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J. S. BACH'S SIX SUITES FOR SOLO VIOLONCELLO, BWV 1007-1012;
THEIR HISTORY AND PROBLEMS OF TRANSCRIPTION AND PERFORMANCE
FOR THE TROMBONE, A LECTURE RECITAL, TOGETHER WITH THREE
RECITALS OF SELECTED WORKS BY PAUL HINDEMITH,
GEORG CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL, RICHARD MONACO,
DARIUS MILHAUD, NINO ROTA,
GIOVANNI B. PERGOLESI
AND OTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas

August, 1983

Conger, Robert B., J. S. Bach's Six Suites for Solo Violoncello, BWV 1007-1012; Their History and Problems of Transcription and Performance for the Trombone, A Lecture Recital, Together with Three Solo Recitals. Doctor of Musical Arts (Trombone Performance), August, 1983, 27 pp., 11 musical examples, bibliography, 32 titles.

The dissertation consists of four recitals: three solo recitals and one lecture recital. The repertoire of all the programs contained both music written specifically for the trombone and transcriptions from various other instruments.

The lecture recital, "J. S. Bach's Six Suites for Solo Violoncello, BWV 1007-1012; Their History and Problems of Transcription and Performance for the Trombone," was presented on June 20, 1983. The lecture was an attempt to illuminate the rationale and performance problems of transcribing the Bach 'cello suites to the modern tenor trombone with an F attachment and also to provide background information on the suites and the early solo emergence of the violoncello. The program included the performance of the Suite No. 2 in d minor, BWV 1008, with the movements: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Minuets I and II, and Gigue.

Tape recordings of all performances submitted as
dissertation requirements are on deposit in the North Texas
State University Library.

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North Texas State University
School of Music
presents

Bob Conger

Trombone

Martha Kirkpatrick

Piano and Harpsichord

Monday, April 13, 1981 5:00 P.M. Concert Hall

SinfoniaG. B. Pergolesi
Comodo
Allegro
Adagio
Presto

Scott Roller, cello

Sonate Paul Hindemith
Allegro moderato maestoso
Allegretto grazioso
Allegro pesante (Swashbuckler's Song)
Allegro molto maestoso

Intermission

Sonata Leslie Bassett
Allegro moderato
Moderato cantabile
Allegro Marziale

Seven Variations Ludwig von Beethoven
on the duet "Bei Mannern, welche Liebe fuhlen"
from the Magic Flute by W. A. Mozart

Aria and Dance Thom Ritter George
Andante
Vivace e giocoso

Jeff Thomas, trombone
David Pozos, trombone

Cully Beasley, trombone
Brian Brink, bass trombone

*presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts*

North Texas State University
School of Music

Graduate Recital

BOB CONGER, Trombone

MARTHA KIRKPATRICK, Piano

Monday, March 8, 1982 8:15 p.m. Concert Hall

Symphonic Piece. Philippe Gaubert

Concerto for Trombone. Nino Rota
Allegro giusto
Lento
Allegro moderato

Brief Intermission

Choral, Cadence et Fugato. Henri Dutilleux

Sonata for Trombone Richard A. Monaco
Allegro
Andante
Allegro molto

There will be a reception following the program in the
Green Room.

North Texas State University
School of Music

BOB CONGER, Alto and Tenor Trombone

Assisted by:

Members of the NTSU Orchestra

Becky Burkhardt, Conductor

The Velvetones

The New Arts Quartet

Monday, February 21, 1983 8:15 p.m. Concert Hall

Concerto for Alto Trombone
and Orchestra. Georg Christoph Wagenseil
Con Discretionem, Quasi Andante
Allegro Assai

Concertino d'Hiver for
Trombone and Strings. Darius Milhaud
Anime
Tres modere
Anime

Music Hall Suite for Brass Quintet. Joseph Horowitz
Soubrette Song
Trick Cyclists
Adagio Team
Soft Shoe Shuffle
Les Girls

The Velvetones

Brief Intermission

Synaxis for Trombone Solo and
Trombone Quartet. William Brusick
Call to Worship
Introit
Respond
Alleluia

The New Arts Quartet

North Texas State University
School of Music

Lecture Recital

BOB CONGER, Trombone

Monday, June 20, 1983

4:00 p.m.

