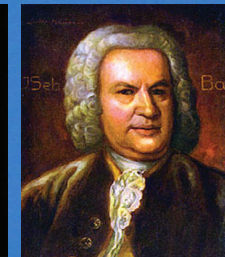


Bach Piano 2

French Overture • Capriccio
Aria Variata • more

Judith Lambden



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

French Overture BWV 831

- 1 Overture 9'03
- 2 Courante 2'51
- 3 Gavottes 1 and 23 3'48
- 4 Passepieds 1 and 2 3'23
- 5 Saranbande 3'46
- 6 Boureés 1 and 2 3'27
- 7 Gigue 2'58
- 8 Echo 2'58

Overture in F major BWV 820

- 9 Overture 3'01
- 10 Entree 3'04
- 11 Menuet and Trio 2'15
- 12 Bourree 1'17
- 13 Gigue 0'43

Capriccio on the departure of a beloved brother BWV 992

- 14 Arioso: Adagio – 'Friends Gather & Try to Dissuade Him from departing' 2'24
- 15 (Andante) – 'They Picture the Dangers Which May Befall Him' 1'42
- 16 Adagiosissimo (or Adagissimo) – 'The Friends' Lament' 3'18

- 17 (Andante con moto) – 'Since He Cannot Be Dissuaded, They Say Farewell' 0'52

- 18 Allegro poco – 'Aria of the Postilion' (Aria di postiglione) 1'22

- 19 'Fugue in Imitation of the Postilion's Horn' (Fuga all'imitazione della cornetta di postiglione) 2'42

Aria Variata BWV 989

- 20 Theme 2'32
- 21 Variation 1 1'10
- 22 Variation 2 1'13
- 23 Variation 3 1'30
- 24 Variation 4 1'26
- 25 Variation 5 1'13
- 26 Variation 6 2'08
- 27 Variation 7 0'59
- 28 Variation 8 0'58
- 29 Variation 9 1'01
- 30 Variation 10 2'22

Fantasia and Fugue in A minor

BWV 944

- 31 Fantasia and Fugue 6'54

Judith Lambden *piano*

Total time 76 minutes

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French Overture – BWV 831

Having played and recorded Bach's Suites: the six French Suites, the six English Suites and the six Partitas, nothing could have prepared me for the awe-inspiring magnificence, delight and charm of a later work, a single lengthier Suite, and the French Overture.

Bach only began publishing his works for keyboard in 1731, the year he turned forty-six. The six Partitas were his Opus 1. – "Clavier-Übung Volume 1" (Keyboard Practice). Four years later a second volume came out, containing the Italian Concerto and the French Overture. Bach wanted to show his skill in translating the Italian style, as well as the contrasting French style (also called "Art Galant"), to the keyboard. The title "Concerto" was normally given to a work three- or four-movement for orchestra, with or without solo instruments, and "Overture" was normally a single movement for orchestra preceding an opera.

Bach was influenced by the French composers Lully, Couperin and Chambonnières, and by the Italian composers Vivaldi, Albinoni, Corelli and Marcello.

The French Overture is a unique work. Its opening movement is about 14 minutes in length, and is very imposing

and impressive. It is like grandiose and stately processional music to be played in a cathedral. After faster contrapuntal sections, the slow, formal opening music is repeated, with its pointed, dotted rhythms. The sombre key of B minor lends the music a grave, serious character. I have omitted one of the repetitions to better suit modern day tastes.

There are 10 more much shorter dances, presented in pairs, the first one repeated after the second, but this time without the internal repeats. Unusually, this French Overture does not include an Allemande.

The solemn and noble Courant is in 3/2 rhythm, in the French style.

Next are graceful Gavottes, then with piquant charm, Passpieds including trills and mordents.

The slow dance, an intense and passionate Sarabande, in triple time follows.

Next follow two Bourees – lively and energetic, and then a sprightly Gigue in bouncing rhythm.

This would usually be the final dance of a Suite, but Bach gives an extra virtuoso piece to end this great invention. It is Echo, which has markings 'piano' and 'forte' to give dynamic contrasts.

Overture in F major – BWV 820

This is an earlier, and less grand, work than the French Overture. The Opening movement or "Overture" has the same dotted rhythms, and this miniature work is in the French style. It is in 6 movements.

Capriccio in B flat major "on the Departure of his Beloved brother" – BWV 992

J.S. Bach was born in 1685, and orphaned at the age of ten. He was put into the care of a brother Johann Christoph Bach, fifteen years his senior. This brother taught the younger Bach keyboard and composition. Johann Christoph was organist at the church of St. Michael, and the young Bach at the age of fifteen followed in his footsteps in church organ playing and singing. He also copied out music he found in his library. He did this by stealth – often at midnight and by moonlight. This music was by Pachelbel and Froberger. Another composer whose work influenced Bach at that time was Frescobaldi.

