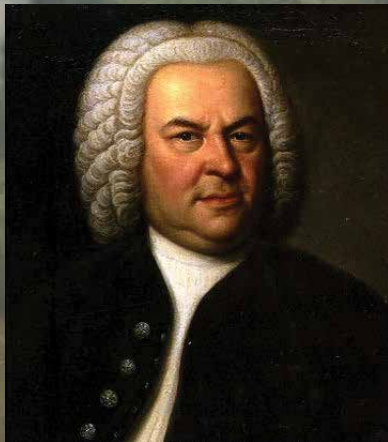


Six English Suites



Johann Sebastian Bach

Judith Lambden *piano*

CD1

1st Suite in A major

BWV 806

- 1 Prelude 2'34"
- 2 Allemande 4'43"
- 3 Courante I 2'19"
- 4 Courante II 2'28"
- 5 Double I 1'44"
- 6 Double II 1'47"
- 7 Sarabande 5'06"
- 8 Bourrée I 2'23"
- 9 Bourrée II 2'51"
- 10 Gigue 2'40"

2nd Suite in A minor

BWV 807

- 11 Prelude 5'34"
- 12 Allemande 3'44"
- 13 Courante 2'28"
- 14 Sarabande 4'08"
- 15 Bourrée I 2'27"
- 16 Bourrée II 2'39"
- 17 Gigue 3'39"

3rd Suite in G major

BWV 808

- 18 Prelude 3'36"
- 19 Allemande 3'41"
- 20 Courante 2'45"
- 21 Sarabande 4'29"
- 22 Gavotte I 1'48"
- 23 Gavotte II 1'50"
- 24 Gigue 2'46"

"I can enjoy and appreciate Lambden's balanced J S Bach interpretations in a mood of relaxed, unperturbed concentration ... thoughtfully appealing, reliably judged."

Howard Smith, Music and Vision



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CD2

4th Suite in F major

BWV 809

- 1 Prelude 5'56"
- 2 Allemande 3'50"
- 3 Courante 1'54"
- 4 Sarabande 3'48"
- 5 Menuet I 1'30"
- 6 Menuet II 2'12"
- 7 Gigue 3'23"

5th Suite in E minor

BWV 810

- 8 Prelude 5'42"
- 9 Allemande 4'15"
- 10 Courante 3'00"
- 11 Sarabande 3'09"
- 12 Passepied I 1'20"
- 13 Passepied II 2'13"
- 14 Gigue 2'54"

6th Suite in D minor

BWV 811

- 15 Prelude 8'51"
- 16 Allemande 4'01"
- 17 Courante 2'57"
- 18 Sarabande 3'30"
- 19 Gavotte I 2'35"
- 20 Gavotte II 4'12"
- 21 Gigue 3'12"

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

(1685–1750)

Six English Suites

BWV 806-811

The English Suites were probably written during Bach's years as Kappellmeister in Cöthen, or even as early as 1715 while he was still in Weimar – certainly well before the six French Suites and the six Partitas. It was customary to write Suites in sets of six. The original manuscript had been lost, but a copy was in the possession of Bach's youngest son, Johann Christian Bach, then living in England. The title page included the inscription *Faites pour les Anglois*.

The name 'English' was not given by J.S. Bach himself – indeed it in no way refers to the style of the music. The style is essentially French, also to a lesser extent Italian.

The Suites may have been dedicated to an Englishman of some rank, or alternatively to the French composer Dieupart, who lived in England for forty years. As the melody of the Prelude No. 1 of the first Suite, Bach borrowed a Gigue written by Dieupart, who also wrote *Six Suites pour le Clavecin*. Handel also wrote his first Suite in the key of A major. Bach's own Prelude, from the Prelude and Fugue in A major in Volume 2 of the 48 preludes and fugues also shows a similarity to the No. 1 Prelude.

The English Suites are unique in that they begin with a Prelude – generally quite



large-scale, giving the impression of soloist alternating with orchestra (as Bach does in his later Italian Concerto.) The Prelude of No. 6 opens with a Rhapsodic Introduction as well.

Bach's later Partitas Nos. 2-6 also begin

with a large-scale opening piece each titled differently. (Only Partita No. 1 has a short Praeludium.)

Bach's French Suites are without Preludes. Composers who influenced him, such as



Johann Jacob Froberger and Georg Böhm, wrote suites following the 'Allemande, Courante, Sarabande & Gigue' pattern, Sequential (binary form), dance movement structure.

Bach showed an affinity with the French lutenists who 'warmed up' with an improvisatory unmeasured Prelude preceding their dance Suites. The Allemandes are of a serious and discursive nature, with beautiful

melodic lines with bass in imitation or supporting the treble.

The Courantes were usually quite short and of the French type, though The Courante of No 1 is followed by a 2nd one, then yet another 2 variants called 'Doubles'. The final pieces have intricate semi-quavers and quaver figures often in the bass for the left hand. These ornamental dances are very similar to those of Couperin. The Sarabandes in all suites are very fine in

quality and very expressive, yet they still suggest the slow triple-time dance with the emphasis on the 2nd beat.

Sarabandes of Nos 2, 3 and 6 are not only magnificent, but are followed by decorative variations. The repeat of the two sections allows for the player to add more ornaments, such as mordents, double mordents, turns and trills. Each English Suite had six movements, as between the Sarabande and Gigue, Bach placed a pair of Gavottes (Nos. 3 and 6). Bourrées in Nos 1 & 2, Minuets in Nos 2 & 4 and Passepieds (en Rondeau) in No. 5. The 2nd dance of each pair is in the relative major or minor key. These are delightfully playful little dances.

The Giges were in lively compound duple or quadruple time (6/8 or 12/8) with rollicking flowing rhythm. The most original is the final No. 6 Gigue with its fiendishly difficult trills, between semi-quaver triplets – dramatic and rivetingly exciting. This final piece brings the whole of the English Suites to a great end.

In the mid 1720s after Bach was settled as Cantor of St. Thomas's, Bach composed fewer Cantatas. At last he had time to sort out all his keyboard works with a view to publishing them, yet only the Six Partitas were published by Bach himself. His great Four-Volume collection Clavier-Übung, was widely disseminated after his death in 1750. It included all the massive organ pieces, concluding with the Goldberg Variations BWV 988. Bach's intention was to provide a comprehensive survey of keyboard style.

Judith Lambden

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.

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Front cover background photo (over Germany) and Frankfurt photo (page 6): Martin Wright

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