Concert Hall

J. S. BACH'S SIX SUITES FOR SOLO VIOLONCELLO,
BMV 1007-1012; THEIR HISTORY AND PROBLEMS
OF TRANSCRIPTION TO THE MODERN
TENOR TROMBONE

Suite No. 2 for Solo Violoncello BMV 1008. . . . J. S. Bach
Prelude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Minuets I and II
Gigue

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

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J. S. BACH'S SIX SUITES FOR SOLO VIOLONCELLO,
BWV 1007-1012; THEIR HISTORY AND PROBLEMS
OF TRANSCRIPTION AND PERFORMANCE
FOR THE TROMBONE

Brief History of the Suite to 1720

The first known use of the term "suite" to denote groups of various dance movements was in the title suyettes de branles from Estienne du Tetre's Septième de dancieries of 1557.¹ Branle, a commonly used term of the period referring to a popular class of dances, was used by Arbeau in his Orchesography of 1589 to label certain types of dances; e.g. branle double, branle simple, in duple meter and branle gay in triple meter.² He made it clear that it was usually the musicians at a dance who assembled the branles into suites, ordering them according to the demands of the occasion or current fashion. Most often dances were arranged in pairs of slow-fast and/or duple-triple movements. Among such pairs were the Italian bassadanza-salterello (later passamezzo-salterello) and the French pavan-gailliard.

¹Estienne du Tetre, Septième Livre de Dancieries (Paris, 1557), title page.

²Thoinot Arbeau, Orchesography, translated by Mary Stewart Evans (New York, 1948), p. 15.

Normally the paired dances were each based on the same material, chord successions, or a metric variation of the melody.

By the early seventeenth century, dance music remained somewhat nationalized but was growing increasingly cosmopolitan in scope. Composers from various countries began to combine dances such as the German allemande, the French courante, the Italian corrente, the Spanish sarabande, and the English gigue into suites, although there was still no definite ordering of the dances.

One such publication was Banchetto Musicale (1617) by J. P. Schein, a collection containing twenty suites in various groupings of paduana, gagliarda, courante, allemande, and tripla. This collection and others like it began a tradition of chamber music intended to be listened to and not necessarily danced to through its use of increased rhythmic complexity as opposed to the stylized dance rhythms of earlier compositions.

Seventeenth-century Italian chamber music made use of certain stylized dances in the sonata da camera, usually written in five movements and performed by a variety of instruments, usually winds, and continuo. The sonata da chiesa, or church sonata, was another Italian development that evolved from the sectionalized ensemble canzona. It usually had four movements, slow-fast-slow-fast, which were often performed in a trio sonata format of two violins,

continuo, and a separate instrument on basso continuo. Occasionally these sonatas incorporated stylized dance movements, though they were not necessarily labeled as such. After 1700, both the sonata da camera and sonata da chiesa gravitated toward the solo sonata as the violin gained in prominence as a soloistic vehicle.

The order of the suite did not become standardized until the second half of the seventeenth century, and consisted of the allemande, courante or corrente, and sarabande. The gigue was not firmly connected with those movements until late in the century.

Stylistically the allemande was usually in duple meter, began with a short upbeat, and contained a steady stream of eighth or sixteenth notes. The courante was in 6/4 time with an agogic accentuation on the first and fifth beats. At cadences the tactus often shifted to 3/2 for a hemiola effect. The Italian corrente was a faster dance in 3/4 with a lighter, more homophonic texture. The sarabande, a slow dance in triple meter, may have been derived from a quick Spanish or Mexican dance. It had a characteristic agogic accent on the second beat of every measure or every other measure. The gigue was a quick dance, often in 3/8, 6/8, or 12/8, and was characterized by triplets with wide intervallic leaps.

The actual use of the term suite to describe the allemande-courante-sarabande-gigue formula was not widespread until the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Suites

which varied from this standard format most often contained an overture or prelude and/or a substitute for the gigue.

By the early eighteenth century, the optional placing of a dance from a group of dances known as galanterien before or after the sarabande became an accepted practice. These optional dances included the minuet, bourrée, gavotte, and the passepied.

J. S. Bach and the Suite

In tracing the historical development of the suite from the fifteenth century, it is found that the suites of J. S. Bach display a refined musical sense that was generally absent from the functional dance music of the previous century. This musical refinement elevates Bach's suites to a standard against which all other music in the genre has come to be measured. A century before Bach, the character and stylistic musical features of each dance were organized into suites by such elements as key, thematic unification and chordal succession. In Bach's suites, while these characteristics are still evident as unifying factors, they have been transformed with the addition of textural complexity, technical demands and, above all, a singularity of affection which unites even the most sophisticated movements.

