all sorts of tendencies in the music: A firm tonal foundation, but also a hefty dose of dissonance, and lots of energy. The orchestral writing is very demanding, especially in the winds; it almost has a concertato feel at times.*

A: It does.

*Q: A harpsichordist friend of mine on Facebook, when he heard that I was going to interview you, advised me to listen to your keyboard music, because he thought that's your strongest suit.*

A: Oh, he might have been talking about the Partita for Harpsichord and Piano.

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I'm actually playing one of the movements from the Partita this Thursday at the Manhattan School of Music.

*Q: I hope that whichever Fanfare critic tackles your collected works will give them a fair shake.*

A: I hope so, too, if only for this reason: I've formulated the theory that [concert] music has turned into a kind of a museum like the Metropolitan, where you go to visit the great works, from about 1700 to 1910 or so. You won't find any new music in this museum, because it's usually dismissed as mere annoyance and noise, with the typical reaction being "who cares?"

I have to say that's the fault of musical academia over the last 90 years or so. The preoccupation with non-tonal music was such a mistake, because it doesn't touch that part of the brain that experiences awe or ecstasy. It was just a tragic error.

*Q: I agree with you completely, because I gave up on being a composer a long time ago; now I'm a consumer.*

A: You're a consumer! [laughs]

*Q: I'm the guy who buys subscription tickets to the symphony and has to sit through this stuff.*

A: You know, I went to a Philharmonic concert recently, and they did some contemporary piece. I sat there and watched as one-fifth of the audience got up and left.

*Q: Well, I've never felt it necessary to do that. I figure that if the poor guy has gone to all that trouble and the orchestra has rehearsed it, I owe it to him to listen to the piece at least once.*

A: I feel that way, too. I want to hear what people are writing. New music is so unpopular, and people have such little interest in it, that we're back to museum theory of music.

*Q: Exactly. Of the pieces I've listened to so far, I thought your organ music was*

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*the most exciting, perhaps because it comes from that area of performance where you've made the biggest splash. I guess it's the intellectual density of the music that I find most impressive.*

A: Well, I play it quite a bit. For example, I'll be playing an organ recital [of my music] next year at Disney in L.A. Needless to say, it's music that was tailor-made for me. A lot of it was commissioned by an organist named Stephen Tharp. Do you know that name?

Q: *Sorry, I don't.*

A: He's a wonderful organist who has championed a lot of my music.

Q: *Do you improvise at all?*

A: Yes, I've improvised several times at Davies Hall in San Francisco and elsewhere. I like to take themes from the audience and improvise on them. You know, I was a student in Paris, and anyone who studies organ in Paris has to improvise, so I got very used to that aspect of organ-playing when I was 18 or 19.

Q: *One of the proven career paths for a keyboardist, at least in England and on the continent, is to become the leader of a Baroque band. People like Trevor Pinnock and Christopher Hogwood have built successful careers and made many recordings as leaders of their own ensembles. Did you ever have an interest in that sort of thing?*

A: Well, at one time I did exactly that. The ensemble was called Bach Works, and in 1988, for example, we recorded the *Brandenburg Concertos* on period instruments for Newport Classics. When Newport Classics was absorbed by Columbia/Sony, they reissued the *Brandenburg* s on one of their side labels. Altogether, Sony has reissued about 10 of my period instrument CDs. But unless you have tremendous financial backing or a big fat recording contract, these groups are hard to keep going.

The fellow who runs the main Baroque orchestra in Holland, Ton Koopman, told me that he has spent just about every last penny of his own money to keep his

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group going.

*Q: I don't doubt it. Another example is England—I was told by the conductor Paul McCreech that the English period instrument groups don't get a drop of so-called core subsidy—that's reserved for the big orchestras and opera companies.*

Yes, it would seem that most early music groups have to make it on their own.

*Q: But in New York, I imagine there is a sizable pool of period instrument players, which might make it pretty easy to throw together an ensemble at the drop of a hat.*

A: It's not all that large. There aren't that many because basically you can't make a living at it. The group that seems to have survived the longest is Rebel. You always see the same people. I would say that in all of New York City, there aren't more than 20 or 30 really fine period instrumentalists.

