



**Johann
Sebastian
BACH**
**Cello
Suites • 2**
arranged
for guitar

**Jeffrey
McFadden**



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) Cello Suites • 2: BWV 1010–1012 (arr. guitar)

J.S. Bach is believed to have written the *Cello Suites* while at Cöthen, a town in Saxony some 19 miles north of Halle, where the composer was employed as Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, between 1717 and 1723. The original manuscripts for these have been lost and the earliest source is in the handwriting of Bach's wife, Anna Magdalena.

The *Cello Suites* of J.S. Bach were hardly known even among professional musicians for a century and a half after their composer's death. It was the great Spanish cellist, Pablo Casals, who discovered (on the day his father purchased for the young prodigy his first full-size cello) 'at an old music shop near the harbour' in Barcelona, a copy of the *Six Suites for Violoncello*.

Casals studied and worked at these pieces every day for the next twelve years and waited until he was 25 years old before he dared to perform them in public. As Casals explained in his autobiography:

'Up until then no violinist or cellist had ever played one of the Bach suites in its entirety. They would just play a single section – a Sarabande, a Gavotte or a Minuet. But I played them as a whole: from the *Prélude* through the five dance movements, with all the repeats that give the wonderful entity and pacing and structure of every movement, the full architecture and artistry. They had been considered academic works, mechanical, without warmth. Imagine that! How could anyone think of them as being cold, when a whole radiance of space and poetry pours forth from them! They are the very essence of Bach and Bach is the essence of music.'

– *Joys and Sorrows, Reflections by Pablo Casals, as told to Albert E. Kahn*,
London: Macdonald, 1970, pp. 46–47

Suite No. 4, BWV 1010, was originally in the key of E flat major but the present arrangement is in G major. In the *Prélude* (in Anna Magdalena Bach's copy entitled *Preludium*),

following the opening shapes of descending quaver patterns the music breaks from time to time into rapid semiquavers providing a vivid climax. The great French cellist Paul Tortelier commented about the *Prélude*: 'It has beautiful things to say, and it says them simply and fully.' The *Allemande* is rhythmically varied bringing together many different elements. Flowing semiquavers alternate with steady quavers while many of the phrases echo the downward sweeping curves of the *Prélude*. The *Courante* takes the mixture of note values further with the addition of subtle triplets added to a brilliant blending of semiquavers and quavers.

The *Sarabande* is characterised by its use of dotted note patterns structured round the ordered harmonic progression of the chords, and increases in rhythmic complexity as the movement progresses. After the serious gravity of the *Sarabande*, the first of the two *Bourrées* is positively skittish with ascending and (later) descending flourishes between the dance-like quavers. In contrast the second *Bourrée*, extremely compact, enacts a more simple structure of straight crotchets and lyrical quavers. The *Gigue* in 12/8 time is ebullient and witty, its vitality exemplified in its perpetual motion of vivacious triplets.

Suite No. 5, BWV 1011, originally in C minor, also exists in a lute arrangement, *BWV 995*. On the autograph copy is the heading *Pièces pour la luth à Monsieur Schouster par J.S. Bach*, though Monsieur Schouster's identity (despite various well-informed researches) has never been authoritatively established.

The *Prélude* actually consists of a prelude and fugue, the prelude being in a quasi-improvisatory style followed by the more tightly organised texture of the fugue. In connection with the fugue Pablo Casals commented that 'all the entrances of this subject ... must retain this feeling of linear polyphony', a concept perhaps more amenable to the guitar than to the cello. The *Allemande* of this suite is not the flowing type but more fierce with its dotted rhythms and strong statements, the somewhat florid decorative line providing an effective contrast after the straight logic of the preceding fugue. The *Courante*, in 3/2 time, is of the French

variety with strong phrases, dotted rhythms various complex rhythmic shifts of emphasis. The second half refines the rhythmic complexity with the intricate filigree of ornamentation.

The *Sarabande* has intense feeling and profundity, its austere texture creating an organic web of sound haunting in its effect. *Gavottes I* and *II* are especially suited for the guitar. The first represents the light dance element of the Gavotte form, while the second, in the same key as *Gavotte I*, mutates into lively triplets. The *Gigue* offers dotted notes in every bar conveying a sense of latent energy in headlong momentum.

