



Johann Sebastian
BACH

Complete Works for Lute

Yasunori Imamura, Baroque Lute



Partita in E major, BWV 1006a	20:41	Suite in E minor, BWV 996	18:18
1 Prelude	4:13	16 Prelude	2:51
2 Loure	3:58	17 Allemande	3:02
3 Gavotte en Rondeau	3:29	18 Courante	2:40
4 Menuet I & II	4:43	19 Sarabande	4:24
5 Bourrée	1:51	20 Bourrée	1:33
6 Gigue	2:27	21 Gigue	3:48
Suite in C minor, BWV 997	22:01	Suite in G minor, BWV 995	25:15
7 Prelude	3:11	22 Prelude	6:11
8 Fugue	7:13	23 Allemande	6:18
9 Sarabande	5:28	24 Courante	2:35
10 Gigue & Double	6:09	25 Sarabande	2:50
11 Prelude in C minor, BWV 999	1:55	26 Gavotte I & II	4:43
		27 Gigue	2:38
12 Fugue in G minor, BWV 1000	5:46	Arioso from St John Passion, BWV 245	2:24
		28 Arioso: Betrachte, meine Seel'	
Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E flat major, BWV 998	13:24	Recitativo from St Matthew Passion, BWV 244b	0:41
13 Prelude	3:04		
14 Fugue	6:32	29 Recitativo: Ja freilich will in uns	
15 Allegro	3:48	Aria from St Matthew Passion, BWV 244b	6:31
		30 Aria: Komm, süßes Kreuz	

Yasunori Imamura, Baroque Lute

with **Dominik Wörner, Bass-baritone** **28–30**
Karl Kaiser, Zsuzsa Csige, Transverse Flute **29**
Christoph Hesse, Johanna Weber, Viola d'amore **28**
Haralt Martens, Violone **28–30** • **Aki Noda-Meurice, Organ** **28–30**

Instruments: 13 course Baroque lute made by José Miguel Moreno, 2010 **11–12**,

14 course Baroque lute made by José Miguel Moreno, 2011 **13–15** **22–30**,

13 course Baroque lute made by Hendrik Hasenfuss, 2012 **16–21**

All works played from copies of Bach's manuscripts.

An intabulated edition by Yasunori Imamura of the music on this recording (fully revised in 2018) is published by Tree Edition, Germany (www.tree-edition.com).

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Complete Works for Lute

This recording offers the complete lute works of J.S. Bach including all the solo works as well as pieces from the *St John Passion* and the *St Matthew Passion*, where the lute appears in an ensemble setting. The depth and breadth of Bach's interest in the lute and its sonorities are thus amply demonstrated. The variety of the composer's output in this area is considerable, covering different periods of his life.

A brief biographical summary is perhaps relevant to an understanding of the lute works. Bach's first professional appointment was as organist at Arnstadt, a few miles from his birthplace, at the age of 17 in 1703. Two years later he travelled to Lübeck, not far from Hamburg, to hear the playing of Dietrich Buxtehude (c. 1637–1707), staying there for four months and exceeding his permitted leave of absence from Arnstadt. The following year he became organist at Mühlhausen where on 17 October 1707, he married his distant cousin, Maria Barbara.

Resigning from the post in June 1708, Bach was appointed chamber musician and organist at the court of Wilhelm Ernst, Duke of Saxe-Weimar (1707–1717). (The *Suite in E minor, BWV 996*, is dated within this period, shortly after 1712.) In 1714 he was promoted from court organist to Kapellmeister, a position which obliged him to 'perform new works monthly'.

In 1716 Bach was offered the post of Kapellmeister at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen where he became court conductor with an orchestra of 17 musicians. Between 1717 and 1723, he composed the *Suites* for unaccompanied violin and cello, the *Brandenburg Concertos*, the first book of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the *French and English Suites* for keyboard, and the *Prelude in C minor, BWV 999*.

In 1720, while Bach was in Karlsbad with his employer, Prince Leopold, his wife suddenly died, leaving him with four children to care for. Within 18 months, Bach married Anna Magdalena, with whom he would have 13 children, seven of whom died as infants. In April 1723,

following the death of Johann Kuhnau (1660–1722), Kantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, Bach was appointed as his successor.

