

Technical notes on recording the "Art of the Fugue"

Recording the "Art of the Fugue" with a fortepiano is not completely simple for several reasons:

In the first place the work is musically and, in consequence, mentally on an extremely high level. The usual procedure (pianist playing, recording master and sound technician present) was used when recording a demo CD in October 2004. At that time the goal was above all to find and optimize acoustic conditions. The recording was made in a vaulted room at Niederfellabrunn Castle, which owns natural, somewhat reverberant acoustics. After many attempts a configuration with a stereo pair of microphones about 1 m in front of the piano turned out as optimum. By means of a wall of acoustic cubes (having a sound-swallowing effect) behind the piano a special clarity of the tone resulted. The piano was located in an unusual position, namely in a corner of the room (opened towards the corner).



At that time primarily the beginnings of all movements as well as some characteristic excerpts from individual movements were recorded. Surprisingly it turned out that the actually very experienced recording master (one of the best-known in Austria) could not quite meet the demand because of the complexity of the work and the resulting impossibility to seize the note text in each detail (except one knows the work as well as the pianist himself). The cutting of the demo CD therefore was implemented by the pianist and resulted only rarely in agreement with the notes taken by the recording master. So we agreed that the actual recording (in May 2005) would be done by the pianist alone, and that was the way it was done.

As recording equipment a "Field recorder" Fostex Fr-2 was used, a completely new, technically most excellent unit which stores on a Compact Flash card with 2 GB capacity. The sound level controls function quite similarly to those of a normal mixer (gain and master), two studio microphones AKG C391B "Blue line" were connected directly to the Fostex receiving their 48 V phantom voltage from there.

The audio files were entered into the audio program SEK'D Samplitude directly from the CF card and processed there.

