

J. S. BACH
English Suites
Nos. 1–3
Arranged for
Two Guitars

Montenegrin
Guitar Duo



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
English Suites Nos. 1–3, BWV 806–808
(Arranged for two guitars by the Montenegrin Guitar Duo)

Guitarists have been enthusiastic to perform the music of J. S. Bach since the nineteenth century when the great Spanish maestro, Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909) arranged single movements from the unaccompanied violin works. The art of transcription was continued by Andrés Segovia (1893-1984) who not only played, recorded and re-edited several of Tárrega's favourite Bach pieces but also arranged the great *Chaconne* from the *Partita in D minor, BWV 1004*, and performed it at his Paris début at the Salle Gaveau on 4th June, 1935.

Since then guitarists have embraced far more of Bach's music, including the 'lute' suites (possibly intended mainly for the lute-harpsichord, an instrument played as a keyboard but sounding like a lute), the cello suites, and even keyboard partitas. Guitar duos have extended the range further adding to their repertoire such complex musical entities as the *Goldberg Variations* and preludes and fugues from the *Well-Tempered Klavier*.

The *English Suites* is the title given to six suites for keyboard believed to have been composed (or at least collected and revised), between 1720 and the early 1730s. The title 'English' suites, according to J.N. Forkel (in a publication of 1801), was applied because Bach may have prepared a copy for a visiting Englishman. In fact the style of the suites is not at all English but, according to the eminent Bach scholar David Schulenberg, 'that of French or German compositions of the previous generation'.

These suites are characterised by very different opening *Préludes*. *English Suite No. 1 in A* has a shorter *Prélude* than the other suites in the sequence. This *Prélude* begins with a quasi-improvisatory flourish before proceeding into an intricate contrapuntal exercise. The *Allemande* as a dance movement is, as the name suggests, of German origin. This dance is quiet and steady, not brilliant, and its four beats to a bar and gentle semiquavers give it a sense of serene stability. The *Courante*, its title derived from the

French verb 'to run', is vigorous and rapid in contrast to the *Allemande*. In this suite both *Courantes* are in the French style, as opposed to the Italian *Corrente* with simpler textures and less complex harmonic and rhythmic movement. The *doubles*, variations on the preceding *Courantes*, are characterised by flowing quavers.

The *Sarabande*, a slow, stately dance, probably Spanish in origin, represents the emotional heart of the suite. This *Sarabande* with its elaborate ornamentation and extended melodic line may well have been influenced by the Italian *adagio* rather than French models of this dance. *Bourrées*, along with *minuets* and *gavottes*, remind us in their rhythmic simplicity of a more earthy dance, releasing us from the courtly dignity of the *sarabande*.

The *Bourrée* is a French dance, similar to the *Gavotte*, but quicker. It is often followed, as in this instance, by a second *Bourrée* in a different key, after which the first *Bourrée* is repeated. These two movements are longer and more contrapuntal than Bach's earlier suites. The *Gigue* generates excitement, vigour, and zest with a foot-tapping rhythmic vitality as the suite comes to a dramatic culmination. The opening theme recalls that of the *Prélude*, and this line is inverted at the beginning of the second half in a vivid demonstration of two part counterpoint.

English Suite No. 2 in A minor begins with a longer *Prélude* demonstrating admirably the flexibility of the introductory *prélude* concept which lays down few structural rules unlike the other movements which generally adhere to specific dance patterns. Following the sheer energy of the *Prélude*, the *Allemande* comes as a gentle stream of tranquillity. The single *Courante* is less extended than those in *Suite No. 1*, the texture being that of flowing quavers.

For the *Sarabande* J.S. Bach put in a second example of the piece complete with *agréments* or embellishments, an idea which had found a precedent in Couperin's *Premier Ordre* (Paris 1713). This establishes a guide to the

composer's own approach to embellishing his music. The two *Bourrées* offer elegant contrasts to each other in key, texture and mood, the second being more chordal and buoyant than its two-part invention-like predecessor. The *Gigue* differs from that of *Suite No. 1* in that the second half leads back to the beginning for a repeat.

English Suite No. 3 in G minor, BWV 808, is possibly the most popular suite of the set. The *Prélude* contrasts chordal accompaniments against brilliant semiquavers in a manner reminiscent of Vivaldi's *concerto grosso*. The *Allemande* differs from the previous suites in that the opening theme is in the bass. The fluent beauty of the particular composition makes this an example (if ever one was needed!), of the ideal *allemande*.