Bach composed about 45 suites for a wide variety of instruments including harpsichord, flute, violin, violoncello, and the full orchestra. Many of these were composed

at Cöthen from 1717-1723. The Six Suites for Violoncello Solo, BWV 1007-1012, exhibit to a high degree the classical tendencies of the genre. These suites have a somewhat progressive ordering according to difficulty. The relative difficulty of key, the use of multiple stops, the use of scordatura in the fifth suite as well as the use of a different instrument altogether for the sixth suite, all suggest graduated levels of difficulty. Between the sarabande and gigue of each suite Bach has inserted the optional galanterien. Accordingly, the six suites are divided into three groups of two: the first two contain minuets, three and four contain bourrées, and the final two include gavottes. The preludes are most often through-composed and in an improvisatory style. The only exception to this occurs in the fifth suite which begins with a French overture. The fifth suite is also unique in that it was written for 'cello scordatura with the "G" string retuned up a step to "A." The sixth suite was written for a five-stringed instrument--the viola pomposa or the violoncello piccolo, although there is no agreement among Bach scholars as to the composer's preference for either.

According to most sources, the 'cello suites were composed in 1720, at about the same time Bach was writing the Six Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, BWV 1001-1006.³

³Johann N. Forkel, J. S. Bach, His Life and Work, translated by Charles S. Terry (London, 1920), p. 137.

From 1717-1723, Bach held the position of musical director at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. Prince Leopold was a fairly accomplished performer on the violin and viola da gamba, and Bach himself wrote that the prince "loved and understood music."⁴ Much of Bach's chamber music was written during his tenure at Cöthen, including the sonatas for violin, the French and English suites for harpsichord, and the six Brandenburg concerti.

Among the orchestra members at Cöthen were Christian Ferdinand Abel, a virtuoso on viola da gamba as well as a violoncellist, and Christian Bernhard Linigke, whose primary instrument was the violoncello. While authorities cannot agree as to which musician first performed the suites, there is an agreement that Bach must have been influenced in his writing of the suites by the fact that he had recourse to such outstanding performers.⁵

Early Manuscripts

Although Bach's autograph of the 'cello suites is not extant, there are three eighteenth-century manuscripts in the Prussian State Library in Berlin.⁶ The earliest is

⁴Charles Sanford Terry, Bach: A Biography (London, 1928), pp. 204-205.

⁵Gordon James Kinney, The Musical Literature for Unaccompanied Violoncello (Ann Arbor, 1962), p. 319.

⁶Mark M. Smith, "A Deceptive Edition of the Bach 'Cello Suites," Bach, 9 (1978), 26.

thought to have been written by Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, and probably dates from 1720-1730. Spitta claimed that this manuscript was in Bach's handwriting and that only the titles were copied by his wife.⁷ In any case, the copy contains numerous errors and omissions in notes and slurs, even though it is fairly neat and legible. Anna Magdalena's copy of the violin sonatas, when compared with Bach's autograph, shows that she was an honest copier who avoided deliberate alterations, although she was careless at times.

The second manuscript dates from the same period and was written by Johann Peter Kellner, a pupil of Bach. One tenuous piece of evidence that Kellner may have literally copied the Anna Magdalena manuscript exists in the omission of six measures that made up exactly one line of the Bach manuscript. Kellner's manuscript contains some deliberately altered notes and slurs, but for the most part remains true to the original.

The third manuscript dates from the second half of the eighteenth century and was written in the distinctly different styles of two copyists--one who wrote the first fifteen pages and another who wrote the remaining twenty-six pages. Unique features of this manuscript include additional

⁷Phillip Spitta, Johann Sebastian Bach, translated by Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (New York, 1951), pp. 652-654.

ornaments, different bowings, and many additions in notes and slurs.⁸

Since the eighteenth century, there have been over thirty editions of the suites, at least three of which have added piano accompaniment parts.⁹ Currently there are more than fifteen 'cello editions in print, as well as transcriptions for various wind instruments including saxophone, french horn, tuba, and trombone.

The 'Cello's Emergence as a Solo Instrument

The 'cello's emergence as a solo instrument in the seventeenth century was mainly an outgrowth of its use as a basso continuo instrument in Baroque compositions. The 'cello shared this function with the viola da gamba, the bass gamba, the trombone, and the bassoon. Eventually, the 'cello became the preferred continuo instrument because its tonal color more nearly matched the violins and its carrying power was better suited for use with other instruments and choruses in larger ensemble groupings. By the early eighteenth century, the 'cello line had evolved into an important part of the compositional structure of the trio sonata, as the keyboard instrument had begun to assume full responsibility for realizing the bass and inner parts.

