



Plucked Bach III

Alon Sariel

PLUCKED BACH III
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

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| Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005 (archlute) | | |
| 1 | I. Adagio | 4. 05 |
| The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I (tuscan mandolin) | | |
| 2 | Prelude No. 1 in C Major, BWV 846 | 2. 07 |
| Cello Suite No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1009 (tuscan mandola) | | |
| 3 | I. Prélude | 4. 31 |
| 4 | II. Allemande | 4. 33 |
| 5 | III. Courante | 3. 32 |
| 6 | IV. Sarabande | 3. 50 |
| 7 | V. Bourrée I & Bourrée II | 4. 01 |
| 8 | VI. Gigue | 3. 36 |
| Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach, 1725 (bağlama) | | |
| 9 | Musette in D Major, BWV Anh. 126 (Attributed to J. S. Bach) | 1. 55 |
| Nicola Matteis (c. 1670–1737) | | |
| 10 | Alia Fantasia in A Minor (mandolin) | 4. 53 |

Johann Sebastian Bach
Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 (tuscan mandolin)

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| 11 | I. Allemande | 5. 15 |
| 12 | II. Courante | 2. 57 |
| 13 | III. Sarabande | 3. 56 |
| 14 | IV. Gigue | 5. 02 |

Johann Paul von Westhoff (1656-1705)
Violin Sonata No. 3 in D Minor (mandolin)

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| 15 | III. Imitatione delle campane | 3. 00 |
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Johann Sebastian Bach
Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 (mandolin)

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| 16 | V. Chaconne | 14. 56 |
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Cello Suite No. 4 in E-Flat Major, BWV 1010 (archlute)

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| 17 | IV. Sarabande | 4. 18 |
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Total playing time: 76. 32

Alon Sariel, tuscan mandola, archlute, tuscan mandolin, mandolin & bağlama (as displayed on cover image, from left to right)





Alon Sariel playing the baglama

It is with much gratitude and joy that I may present the third volume of my Plucked Bach series. It introduces two new instruments to the project: The baglama, which comes from the Ottoman tradition, and the mandola by Pilade Mauri (Firenze, 1920), whose mandolin can be heard on the two earlier volumes. This mandola is tuned an octave lower than the mandolin and with its deep tone I feel that it lends itself even better to the cello suites. As an instrument tuned in fifths, it is also much more similar to the cello than the lute. The latter also reappears here in the two outer tracks, opening and closing the album.

The opening **Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3** was transcribed by Bach himself for the keyboard (BWV 968), and that version is highly interesting and elaborated, compared to the more “naked” one for solo

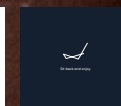
violin. Both versions keep the pulse element very present, like the birth of a heart which is to enliven the whole sonata, or in this case the whole album. It is then followed by the opening prelude from Bach’s **The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I)**, written around the same time as Bach’s solo works for the violin and for the cello. This opening prelude is known to music lovers all around the world in thousands of adaptations, from Charles Gounod to Bobby McFerrin. I imagine how this music was played in the Bach house by members of the family, students and friends, all making their way through the 24 Preludes and Fugues which the great master invented on the keyboard. Another friendly companion for house-music at the Bach’s was certainly the **Notenbüchlein for Anna Magdalena**. This notebook was compounded together by Bach and his second wife Anna Magdalena,



| Track | Duration |
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| 1. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 2. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 3. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 4. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 5. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 6. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 7. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 8. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 9. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 10. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 11. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 12. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 13. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 14. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 15. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 16. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 17. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 18. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 19. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 20. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 21. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 22. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 23. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 24. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 25. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 26. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 27. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 28. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 29. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 30. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 31. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 32. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 33. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 34. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 35. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 36. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 37. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 38. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 39. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 40. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 41. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 42. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 44. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 60. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 62. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 63. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 64. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 65. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 66. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 67. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 68. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 70. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 73. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 74. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 75. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 76. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 77. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
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| 80. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 81. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 82. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 84. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 88. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 90. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 92. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
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| 94. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 95. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 96. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 97. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 98. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |
| 99. Adagio from Violin Sonata No. 3 | 04:58 |
| 100. Prelude from The Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) | 03:12 |



Alon Sariel playing the baglama



and contains music by the two as well as by different authors. Unfortunately we don't know exactly from whose feather came the delightful **Musette in D Major**, but whoever it was, I don't think he or she would have ever imagined it played on the bağlama, not in their wildest dreams! For me it's again a chance to build some intercultural bridges, something I very much enjoy, and at the same time hold a spotlight on Bach's relationship to his beloved Anna Magdalena, to whom we must be thankful for her manuscript of the cello suites.