*Q: Along with Boston and San Francisco, New York City is probably one of the few cities in the world where you can find that sort of concentration.*

A: I think Boston has a bigger period instrument contingent; New York is much more of a melting pot. In Boston and San Francisco, people go to concerts specifically to hear original instruments.

*Q: Getting back to your book, we talked about the topic of strong and weak beats, as well as the strong and weak measures....*

A: Both. I'm not sure that anyone who has dealt with strong and weak has ever specifically discussed the strong and weak *bars*, yet the quote from Kirnberger comes directly from Bach himself. What could be more important? As you said, it's like a fish swimming in water. Of course, this is how music was played, all the way from 1690, when Bach was five years old.

*Q: There are so many important topics here, but reading the chapter on "Inequality and Pairs of Notes," I was reminded of the "inequality battle" that you had with Frederick Neumann.*

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A: Yes! [laughs] It was really a kind of intellectual tempest in a teapot. The battle was mostly between Sol Babitz and Neumann.

Q: *Also the British writer David Fallows, who entered into the fray with Neumann in the magazine Early Music.*

A: Oh, I didn't know that.

Q: *Neumann was being challenged on both sides of the Atlantic. It was quite fascinating to follow, but the dispute went on for several months without a clear winner.*

A: It did. It was busy and nasty, and nobody who's actually a player ever heard a thing about it.

Q: *I don't own a copy of Neumann's book, but I remember that another one of Neumann's pet peeves was the upper-note-with-appoggiatura trill that's become a kind of mannerism with period instrument performers. What's your feeling about that?*

A: Well, I knew Frederick Neumann pretty well. He was actually at Indiana for a year while I was there, and we did have many discussions about this and other topics. I have to say that we were friends, even though he wrote a rather mixed review of the book. My stance on the trills is that they were much freer than people think. The trill may or may not have started on the upper note, depending on whether it was in "familial style," "city style," "country style," or whatever. The whole issue was probably much less rigid and codified than modern-day scholars would lead us to believe. As for holding the upper note, which I often do, it *has* become somewhat a mannerism. It's part of a specific style, and of course the ornament table that Bach wrote out for his sons does contain that ornament. D'Anglebert has it too, and Bach probably copied it from D'Anglebert.

The inequality question turned into such a nasty, contentious debate. At one point, Sol Babitz called me and said, "We must talk about this." So I visited him in Los Angeles. He was completely adamant on the subject; he was one of those people who felt he was always right and everyone else was wrong. He was a

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difficult person to get along with, but so was Frederick Neumann. He was equally convinced that he was right and everyone else was wrong.

*Q: Your position, I take it, is that of a performer. You're interested in how the ornament or technique in question works musically.*

A: Exactly.

*Q: I can't imagine anyone arguing with that.*

A: I hope not. I mean, you can't separate musical scholarship from performance; you'd be nuts to do so. Music is meant to be performed—you have to combine the two.

*Q: Right. Well, we're about out of time. There's so much more we could talk about, but perhaps you'd like to say something in conclusion?*

A: I think one can say this about art: As soon as you try to change the status quo, you're going to run into a lot of trouble. The original instrument movement really began in the 1960s but didn't hit full steam until the 1980s or 90s. Because I was part of this sweeping change early on, I ran afoul of many of the critics. But I also encountered many people who were very positive towards what I was doing. That's why, I think, I was regarded as "controversial." When people listen to the various sets of CDs, the works of Bach and my own compositions—and bear in mind, there are another 20-plus CDs of Mozart and Beethoven that I've done as well—I hope they will take all of this into consideration.

The period instrument movement was and is a very powerful force, because it made the public aware of how the music really sounded at the time it was written. This is preferable to the notion, say, that a particular performer's bias is of primary importance: "Well, that's the way Rachmaninoff played the piece, so that's the way we should all play it". Of course, this is not to insult Rachmaninoff, who was a great genius. But the status quo is very hard to change.