⁸Smith, "A Deceptive Edition of the Bach 'Cello Suites," p. 27.

⁹Kinney, The Musical Literature for Unaccompanied Violoncello, p. 323.

The first solo works for 'cello were written by Italian composers and included unaccompanied ricercari and pieces for the 'cello and cembalo.¹⁰ These works were not only instrumental in bringing out the latent musical capacities of the 'cello, but were pieces of considerable musical worth also. In the eighteenth century, sonatas were written for the instrument by such composers as Alessandro Scarlatti and Antonio Vivaldi that not only enhanced the status of the 'cello as a melodic instrument, but enlivened its soloistic usage as well.¹¹ Once its capabilities were recognized, the 'cello assumed an important role as a solo instrument throughout the Baroque era and indeed to the present day.

Comparison of the 'Cello and Trombone

Although there are great differences between the modern large bore tenor trombone and the violoncello, including the method of tonal production and the medium of construction, there are also many similarities such as range, timbre, and slurring capabilities.

The range of the 'cello in the first five of the six suites is from C to g'. Its range in the sixth suite is wider, since it was intended for viola pomposa or violoncello piccolo--both five-stringed instruments. A standard tenor

¹⁰Analee Camp Bacon, The Evolution of the Violoncello as a Solo Instrument (Ann Arbor, 1962), p. 133.

¹¹Ibid., p. 141.

trombone today includes an F attachment that enables the instrument to accommodate this extended lower range. The interval of a third, from C-E, is made possible by the extra tubing that is added by a rotary valve operated by the left thumb. The upper range of the first five suites is easily playable on trombone, while that of the sixth is somewhat more difficult due to its higher tessitura. The lower range of the suites, while available through the use of the F attachment, is occasionally awkward due to some large leaps in the music and the resultant quick embouchure changes required of the trombonist.

The modern trombone has a much darker sound than the eighteenth-century trombone, due mainly to a larger bore diameter and a deeper mouthpiece cup. As a result, it produces a sound that more closely resembles the 'cello's dark bass-baritone timbre.

An additional similarity between the two instruments is the legato capability: the trombonist can perform very smooth natural and artificial slurs without having to cope with valves or keys. This legato style is achieved by using a soft dah syllable with the tongue under steady breath pressure, the result being remarkably similar to the smooth slurs of the stringed instrument. Even when considering the obvious differences between the two instruments, the elements of range, timbre, and articulation all pattern the modern trombone closely with the viloncello.

While the trombone and its forerunner, the sackbut, have been in continuous use since the fifteenth century, the amount of solo literature written for the instrument is quite small, especially when compared to that of the 'cello. This is largely due to the fact that, until the latter part of the eighteenth century, the trombone was regarded as primarily an ensemble instrument in ceremonial music and as a doubling instrument of vocal parts in church music. While over the centuries there have been only a handful of trombonists with technique proficient enough to perform pieces of the caliber of the 'cello suites, the band movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the trombone's use in jazz bands from Dixieland onwards, and more extensive pedagogical procedures have greatly increased the number of players with technical facility to engage the instrument in performance of 'cello literature. It is only reasonable, then, that the trombone community would regard the Bach suites as viable transcription material.

Trombone Editions of the Suites

One of the earliest trombone teachers to utilize the 'cello suites for study and performance was Emory Remington, a master pedagogue at the Eastman School of Music from 1931-1971. The teachings of Remington influenced one of his students, Robert Marstellar, to publish an edition of the suites for trombone in 1963, although it is possible that he was using the material in teaching and performance as early

as 1940. Marstellar includes all notes below E as optional and transposes them up an octave to facilitate performance on a tenor trombone without an F attachment. Marstellar adds on each page his own dynamics, phrasing, and articulation markings, with the advice that "these nuances become a highly personal thing, subject only to the generally accepted rules of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."¹² He usually treats multiple stops as ascending grace notes, but occasionally "composes" his own altered melodic lines or simply ignores the multiple stops altogether. Also, his edition often opts for sustaining only one of the notes, a device which is more of linear convenience than musical importance. The altered lines in this edition sometimes create significant changes from the original music, although the optional lower notes are always indicated with smaller noteheads.

Another trombone edition, by Keith Brown, is predominantly in legato style and contains fewer editorial markings than the Marstellar edition. Most multiple stops are treated in the common manner of ascending grace notes or are ignored altogether.

A third trombone edition, published by Alphonse Leduc in Paris, is edited and arranged by André Lafosse of the Paris

¹²Robert Marstellar, Suites 1, 2, and 3 for Violoncello Alone by J. S. Bach transcribed for Trombone (San Antonio, 1963), p. i.