My relationship with Bach's **Violin Partita No. 2** goes back to my teenage years, and although it's the partita I've probably played the most in concerts, I was long uncertain about recording it, especially its final movement, the Chaconne. Paradoxically, the closer I get to it, the further away it seems!

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When looking at this divine music, I always think it's so perfect on the paper, that any attempt to perform it, no matter by whom or on which instrument, will result in some kind of an earthly compromise. It carries a huge spiritual load and has been tied to uncountable superlatives by many important musicians throughout the eras. One quote that I like can be found in a letter of Johannes Brahms to Clara Schumann:

On one stave, for a small instrument, the man [Bach] writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings. If I imagined that I could have created, even conceived the piece, I am quite certain that the excess of excitement and earth-shattering experience would have driven me out of my mind.

For me, a strange but clear comparison has become eminent between Bach's Chaconne and the Zohar, the Magnum Opus of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism). Traditionally this mystical content was prohibited from any non-scholar of less than 40 years of age, due to the danger of misinterpretation. Out of great respect to this music, I restrained myself from recording it on my earlier *Plucked Bach* volumes, and I'm hugely excited about publishing my current take on it today.

This monumental movement is often seen as a tombeau for Bach's first wife, Maria Barbara, who died shortly before this piece was conceived. Bach himself was in Karlsbad with his employer, Prince Leopold of



Alon Sarel with a Tuscan mandola



| Track | Duration |
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| 1. Musette in D Major | 0:45 |
| 2. Minuet in G Major | 0:30 |
| 3. Minuet in E Minor | 0:30 |
| 4. Minuet in A Major | 0:30 |
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| 350. Minuet in E Major | 0:30 |
| 351. Minuet in F Major | 0:30 |
| 352. Minuet in G Major | 0:30 |
| 353. Minuet in A | |

Anhalt-Köthen, and when they arrived back in Köthen, Bach was devastated to learn of his wife's sudden death. He did not have the chance to farewell Maria Barbara, not even to be present in her burial.

This context made me want to include Johann Paul von Westhoff's *Imitatione delle Campane* from his 3rd violin sonata. Tombeau movements often carried a dedication in their title and were

mostly written for the lute or the harpsichord. Sometimes we find imitations of church bells, which come to symbolize the funeral of a beloved person and their ascension to the next world. And so just before the Chaconne, I chose to interrupt the partita and allow Westhoff's bells, sounding here for the first time through the strings of a mandolin, set the ground for the longest tombeau in the whole Baroque era. It's fascinating to realize that the set of 6 violin sonatas by Westhoff predates the one of Bach by more than 20 years and although there's no clear proof of it, I'm sure these works have influenced Bach's approach to the violin as a polyphonic medium. Also the Fantasies by Nicola Matteis Jr. are believed to predate Bach's own Sonatas and Partitas. The piece titled **Alia Fantasia** recorded here follows a very loose structure and feels more like a free improvisation.

I love the way which the **Sarabande from Cello Suite No. 4** unfolds on the archlute, displaying the deep basses next to the angelic soprano register of the instrument. This heavenly music is here to symbolize the afterlife of Maria Barbara, of Anna Magdalena and of Johann Sebastian.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.

This album was recorded in a time of a terrible war in my home country. With this music I hope to share one drop of peace with all who thrive for love and freedom.

Alon Sariel

www.alon-sariel.com

Alon Sariel playing his Tuscan mandolin



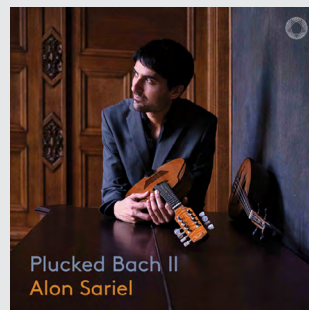
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Special thanks: Thanks to **Pieter van Tichelen** for allowing me to record Bach's 3rd Cello Suite on his Tuscan Mandola and to the Stadtmuseum Kaiserslautern, **Dr. Bernd Klesmann**.

Co-production with Südwestrundfunk, SWR Kultur Musik



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Sit back and enjoy



| Track Name | Duration |
|------------------|----------|
| 1. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 2. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 3. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 4. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 5. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 6. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 7. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 8. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 9. [Track Name] | 00:00 |
| 10. [Track Name] | 00:00 |



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