During this time, Bach is believed to have been in contact with two esteemed lute-players, Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1687–1750) and Johann Kropffgans (1708–c. 1770). (Around this period, he transcribed his *Fifth Cello Suite* for lute and arranged the *Third Violin Partita* for lute-harpsichord, *BWV 1006a*. The *Suite in C minor, BWV 997* for lute, and the *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro, BWV 998*, were written between 1740 and 1745.) Bach stayed in this post until his death in 1750. The later years saw the creation of the *St John Passion*, the *St Matthew Passion*, the *Christmas Oratorio* and the second book of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

Of all Bach's compositions only seven works (*BWV 995–1000* and *1006a*) are listed as being for lute. Out of these it is not certain that each composition was intended for the lute. What is known is that three works (*BWV 995, 997*, and *1000*) are extant in 18th-century tablature copies. One difficulty is that the lute pieces are often not ideally suited to performance on the Baroque lute, given the tunings as we know them, without some emendations.

The German lute virtuoso, Lutz Kirchhof, has observed that 'if one attempts to play the pieces exactly as they appear in the autograph, one fact becomes clearly apparent: Bach was not a lutenist!' The problems, however, are soon resolved as during the Baroque era 'it was the task of the instrumentalist to make the piece playable and Bach could safely assume that the necessary interventions would be carried out expertly and as a matter of course.'

Though no such instrument has survived from Bach's time, the existence of the lute-harpsichord may have been a significant focus of the composer's work. At the time of Bach's death his inventory of possessions included two lute-harpsichords, as well as three harpsichords, one lute, and a spinet.

For a better understanding of what the lute-

harpsichord was like we must rely on descriptions by musical historians of Bach's time. In an annotation to Adlung's *Musica mechanica organoedi*, Johann Friedrich Agricola describes a lute-harpsichord belonging to Bach: 'The editor of these notes remembers having seen and heard a Lautenclavicymbel in Leipzig around 1740, designed by Mr Johann Sebastian Bach and made by Mr Zacharias Hildebrand. This was smaller in size than a normal harpsichord but in all other aspects was similar ... It is true that in its usual setting ... it sounded more like a theorbo than a lute. But if one drew the lute-stop (such as is found on a harpsichord) together with the cornet stop ... one could almost deceive professional lutenists.'

When Bach's lute works are transferred to the lute-harpsichord, many extraneous technical difficulties disappear. But lutenists in the 20th century have been eager to restore these pieces to their instrument which was surely Bach's inspiration for the works.

In 1921, Dr Hans Dagobert Bruger published his edition of Bach's *Lute Suites*, allotting numbers to each suite (*No. 1* was *BWV 996*, *No. 2*, *BWV 997*, *No. 3*, *BWV 995*, and *No. 4*, *1006a*). These numberings, though in themselves somewhat misleading as there was no coherent sequence, were used by guitar editors and arrangers up to the 1980s and the *Suites* designated as such on guitar recordings and for recitals.

In Dr Bruger's scheme of things, the *Partita in E major*, *BWV 1006a* was designated as *Lute Suite No. 4* and has been regarded as one of the most technically challenging of the lute works. The instrumentation of the autograph copy, now in Tokyo, is not explicitly stated. Wolfgang Schmieder, author of the Bach catalogue, the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* (BWV), even wondered if it was intended for harp, though it could be for keyboard, Baroque lute or even lute-harpsichord. In the Staatsbibliothek Berlin-Dahlem are two 18th-century copies and an autograph copy in a violin version. Bach twice orchestrated the *Prelude* as part of *Cantatas*, *BWV 120a* and *BWV 29*. In the 18th century, composers were accustomed to making arrangements of specific pieces for a wide range of instruments. For that reason it is not surprising that this suite is appropriate for the expressive qualities of the lute.

The first movement, *Prelude*, consists of broken chords and *bariolage* ('medley of colours') string passages in perpetual motion, creating textures reminiscent of the lute preludes of Sylvius Leopold Weiss, the great master of the Baroque lute, personally well acquainted with Bach himself.