*Q: I'm sure you're aware that there's still quite a lot of resentment among symphony musicians about period instruments. Mostly for the fact that period*

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*instrument groups have taken away their Bach and Handel.*

A: Unfortunately, that's true. Listen, I've had a great time—I hope we meet in person.

Q: *Me too.*

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# Anthony Newman-CD/MP3s

The screenshot shows the website for Anthony Newman, featuring a navigation menu with links for welcome, about, media, store, concerts, blog, and contact. The main content area highlights the album "Anthony Newman: Large Chamber Works (2013)", which includes a portrait of the composer and a description of the music. A "Buy MP3" button is priced at \$4.99. Below this, a table lists individual tracks with their respective prices.

Title	Price
Chamber Concerto: I. Allegro Di Molto	MP3 \$0.49
Chamber Concerto: II. Andante (Memorial to 9/11)	MP3 \$0.49
Chamber Concerto: III. Presto	MP3 \$0.49
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# Anthony Newman-Performance Schedule

**Jan, 11 2015** Disney Hall, Los Angeles, CA.

**7:30 PM** Anthony Newman, Organ

**Tickets:** TBA

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**Jun, 23 2014** Spreckels, Balboa Park Pavillon, San Diego, CA.

**7:30 PM** Anthony Newman, Organ

**Tickets:** TBA

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**May, 31 2014** Carnegie Room, Nyack Public Library, Nyack NY

**7:30 PM** French works, Eugenia Zukerman, flute and Anthony Newman, piano

**Tickets:** TBA

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**May, 07 2014** St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (Fellowship Hall), 382 Cantitoe Street,  
**8:00 PM** Bedford, NY 10506

Bedford Chamber Concerts, The season finale includes Anthony Newman  
Symphony #2 An American Classic, Beethoven Piano Concerto #3 with  
pianist Andrew Feldbau, and Mozart Haffner Symphony.

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**May, 03 2014** Carnegie Room, Nyack Public Library, Nyack NY

**7:30 PM** French works, Eugenia Zukerman, flute and Anthony Newman, piano

**Tickets:**

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**Apr, 09 2014** St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (Fellowship Hall), 382 Cantitoe Street,  
**8:00 PM** Bedford, NY 10506

Bedford Chamber Concerts, Vladimir Feltsman, hailed by the New York  
Times as "quite simply an amazing pianist", will perform music for solo piano  
of the classical and romantic periods.

**[Get Tickets](#)**

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**Mar, 30 2014** South Salem, 111 Spring St., South Salem, NY

**3:00 PM** French works, Eugenia Zukerman, flute and Anthony Newman, piano

**Tickets:** Phone: 203 550 5992

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- Mar, 22 2014** Carnegie Room, Nyack Public Library, Nyack NY  
**8:00 PM** Bedford Chamber Concerts, Sandro Russo, Piano  
**Tickets:** TBA
- 
- Mar, 19 2014** St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (Fellowship Hall), 382 Cantitoe Street,  
**8:00 PM** Bedford, NY 10506  
Bedford Chamber Concerts, Cellist Nathan Vickery, the New York  
Philharmonic's most recent addition, will perform works by Debussy, Brahms  
and Bach, accompanied by Anthony Newman on the piano.  
**[Get Tickets](#)**
- 
- Mar, 16 2014** Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, 89 Ridge Street, Newark, NJ 07104  
**4:00 PM** Bedford Chamber Concerts, BACH, MOZART, and NEWMAN  
**[Get Tickets](#)**
- 
- Mar, 08 2014** Carnegie Room, Nyack Public Library, Nyack NY  
**8:00 PM** Bedford Chamber Concerts, Fedor Amasov, Cello and Anthony Newman,  
Piano  
**Tickets:** TBA
- 
- Mar, 02 2014** The Phillips Collection, 1600 21st St., NW, Washington, DC, 20009  
**4:00 PM** Bach English Suites 1, 2 and 3, Anthony Newman, harpsichord  
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- 
- Feb, 05 2014** Manhattan School of Music, NY  
**4:00 PM** Master Class, Performance Practice for Pianists  
**Tickets:** Student Seminar
- 

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