Suite No. 6 was written for a cello with five strings (the extra one being above the top string). For the modern cellist the suite therefore poses acute difficulties. That this work was composed for the higher registers of a five string cello paradoxically makes it an appropriate medium for guitar, in fact taking in the range of the fingerboard in an idiomatic way.

The *Prélude*, an extended movement with a deep sense of inner structure, begins with the alternation of unisons on

two strings. Dramatic use is made of pedal notes and contrasts between adjacent strings. The constant quaver triplets create a momentum which finds its climax in rapid semiquavers and sudden energetic chords.

The *Allemande* is characterised by rich ornamentation and intricate melodic progressions over a slow pulse (aspects which accord well with the lute-like voices of the guitar). In contrast the *Courante* is vigorous and exuberant with a catchy rhythm. The *Sarabande* with many intervals of the sixth and a variety of bowed chords in the original, provides a perfect vehicle for the guitar's harmonic expressiveness.

Gavottes I and *II* are lyrical dances of unforgettable charm. *Gavotte II* is quieter and in the style of the Musette, the drone imitating the music of the hurdy-gurdy or bagpipe. The *Gigue* begins with a short quasi-military fanfare or perhaps echoes of the hunt, the rhythmic quavers of the opening quickly evolving into brilliant semiquavers reminiscent of the *Prélude*.

Graham Wade

Jeffrey McFadden

Jeffrey McFadden has established a place among the most admired guitarists of his generation. Since his debut at the legendary Guitar '87 festival he has performed across North and South America and Europe. His debut recording followed a Silver Medal from the Guitar Foundation of America Competition, and was the first guitar recording in the Laureate Series on Naxos. He has since made ten highly acclaimed recordings exploring the works of Sor, Coste, Barrios Mangoré and others. Jeffrey McFadden's doctoral dissertation formed the basis of his groundbreaking book, *Fretboard Harmony (Common Practice Harmony on the Guitar)*, which is used worldwide. He is chair of guitar studies at the University of Toronto, and was recognised as the 2018 Teacher of Distinction by The Royal Conservatory of Music. He is also founder and artistic director of the Sauble Beach Guitar Festival.

www.jeffreymcfadden.com



Photo © Michael Culpepper

J.S. Bach's *Cello Suites* are believed to have been written in the Saxon town of Cöthen between 1717 and 1723. They stand near the apex of Bach's compositions for a single instrument and contain some of his most beautiful and vivid writing. Jeffrey McFadden's guitar arrangements augment these elements with their own harmonic complexity, creating a new string medium for these epochal works. *Volume 1*, containing the first three suites, is on 8.573625. 'McFadden's ability to make the guitar sing is second to none' (*Daily Telegraph*, UK).

**Johann Sebastian
BACH**
(1685–1750)

Cello Suites • 2
BWV 1010–1012

arranged 2010–11 for guitar by Jeffrey McFadden

Cello Suite No. 4 in E flat major, BWV 1010 (c. 1720)		21:40	9 III. Courante	2:01
1 I. Prélude	3:26	10 IV. Sarabande	2:37	
2 II. Allemande	4:13	11 V. Gavotte I–II	4:36	
3 III. Courante	3:24	12 VI. Gigue	1:56	
4 IV. Sarabande	3:23	Cello Suite No. 6 in D major, BWV 1012 (c. 1720)		27:21
5 V. Bourrée I–II	4:35	13 I. Prélude	4:36	
6 VI. Gigue	2:34	14 II. Allemande	6:58	
Cello Suite No. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011 (c. 1720)		21:45	15 III. Courante	3:36
7 I. Prélude	5:22	16 IV. Sarabande	4:05	
8 II. Allemande	5:11	17 V. Gavotte I–II	4:08	
		18 VI. Gigue	3:55	

Jeffrey McFadden, Guitar

Recorded: 17–19 January 2018 at Trinity United Church **1**–**12** and 23 September 2019 at St. Paul's Anglican Church **13**–**18**, Newmarket, Canada • Producer and engineer: Norbert Kraft
Editor: Jeffrey McFadden • Booklet notes: Graham Wade • Editions: unpublished
Guitars by Roberto de Miranda (Milan) **1**–**12** and Marcus Dominelli (Victoria, BC, Canada) **13**–**18**
Cover images: Cello © Brittany Rule / Dreamstime.com • Guitar © Drugoy66 / Dreamstime.com



8.573626

DDD

Playing Time
70:54



Made in Germany
www.naxos.com

© & © 2020 Naxos Rights US, Inc.
Booklet notes in English