

THE LEGACY SERIES

VIRGIL FOX

ORGAN



VOLUME IV - 1963 & 1965
COMMAND PERFORMANCES
4 ORIGINAL COMMAND CLASSICS LP DISCS
THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY
PHILHARMONIC HALL, LINCOLN CENTER
BOSTON SYMPHONY HALL (2 LP DISCS)



PROGRAM NOTES

Virgil Fox lost his recording contract with Capital Records in 1962, after the company abandoned the field of classical music. Virgil had made some splendid recordings for Capital; but, as was the practice in those days, he had to make one popular “slush” album for every “serious” classical one. Popular records sold best, and Virgil enjoyed making them; but he thought he had made enough. He wanted me to find a new company for him, and so I made an appointment with Wilma Cozart Fine, head of Mercury Records, which was one of the excellent classical labels. Ms. Fine was not interested, but Mr. Fine was!

I met Robert Fine, brilliant engineer for Mercury and other quality companies, through a friend, and he suggested we consider Command Records, which was an “audio” label. Enoch Light, a former big band leader, used 35-millimeter magnetic tape machines developed by Bert Whyte (with whom we worked much later, on direct-to-disc and the

first commercial digital recordings), and we were intrigued. Unfortunately, I was new to the management field, and didn’t recognize some of the costly business implications of long-term recording contracts. Nevertheless, Virgil signed for six recordings in three years. The new Aeolian-Skinner at Philharmonic Hall (now Avery Fisher Hall), Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, was foremost in his plans, because he helped inaugurate it in December 1962.

The first two recordings that Virgil made for Command Classics comprise most of Disc One in this collection. John Coveney, head of Capital/EMI, who had become a friend of Virgil’s during the Capital days, said that the Philharmonic Hall recording was “the greatest organ recording ever made.” It was recorded just after Virgil played the first solo organ recital at Lincoln Center in January 1963. The following fall, Fine Recording moved its equipment into The Riverside Church to make the Bach album.

The next two projects with Command were the Wanamaker album (made in the spring of 1964 for the Philadelphia American Guild of Organists National Convention) and The Christmas Album (made in the fall for the Christmas season). The final two recordings under the contract were made at Boston Symphony Hall, in 1965. For me, these were some of the best recordings Virgil ever made, and they certainly were “serious” repertoire. They constitute most of Disc Two. At the time, I wasn’t sure the Command contract was a good idea. Now, looking back at Virgil’s long recording career, I realize that it was — although it wasn’t a good business deal since he made little money out of it. Artistically, I think some of these performances are definitive, and he understood that then.

For these CD reissues of the four Command Performances, we have used the archived stereo masters that were mixed from the three-channel, 35-millimeter tapes. However, the archives that

Universal Music now holds lack a master from one of the sessions, which included the Mendelssohn *Sonata* and the Franck *Final*. Fortunately, John Wilson, who has digitized the first three volumes of the OrganArts Legacy Series, had already digitized these works from LP’s for his own archives, and has given them to us. As he points out, such collaboration happens often because the archives of any large music company (Universal has the largest) present many complicated problems. John also acted as an advisor to Universal’s engineers to master the final two-disc set.

Therefore, with the help of our friends — especially John McFadden and Lisa Kabnick, who have funded this project as well as the Wanamaker reissue on SeeMusicDVD (thanks again to permission from Universal Music) — we’re proud to share these splendid recordings of Virgil Fox, which have never before been released as CD’s.

