

Toccata and Fugue in D Minor

My bass clarinet duo Sqwonk primarily performs new pieces that we commission, but occasionally we come across an old piece that seems like it would fit in well with our general aesthetic outlook. J.S. Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* is one such piece. Though originally composed for the organ, the deep resonances, free-wheeling virtuosity, and driving intensity of this work made it fit right in with our repertoire. It was a challenge to condense the many notes and lines of the organ writing into just two parts, but the uniquely rich sonority of two bass clarinets proved to be an excellent match for the musical material. Bach was in many ways a very practical musician, composing and arranging music for the forces he had at hand, and taking advantage of new instruments and changes in music technology. Though he never had the opportunity to write for bass clarinets (they were not invented until after his death), I have little doubt that he would have if he could have, and that he would smile upon hearing this arrangement of his masterful organ work.