



CHANNEL CLASSICS
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Johann Sebastian

BACH

Pieter Wispelwey

baroque cello violoncello piccolo

6

suites for
cello solo



Pieter Wispelwey
cello

Pieter Wispelwey received his early training from Dicky Boeke and Anner Bijlsma in Amsterdam and continued his studies with Paul Katz in the United States and William Pleeth in England. His repertoire covers a broad spectrum from J.S. Bach to Elliott Carter, Kagel and Schnittke. For many years he has given complete performances of the suites for solo cello by J.S. Bach, the solo suites of Benjamin Britten, the five sonatas of Beethoven and the three sonatas of Brahms.

Wispelwey performs regularly as a soloist with orchestras and has recently played concerts by Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Elgar, Haydn, Dutilleux and Schnittke. In 1985 he won the Elisabeth Everts Prize, an award given bi-annually to the Netherlands' most promising musician. In 1986 he gave his debut performance in the Kleine Zaal of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, with a Beethoven recital. He was recently nominated to play as principal cellist for the prestigious Netherlands Music Prize.

Between the years 1717 and 1723 Johann Sebastian Bach works as "Hofkapellmeister" in Köthen in the service of the German prince Leopold von Anhalt-Köthen. During his tenure there, Bach was concerned chiefly with secular instrumental music. Among the works composed in this period are the six Brandenburg Concertos, the first book of Das Wohltemperierte Clavier and the first four French Suites. Leopold was an enthusiastic music lover. He played himself and maintained what was for the time an extraordinarily large court orchestra. It was made up of the very best musicians of the day. The gambist and cellist Ferdinand Christian Abel must have been an exceptional player, as Bach composed six suites for cello for him in 1720, the first important compositions for solo violoncello in the repertoire.

The suite gradually developed as an instrumental form through the combination of various dance forms into a cyclus. This development took place predominantly in Germany. By 1720 a Spanish dance, the Saraband, the English Gigue, the German Allemande and the French Courante had become fully stylised dances within the suite. Only the structure of the original dances remained. Their character as dances had disappeared. The suites all have the same basic structure: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue. The only digression from this is the transition from the slow Sarabande to the

fast Gigue. In order to lessen the abruptness of this tempo change, Bach added a Menuet to suites BWV 1007 and 1008, a Bourrée to suites BWV 1009 and 1010 and a Gavotte to BWV 1011 and 1012. The Menuet, Bourrée and Gavotte were dances which were traditionally played in a medium tempo.

The cello suites were, without a doubt, the most monumental examples of polyphonic composition for solo strings that had appeared in music up to that time. In his pursuit to create polyphonic music at all costs, Bach broke through the technical frontiers of the instrument. The enormous technical difficulties they present are not examples of virtuosity but rather the natural result of both the complexity of his musical ideas and his extensive knowledge of the idiom and performance techniques. In the music of these suites, which is in principle made up of a single voice, the musical image presented is that of several melodic lines which develop freely and simultaneously. Although composers such as Gaultier and Schenk had experimented, before Bach, with 'quasi-polyphony' in their music for lute and viola da gamba respectively, it was the cello suites of Bach which, more than any other pieces, introduced this method of composition. The manner in which this introduction took place was ingenious and marked a new high point in music.



CHANNEL CLASSICS
d i g i t a l

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violoncello piccolo (anon. 18th century)

restored to original state, gut stringing. Pitch 415 hz

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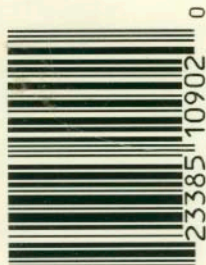
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CCS 1090

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)
6 suites per violoncello solo senza basso
Pieter Wispelwey - baroque-cello (Barak Norman 1710)
and violoncello piccolo (anon. 18th century)

CCS 1090 I

Suite no.1 in G dur BWV 1007

- | | |
|--------------|-------|
| 1 prelude | 2'24" |
| 2 allemande | 4'45" |
| 3 courante | 2'37" |
| 4 sarabande | 2'48" |
| 5 menuet 1&2 | 3'08" |
| 6 gigue | 1'37" |

Suite no.2 in d moll BWV 1008

- | | |
|---------------|-------|
| 7 prelude | 2'18" |
| 8 allemande | 3'50" |
| 9 courante | 2'00" |
| 10 sarabande | 5'04" |
| 11 menuet 1&2 | 3'07" |
| 12 gigue | 2'38" |

Suite no.6 in D dur BWV 1012

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 13 prelude | 4'46" |
| 14 allemande | 7'26" |
| 15 courante | 3'45" |
| 16 sarabande | 6'00" |
| 17 gavotte 1&2 | 4'28" |
| 18 gigue | 4'02" |
| Total time | 67'23" |

CCS 1090 II

Suite no.3 in C dur BWV 1009

- | | |
|---------------|-------|
| 1 prelude | 3'24" |
| 2 allemande | 4'42" |
| 3 courante | 3'09" |
| 4 sarabande | 4'29" |
| 5 bourrée 1&2 | 3'25" |
| 6 gigue | 3'25" |

Suite no.4 in Es dur BWV 1010

- | | |
|----------------|-------|
| 7 prelude | 4'18" |
| 8 allemande | 4'16" |
| 9 courante | 3'28" |
| 10 sarabande | 5'32" |
| 11 bourrée 1&2 | 4'56" |
| 12 gigue | 3'11" |

Suite no.5 in c moll BWV 1011

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 13 prelude | 5'54" |
| 14 allemande | 4'52" |
| 15 courante | 2'08" |
| 16 sarabande | 4'08" |
| 17 gavotte 1&2 | 4'22" |
| 18 gigue | 2'19" |
| Total time | 72'24" |