The *Loure* is both a reference to a kind of bagpipe and a dance in 6/4 time. It is characterised by dotted rhythms matching the dancer's lively steps, with many intricate movements being performed within each measure. The genre is often considered as a 'slow *gigue*'. In contrast the *Gavotte en Rondeau*, presents straightforward dance rhythms and strong melodic lines. *Menuet I & II* offer a sophisticated courtly dance of French origin, the second of these starting with a drone in musette style. The *Bourrée* is an energetic and vigorous dance, close to the earth and of definite folk origins.

The finale, *Gigue*, is distinct from the French dotted version of the form, and belongs to the type which exploits a duple rhythm effect. It is the shortest of all Bach's *Gigues*, an exuberant display in which the rhythmic drive is made virtuosic by much intricate passage work and a precise harmonic accompaniment.

In the case of *BWV 997*, the title 'suite' does not appear in the chief sources and is indeed closer to the concept of a *sonata da chiesa*, though some editors prefer to describe it as a partita.

Several manuscripts of *BWV 997* exist in keyboard notation, while an earlier copy of the *Prelude*, *Sarabande* and *Gigue* is in lute tablature (written out by the lutenist, J. C. Weyrauch, 1694–1771). Thus the suite might originally have been conceived in three movements, the *Fugue* and *Double* being added later for the keyboard or lute-harpsichord.

The *Prelude* and *Fugue* movements recall concerto-style pairings such as those found in *BWV 894*. The *Fugue* itself is in *da capo* form, where the first section is repeated, though sometimes slightly modified, at the end. The central episode offers a contrasting texture of flowing semiquavers either in treble or bass in accordance with the part writing.

The opening motif of the *Sarabande* is notably similar to the theme of the last movement of the *St Matthew Passion*, scored for orchestra and chorus.

The *Gigue*, in sophisticated French style, is an energetic dance of great expressiveness. It is composed over similar bass patterns as the opening of the *Prelude* and complemented by a superbly brilliant *Double*. The pianist and scholar Rosalyn Tureck described the *Double* as 'an invaluable example of Bach's own elaboration of a movement' and 'a true metamorphosis of the *Gigue*' revealing 'a stunning lesson in embellishment treatment'.

The *Prelude in C minor*, *BWV 999*, has come down to us in a manuscript of Johann Peter Kellner, a pupil of Bach. On the cover is written *Praelude in C mol pour la Lute di Johann Sebastian Bach*, and inside *Praelude pour la Lute*. It is frequently played on the keyboard, appearing among the *Twelve Little Preludes*. The style is that of broken chords, the bass articulating a repetitive melodic shape which also denotes the harmonic progressions.

The *Fugue in G minor*, *BWV 1000* can be found in a copy by the lutenist J.C. Weyrauch in French tablature (dated 1761) at the State Music Library, Leipzig, in an autograph violin version at the State library of Berlin-Dahlem, and in a version for organ (*BWV 539*) in various 18th-century collections.

The American lutenist Hopkinson Smith has commented about the opening of the *Fugue* that 'this imperious theme, perhaps inspired by a prelude of Johann Casper Ferdinand Fischer (c. 1656–1746), rings loud and clear on the plucked instrument and its repeated motif lends itself to the most admirable metamorphoses within the space of two pages which are unrivalled in the whole of the original lute literature.'

The *Fugue* is an extended composition and the Bach scholar Joel Lester comments: 'How does the G minor *Fugue* stay interesting for that long. Essentially by doing what all Bach's pieces do: have something new in each section that builds upon and heightens the previous musical discussion. This continuing heightening of levels of activity occurs both within each section of the *Fugue* and in the *Fugue* overall.'

Wanda Landowska, the renowned harpsichordist, described the *Prelude*, *Fugue* and *Allegro*, *BWV 998*, as being 'of incomparable beauty, inspired, spontaneous,

without a moment of arduous elaboration ... unique among Bach's works'. The indications on the score, *Prelude por la lute, ô cembalo*, suggest the piece was for either lute or harpsichord, and in Landowska's opinion may well be one of those pieces actually written for lute-harpsichord.

The *Prelude* represents a supreme example of the style *brisé* (broken chord style), perfected by 17th-century French lutenists and influencing Baroque keyboard players. The *Prelude* is thus a complex series of melodic fragments and broken chords with a clearly delineated bass part.