Another older brother – Johann Jacob

Bach, an oboist, went to Sweden to join the orchestra of the Swedish King Charles XII in 1704.

It is thought that this Capriccio of farewell was written in honour of this brother. It is an early work of Bach, then still in his teenage years. It is his only piece of programme music (one that tells a story). “Capriccio” means caprice, whim or fancy, and in this work Bach lets his imagination run free rather than observing strict rules.

The work is in six movements, each of them fairly short, totalling about twelve minutes.

First is Arioso - gently pleading. His friends are trying to dissuade him from leaving.

Second is Andante (Fugato) – a short Fugue in which they warn him of the dangers and misfortunes which may befall him.

Third is Adagissimo (very slow) – a sorrowful lament in the form of a Passacaglia, with figured bass only. The player must fill in the chords. The brother’s departure is inevitable.

Fourth is an Aria – a sad ornamented melody, saying goodbye.

Fifth is Aria di postiglione: Adagio poco. The postal coach arrives, blowing its horn (this is shown in music by a downward octave leap).

Sixth is Fuga all’imitazione della cornetta di postiglione. This final Fugue movement combines two motives: the subject evoking trumpets, and the countersubject imitating the posthorn.

Aria Variata – BWV 989

Aria Variata is a theme with variations and has the additional words “alla maniera Italiana” in its title. It is in A minor, and is a relatively early work from 1709. It consists of ten virtuoso variations, each in binary form with both sections repeated. It is of 15 -20 minutes duration.

The work was published in the Andreas Bach book, a collection of pieces that Bach wrote for the educational study of some of his sons, such as Wilhelm Friedemann, and also for his second wife Anna Magdalena.

There are several versions of the actual theme, some in figured bass, and some harmonized with chords. This theme is repeated (with slight changes) at the end. This makes an expressive contrast, particularly after the virtuosic brilliance of the ninth and tenth variations.

There is much scope for rich ornamentation with mordents and trills, as rhythmically the music is sparse and plain, and needs filling in to enhance

the sustained long notes. There are similarities in form to Bach’s great Goldberg Variations (BWV 988) written much later. The Aria or theme is likewise repeated after the final (30th) Variation.

Fantasia and Fugue in A minor – BWV 944

This original for organ is an arrangement for piano by Franz Liszt.

Recorded at Move Records studio, Melbourne, Australia

Recording engineers:
Blake Stickland and Vaughan McAlley
Mastering: Martin Wright, Move Records

Cover images:
Six Bachs. The fifth image is a reconstruction of Bach’s head by anthropologist Caroline Wilkinson of Dundee University

Photo of Judith Lambden: Karl Mandl
Other photos: Martin Wright

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Judith Lambden

Judith was born in Creswick, Victoria in Australia. She graduated from the Melbourne University Conservatorium with a B.Mus(Hons) degree. While still in Melbourne for a further seven years, her teachers were Gordon McKeown for piano and John Ingram for theory and composition. She won many prizes and made national broadcast performances for ABC radio.

Having been awarded the Clarke Scholarship for three years of study at the Royal College of Music, Judith travelled to London. In her final year there, she won the Hopkinson Gold Medal and the Norris Prize. She then studied harpsichord in Siena, Italy, with Ruggiero Gerlin, who had been a pupil and associate of Wanda Landowska for twenty years.

Judith also studied under some of the great pianists and pedagogues of our times, including Kendall Taylor, Lamar Crowson, Nadia Boulanger and Paul Badura-Skoda. Later she was awarded a grant by the Dutch Government for one year of study with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam. Aided by an ability to play a substantial number of Bach's keyboard works and other repertoire from memory, Judith has given many recitals in



England, where she lived for 23 years, and throughout Europe. She broadcast for the BBC and Radio Hilversum. Recital venues included the Universities of Oxford, Durham, Colchester, Leicester, Surrey and London. Judith played and recorded, as harpsichordist, with the Dolmetsch Ensemble.

Since her return to Australia, concerts have included a performance of the Schumann Piano Concerto with the Camberwell Camerata and several solo piano recitals including two at the Castlemaine Festival. As harpsichordist with the group 'II Sole Barocco' there have been many tours and recitals including some at Monash University.

Judith taught at the Victorian College of the Arts and at other tertiary institutions, and became an AMEB examiner in 1985 as well as being an assessor for VCAA. She has adjudicated at more than sixty eisteddfodau throughout Australia.

Judith has recorded the Great B flat Sonata of Schubert, Bach's English and French Suites, the six Partitas, and is currently recording more J.S. Bach keyboard works, and other repertoire.