

MARINA TARASOVA



J. S. BACH

6 SUITES
for
SOLO CELLO

BWV 1007-1012

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH:

6 SUITES FOR SOLO CELLO, BWV 1007-1012

DISC 1

Suite No. 1 in G major, BWV 1007

1	I	<i>Prelude</i>	1:33
2	II	<i>Allemande</i>	2:51
3	III	<i>Courante</i>	2:22
4	IV	<i>Sarabande</i>	2:36
5	V	<i>Menuets I & II</i>	3:57
6	VI	<i>Gigue</i>	1:24

Suite No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1008

7	I	<i>Prelude</i>	3:29
8	II	<i>Allemande</i>	2:50
9	III	<i>Courante</i>	1:48
10	IV	<i>Sarabande</i>	5:20
11	V	<i>Menuets I & II</i>	3:53
12	VI	<i>Gigue</i>	2:37

Suite No. 6 in D major, BWV 1012

13	I	<i>Prelude</i>	5:55
14	II	<i>Allemande</i>	9:12
15	III	<i>Courante</i>	4:14
16	IV	<i>Sarabande</i>	5:10
17	V	<i>Gavottes I & II</i>	5:38
18	VI	<i>Gigue</i>	4:26

Total playing time

69:29

DISC 2

Suite No. 3 in C major, BWV 1009

1	I	<i>Prelude</i>	3:07
2	II	<i>Allemande</i>	3:16
3	III	<i>Courante</i>	3:00
4	IV	<i>Sarabande</i>	4:08
5	V	<i>Bourrées I & II</i>	4:49
6	VI	<i>Gigue</i>	2:52

Suite No. 4 in E flat major, BWV 1010

7	I	<i>Prelude</i>	4:26
8	II	<i>Allemande</i>	3:30
9	III	<i>Courante</i>	3:48
10	IV	<i>Sarabande</i>	4:37
11	V	<i>Bourrées I & II</i>	5:47
12	VI	<i>Gigue</i>	2:42

Suite No. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011

13	I	<i>Prelude</i>	6:27
14	II	<i>Allemande</i>	5:26
15	III	<i>Courante</i>	3:01
16	IV	<i>Sarabande</i>	2:48
17	V	<i>Gavottes I & II</i>	6:11
18	VI	<i>Gigue</i>	2:24

Total playing time

72:33

MARINA TARASOVA solo cello

THE MUSIC

Cellists and listeners are forever grateful to Johann Sebastian Bach for the Six Suites for Solo Cello. These towering masterpieces are indisputably the greatest works for solo cello.

The suite was one of Bach's favorite forms: He wrote three sets of six suites for keyboard, known as the French Suites, the English Suites, and the Clavier Partitas. He also composed three suites for solo violin.

The suite is a set of stylized dances, and the cello suites all follow the same pattern — an elaborate prelude followed by an allemande (a dance in 4/4 time); a courante (a quick dance whose name comes from the French word for “run”); and a sarabande (a dignified dance with three beats per measure). The suites all end with a gigue, known in England and Ireland as the jig. Between the sarabande and the gigue are two dances in contrasting keys. In the first two suites they are minuets, in the third and fourth suites they are bourrées, and in the last two they are gavottes.

Bach composed the suites in about 1720 while he was serving as Kapellmeister (chief musician) at the court of Prince Leopold in Cöthen, a smallish principality in east-central Germany. Much of Bach's chamber music was written at Cöthen, where he had no duties to compose church music.

Bach published only a handful of compositions in his lifetime. (The Six Clavier Partitas were published as Bach's Opus 1, indicating his fondness of the form.) Manuscripts circulated among musicians — if cellists wanted their own copy of the suites, they would copy it themselves or have a copyist write it out. Unfortunately, we do not have Bach's original manuscript of the cello suites. The earliest copy was made by Bach's wife, Anna Magdalena. Her handwriting resembled her husband's, with a style that indicates the easy flow of the music. However, this copy appears to have been written out hurriedly, with rather haphazard indications for bowings,

leaving something of a struggle for cellists who want to work out a musical and consistent approach to the suites.

The scope of these works is vast. Although the cello usually plays only one note at a time, Bach implies harmony and counterpoint by his ingenious melodies and occasional chords.

The first suite is famous for its prelude, which begins with broken chords, and after a pause breaks into scale-like passages. The second suite, in the somber key of D Minor, with its poignant sarabande, contrasts with the friendly first suite and the cheerful third. The fourth suite, in E flat major, is the only one of the six whose key does not correspond to one of the cello's open strings, giving it a different resonance from the other five. The sarabande of the fifth suite mostly floats unanchored to a key and leaves no doubt as to why Arnold Schoenberg called Bach "the first twelve-tone composer."

The monumental sixth suite is believed to have been written for the violoncello piccolo, a five-stringed cello, with the top string higher than the top string of the conventional four-stringed cello. (Other scholars believe the work may have been intended for the cello da spalla or viola pomposa). The higher range presents an extra challenge for the cellist who chooses to play it on a four-stringed instrument. The sixth suite is the culmination of the set, wide in its breadth and deep in its passion and expression.

Marina Tarasova believes the suites are often interpreted in an overly academic and formal way. Her inspirational approach is full of vitality and spirit.

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THE PERFORMER

Marina Tarasova is an acclaimed Russian cellist, the winner of international competitions in Prague, Florence, and Paris. She was awarded the laureate of the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow and is an Honored Artist of the Russian Federation. She has worked with many famous musicians, such as Mikhail Pletnev, Mariss Jansons, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Kurt Masur, Edward Grach and Yuri Bashmet among others.

Tarasova lives in Moscow, where she was born. She started playing the cello at the age of six and studied with Alexander Fedorchenko at the Gnessin School and with Natalia Shakhovskaya at the Moscow State Conservatory.

Marina Tarasova's wide repertoire covers works of composers from the 17th century to the 20th. She has recorded much Russian repertoire for Northern Flowers, including some composers little-known in the West. She has joined Divine Art Recordings Group to explore non-Russian repertoire more actively.

For more information, visit marina-tarasova.ru.



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MARINA TARASOVA





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