The *Fugue*, in three voices, is structurally in three parts (A–B–A), the middle section being an extended episode in semiquavers. The *Allegro* exemplifies many of the attributes of a characteristic Bach *Gigue*. Of this movement Landowska commented: 'Bach's art is so masterful that we think we are hearing not two but many voices pursuing one another ... and, underlying it all, there is that bass leaping joyously, participating eagerly in the play of echoes and delighting in chiaroscuro effects.'

The *Suite in E minor*, *BWV 996* can be found in two copies, one in the handwriting of Johann Gottfried Walther (1684–1748) (Staatsbibliothek, Berlin), and the other in the hand of Heinrich Nikolaus Gerber (1702–1775) (Bibliothèque royal de Belgique, Brussels). The words '*aufs Lautenwerck*', added to the manuscript sometime after the original copy was written, has led to speculation that Bach may have intended the work for the lute-harpsichord.

The first movement combines a graceful, improvisatory *Prelude* followed by a fugal *Presto* section of considerable vigour. The *Allemande* is a superb example of the characteristic Baroque keyboard *allemande* with its serenely flowing semiquavers. The *Courante* (of the French variety) is rhythmically strong and complex, increasingly varied in its intricate patterns as it advances. The *Sarabande*, the emotional heart of the suite, is sombre and dignified with a mixture of powerful chords and light melodic passages. The *Bourrée*, in contrast, earthy and sparse, presents in a two-part contrapuntal texture, a catchy melody instant in its

appeal. The *Gigue*, returning to the fugal intricacies of the *Presto*, provides an exciting virtuosic finale. Its passages in thirds and tenths are technically challenging and its weaving lines traverse almost the entire range of the fingerboard.

The *Suite in G minor, BWV 995* is an arrangement of *Cello Suite No. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011*. On the autograph copy (at the Bibliothèque royal de Belgique, Brussels) is the heading *Pièces pour la Luth à Monsieur Schouster par J.S. Bach*, while inside are the words *Suite pour la Luth par J.S. Bach*.

The suite begins ostensibly with a *Prelude* in the form of a French overture with the first section in duple time, the second in triple time. But as the Bach scholar David Ledbetter has pointed out, this movement 'fully represents the late-Baroque development of the overture to include elements of Italian style', such as a fully developed fugue.

The *Allemande*, in the French style with appropriate dotted rhythms, is an exquisitely lilting dance clustered with delicate embellishment. The third movement,

Courante, complements the *Allemande* being in the French style with strong statements and its own lively dotted rhythms. The *Sarabande* is characterised by single notes and a remarkable melodic simplicity. The subsequent *Gavottes I & II* return the listener to the physical energy of the dance, *Gavotte II* adding to the variety with its elegant triplets. The final *Gigue* with its strongly accented rhythms and insistent impetus provides, with its two-part writing, a superbly brilliant climax.

The *St Matthew Passion* and the *St John Passion* are two of Bach's greatest works, monumental masterpieces exemplifying the culmination of the Baroque musical tradition. *Betrachte, meine Seel'*, from the *St John Passion* features a lute part as an integral part of the orchestral texture. The brief *Ja freilich will in uns* from the *St Matthew Passion*, is followed by *Komm, süßes Kreuz*, with a poignant arrangement for lute (often performed by the viola da gamba) of the introduction and coda.

Graham Wade

Arioso from St John Passion, BWV 245

28 Betrachte, meine Seel'

Betrachte, meine Seel', mit ängstlichem Vergnügen,
Mit bitterer Lust und halb beklemmtem Herzen
Dein höchstes Gut in Jesu Schmerzen,
Wie dir auf Dornen, so ihn stechen,
Die Himmelsschlüsselblumen blühen!
Du kannst viel süße Frucht von seiner Wermut brechen
Dum sieh ohn Unterlass auf ihn!

Recitativo from St Matthew Passion, BWV 244b

29 Ja freilich will in uns

Ja freilich will in uns das Fleisch und Blut
Zum Kreuz gezwungen sein;
Je mehr es unsrer Seele gut,
Je herber geht es ein.