The *Courante* presents complex rhythmic patterns as Bach subtly advances the form, moulding the structure into a sonorous contrapuntal labyrinth. The *Sarabande* also is a magnificent vision of the possibilities of this dance taken to its most refined level. As with the previous suite, Bach has written out a more elaborately ornamented version as well as providing a (comparatively) simplified offering.

Gavotte I is contrasted against a *Gavotte* subtitled *Musette*, intended to be imitative of an instrument similar to the bagpipe. The *Gigue* takes us into the structure of a true fugue in a magnificent climax to one of the greatest examples of the suite form.

Graham Wade

Montenegrin Guitar Duo

The Montenegrin Guitar Duo is frequently invited to prestigious international events for recitals and concerts with orchestras, as well as for master-classes, lectures on transcribing Bach's music and adjudicating competitions. Their performances have been highly acclaimed by both audiences and critics for their historically informed performances of J. S. Bach's *English Suites* in a new, fresh approach on two guitars. Their repertoire includes the transcriptions of renaissance and baroque music and original compositions dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a special emphasis on contemporary music originally written for two guitars, as well as improvisation. The Montenegrin Guitar Duo's ultimate goal is to broaden the guitar repertoire and further integrate the instrument into the family of classical instruments. Their début recording with works by Carlo Domeniconi, Ástor Piazzolla and Dušan Bogdanović was released in 2013 by the Montenegrin Music Centre. This first of two recordings of Bach's *English Suites* is a world première.

Goran Krivokapić has been a first-prize winner at eighteen prestigious international competitions. His main focus is on the expansion and development of the guitar repertoire through transcriptions and by collaborating with composers in solo and chamber music. He is currently teaching guitar at the Koblenz International Guitar Academy and at the International Franz Liszt Akademie Cologne Refrath.

Danijel Cerović is currently teaching guitar and chamber music at the Music Academy in Cetinje at the University of Montenegro. A versatile solo and chamber musician, he is also a member of the artistic board of the Montenegrin Music Centre and the Montenegrin Symphony Orchestra. He is the founder and an artistic director of the Nikšić Guitar Festival and competition.

Note: The sound image in this recording places Danijel Cerović in the left channel, and Goran Krivokapic on the right.



Danijel Cerović and Goran Krivokapić

Photo: Luka Bošković

Bach's keyboard works known as the *English Suites* offer a series of dance movements which, despite their name, owe more to earlier French and German models. This is the first of two recordings of the complete *English Suites* arranged for two guitars by the distinguished Montenegrin Guitar Duo. Transcriptions of Bach for solo guitar have been popular since the nineteenth century and the emergence of the guitar duo extends still further the potential for exciting and revelatory performances.



**Johann Sebastian
BACH**
(1685–1750)

English Suites Nos. 1–3

(Arranged for two guitars by the Montenegrin Guitar Duo)

English Suite No. 1		English Suite No. 2		English Suite No. 3	
in A major,		in A minor,		in G minor,	
BWV 806		BWV 807		BWV 808	
	25:34		19:53		17:56
1 Prélude	2:05	10 Prélude	4:06	16 Prélude	2:54
2 Allemande	5:05	11 Allemande	3:31	17 Allemande	3:20
3 Courante I	1:43	12 Courante	1:34	18 Courante	1:56
4 Courante II	1:56	13 Sarabande	3:23	19 Sarabande	2:44
5 Double I	1:57	14 Bourrée I & II	4:05	20 Gavotte I & II	2:47
6 Double II	2:01	15 Gigue	3:14	21 Gigue	4:04
7 Sarabande	3:49				
8 Bourrée I & II	4:34				
9 Gigue	2:23				

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

Montenegrin Guitar Duo
Goran Krivokapić • Danijel Cerović

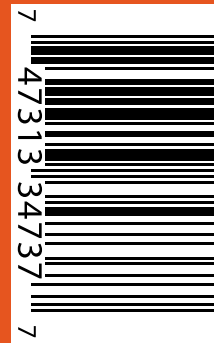
Recorded at St John Chrysostom Church, Newmarket, Ontario, Canada, 18–21 September 2014
Producers: Norbert Kraft & Bonnie Silver • Engineer & Editor: Norbert Kraft • Strings: Savarez
Guitars: Andres D. Marvi, Granada (GK); Simon Marty, Sydney (DC) • Booklet notes: Graham Wade
This recording is co-financed and supported by the Montenegrin Ministry of Culture
Special thanks to: Carlo Marchione, Vanja Lisjak, Norbert Kraft and Rachel Schiff
Cover photo of Montenegrin Guitar Duo by Luka Bošković



8.573473

DDD

Playing Time
63:20



© & © 2015
Naxos Rights US, Inc.
Booklet notes in English
Made in Germany
www.naxos.com