Richard Torrence



VIRGIL FOX PLAYS THE PHILHARMONIC ORGAN AT LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

ÆOLIAN-SKINNER ORGAN

ORIGINAL LP TRACK LIST

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor Johann Sebastian Bach
Dieu Parmi Nous from *La Nativité du Seigneur* . . . Olivier Messiaen
Grande Pièce Symphonique César Franck

Command® Classics — CC 11018 SD — Recorded in 1963

Originated and Produced by Enoch Light

Recording Chief: Robert Fine

Mastering: George Piros

Associate Producers: Julie Klages and Robert Byrne

VIRGIL FOX AT THE ORGAN PLAYS... JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH
ÆOLIAN-SKINNER ORGAN



ORIGINAL LP TRACK LIST

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Prelude and Fugue in D

Trio Sonata VI in G

Fantasy and Fugue in C minor

All Men Are Mortal (*Alle Menschen Müssen Sterben*)

Tocatta in F

Command® Classics — CC 11022 SD — Recorded in 1963

Originated and Produced by Enoch Light

Recording Chief: Robert Fine

Mastering: George Piro

Associate Producers: Julie Klages and Robert Byrne



VIRGIL FOX...ORGANIST AT SYMPHONY HALL, BOSTON

ÆOLIAN-SKINNER ORGAN

ORIGINAL LP TRACK LIST

- Fantasy in F minor, K. 608.Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Final in B Flat.César Franck
Sonata No. 1 in F minor Felix Mendelssohn
I. Allegro moderato e serio
- II. Adagio
 - III. Andante recitativo
 - IV. Allegro assai vivace

Command® Classics — CC 11036 SD — Recorded in 1965
Produced by Loren Becker and Robert Byrne
Recording Engineer: Robert Eberenz
Stereo and Monaural Mastering: George Piro

VIRGIL FOX IN CONCERT

SYMPHONY HALL, BOSTON
ÆOLIAN-SKINNER ORGAN



ORIGINAL LP TRACK LIST

- Prelude and Fugue in E minor Johann Sebastian Bach
Rejoice Beloved Christians Johann Sebastian Bach
Toccata Eugène Gigout
Fantasie on the Chorale
 “How Brightly Shines the Morning Star” Max Reger

Command® Classics — CC 11040 SD — Recorded in 1965
Produced by Loren Becker and Robert Byrne
Recording Engineer: Robert Eberenz
Stereo Mastering: George Piros

VIRGIL FOX › COMMAND PERFORMANCES

C D T R A C K L I S T

D I S C O N E

| | | |
|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor Johann Sebastian Bach | 14:05 |
| 2 | Dieu Parmi Nous from <i>La Nativité du Seigneur</i> Olivier Messiaen | 6:37 |
| 3 | Grande Pièce Symphonique César Franck | 23:39 |
| 4 | Toccatà Eugène Gigout | 2:32 |
| 5 | Prelude and Fugue in D Johann Sebastian Bach | 9:33 |
| 6 | Fantasy and Fugue in C minor Johann Sebastian Bach | 9:41 |
| 7 | All Men Are Mortal (<i>Alle Menschen Müssen Sterben</i>) Johann Sebastian Bach | 3:44 |
| 8 | Toccatà in F Johann Sebastian Bach | 6:16 |
| | Total Time: | 76:07 |

D I S C T W O

| | | |
|----|--|--------------|
| 1 | Trio Sonata VI in G Johann Sebastian Bach | 10:47 |
| 2 | Fantasy in F minor, K. 608 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart | 12:21 |
| 3 | Final in B Flat César Franck | 9:00 |
| | Sonata No. 1 in F minor Felix Mendelssohn | |
| 4 | Allegro moderato e serioso | 4:40 |
| 5 | Adagio | 4:29 |
| 6 | Andante recitando | 3:24 |
| 7 | Allegro assai vivace | 2:47 |
| 8 | Prelude and Fugue in E minor ("The Wedge") Johann Sebastian Bach | 13:33 |
| 9 | Rejoice Beloved Christians Johann Sebastian Bach | 1:47 |
| 10 | Fantasia on the Chorale "How Brightly Shines the Morning Star" Max Reger | 14:35 |
| | Total Time: | 77:31 |

More information on this recording, including complete liner notes from the original albums plus historical information, is available at:

www.OrganArts.com

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