Aria from St Matthew Passion, BWV 244b

30 Komm, süßes Kreuz

Komm, süßes Kreuz, so will ich sagen,
Mein Jesu, gib es immer her!
Wird mir mein Leiden einst zu schwer,
So hilfst du mir es selber tragen.

28 Consider, O my soul

Consider, O my soul, with fearful joy, consider,
in the bitter anguish of thy heart's affliction,
thy highest good is Jesus' sorrow.
For thee, from the thorns that pierce Him,
what heavenly flowers spring.
Thou canst the sweetest fruit from his wormwood gather,
then look on Him for evermore.

29 Yes! Willingly will we

Yes! Willingly will we, Flesh and blood,
Be brought to the cross;
The harsher the pain
The better for our souls.

30 Come, sweet cross

Come, sweet cross, so will I say,
My Jesus, ever give it me!
If my sufferings are ever too heavy,
Thou helpest me to bear them.

Dominik Wörner



Photo: Wolfgang M. Schmitt

The bass-baritone Dominik Wörner studied church music, musicology, harpsichord, organ and singing in Stuttgart, Fribourg and Berne, notably with Jakob Stämpfli. In 2002, Wörner won first prize in the vocal section of the International Bach Competition Leipzig. He completed his studies with a masterclass in Lieder interpretation given by Irwin Gage in Zürich, where he graduated with honours. Wörner has made guest appearances around the world with oratorio, opera and German Lied. His recordings (more than 70 albums and DVDs) for major labels including Deutsche Grammophon and BIS have won accolades including the Diapason d'or de l'Année and the German Record Critics Award. Dominik Wörner is artistic director of the German-Japanese Lied Society Tokyo and founder and artistic director of Kirchheimer Konzertwinter, a concert series in his home region of Pfalz. www.dominikwoerner.de

Yasunori Imamura



Photo: Patrick Lüthy

Yasunori Imamura studied lute with Eugen Müller-Dombois and Hopkinson Smith at the Schola Cantorum in Basle, where he received his soloist's diploma in 1981. Subsequently, he worked on interpretation and thoroughbass with Ton Koopman and Johann Sonnleitner and composition with Wolfgang Neining. Today, Imamura is recognised as one of the most prominent figures of the lute, both as a soloist as well as a continuo player. He is professor of lute at the Conservatoire et académie supérieure de musique de Strasbourg, as well as at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, and regularly gives masterclasses in Europe and the Far East. His solo recordings have received excellent reviews in various audio magazines, with the Diapason d'or prize for *Lute Sonatas, Vol. 1* by Silvius Leopold Weiss in 2006 and a Joker de Crescendo prize for *Lute Sonatas, Vol. 2* by Weiss in 2008. He received the Cultural Achievement Award from the Canton of Solothurn (Switzerland) in 2010. Besides his activities as a soloist, Yasunori Imamura has collaborated as a continuo player with leading artists such as Cecilia Bartoli, Teresa Berganza, Núria Rial, Marc Minkowski, Maurice Steger, Michael Schneider, Martin Gester and Alan Curtis, and has made more than 140 recordings. In 1997 he founded the ensemble Fons Musicae, performing throughout Europe and the Far East. To date they have made six recordings and have earned various international awards, including the Classica prize and the Sterne des Monats prize. www.yasunoriimamura.com

The considerable variety of Johann Sebastian Bach's output for the lute stands witness to different periods of his life and career. This collection comprises Bach's complete lute works, amply demonstrating his interest in its expressive qualities. These works include the technically demanding *Partita BWV 1006a*, Bach's own transcription of his *Cello Suite No. 5*, three pieces from the *St John Passion* and the *St Matthew Passion* where the lute appears in an ensemble setting, and the *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro, BWV 998*, described by the renowned harpsichordist Wanda Landowska as 'of incomparable beauty... unique amongst Bach's works'.



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16–21	Suite in E minor, BWV 996	18:18
22–27	Suite in G minor, BWV 995	25:15
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Yasunori Imamura, Baroque Lute

A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet.

The German sung texts and English translations are included in the booklet,
and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/573936.htm

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Producer and engineer: Martin Linde (Dipl. Tonmeister) • Editor: Yasunori Imamura

Booklet notes: Graham Wade • Sponsored by SÖkultur – Lotteriefonds Kanton Solothurn, Switzerland

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