Conservatory. In this edition, Lafosse uses only selected movements of the first four suites and transposes them up a fourth or a fifth in order to accommodate the tenor trombone register without an F attachment.

The trombonist, under no obligation to use a trombone edition when performing the suites, may choose to read from a 'cello edition in performance. This practice facilitates a more accurate performance by the skilled player since all multiple stops and ornaments would be at his disposal. Various 'cello editions are available including: the George Pratt edition which is a typeset version of the original Anna Magdalena manuscript, the International edition edited by Hugo Becker (used by the author), and the Schrimmer edition.

Performance Problems

A performance of the 'cello suites on trombone can contain many potential hazards and problems, including those of breathing-phrasing, performance of multiple stops, range, articulation, ornamentation, proper tempi, and other relevant stylistic aspects.

Breathing is a consistent problem throughout each of the suites, especially in each of the preludes. Since they were intended for performance on 'cello, the phrase structure is often quite extended, with no clear or convenient place for the player to pause for a breath. Because the performer is limited by his lung capacity, the problem lies in finding a logical place to break the musical line while maintaining

the proper phrase structure. There are quite a few possible solutions to the problem, but even the most skillful performer cannot hide his breaths from the discriminating listener. Every time a trombonist takes a large breath, he must phrase both aurally and musically, thus the search for and the marking of optimum breathing places in every movement becomes an important task in preparing the suites for performance.

Another consideration is the variety of breathing techniques that are possible. At major phrase endings, the performer must inhale as large a volume of air as possible. This kind of breath occurs infrequently, however, due to the extremely long phrases in the music. If a phrase length is beyond the breath capacity of the performer, he must resort to taking a series of smaller "catch" breaths, thus enabling him to complete the line. These can be taken quickly through the corners of the mouth or the nose so as not to disturb the rhythm of the line. Breathing in this manner can create some problems such as the resultant noise of the breath and possible endurance problems caused by not removing the mouthpiece from the lips, even for so short a time. Nevertheless, as a quick means of breathing that will not disrupt the rhythmic continuity, the "catch" breath technique is essential to performance of the suites. Conversely, having too much air may cause the player problems with hyperventilation--an

aspect which should be taken into account during long series of catch breaths.

The need for a breath sometimes necessitates a "technical rubato," or the altering of the flow of the musical line to facilitate breathing. When used effectively, this sort of tempo alteration becomes an expressive device which, to some degree, may serve to conceal the performer's breathing. This strategy is particularly useful in the preludes since their character often resembles that of fantasies. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate "catch" breathing and "technical rubato" with the opening measures to the Prelude of Suite No. 2.

PRAELUDIUM. (♩ = 72 - 69.) (Molto moderato) (C.B.)

Fig. 1--Suite No. 2: Prelude, measures 1-9

PRAELUDIUM. (♩ = 72 - 69.) (Molto moderato)

Fig. 2--Suite No. 2: Prelude, measures 1-6

It is clear that the listener may hear each breath and possibly be distracted by them. Thus it becomes the task of the skilled performer to draw the listener's attention away from the breathing and direct it towards the flow of the music with the aforementioned techniques.

Another obvious problem in the transition from string to slide is that of multiple stops. Bach utilizes multiple stops in various movements of the suites in three general ways: (1) to establish the effect of two lines moving together, (2) to create the allusion of pedal point, and (3) as a device to outline the implied harmony. The performance of these multiple or double stops then needs to reflect their intent, and this factor presents yet another possible problem for the trombonist that requires some solutions within the technical limitations of the instrument.

Possible solutions to the problem are either playing quickly from the bottom to the top of the chord as a series of grace notes, and/or playing the main chord tone and relying on the listener to mentally fill in the other harmonically implied voices. The more experimental performer may choose to use trombone double stops or multiphonics in which the lower note is softly played while the upper note is sung. The change in tone quality when utilizing this technique, however, makes it questionable at best. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the ascending grace note style and the linear approach.

SARABANDE (♩ = 88) (Largo)

Fig. 3--Suite No. 2: Sarabande, measures 1-15

SARABANDE (♩ = 88)

legato

Fig. 4--Suite No. 2: Sarabande, measures 1-15

Naturally, these techniques cannot duplicate the modern 'cello's capacity for playing multiple stops in a chordal style. The ascending grace notes, however, imitate the performance style from the Baroque era of rolling the chord from the bottom. In measuring the importance of these devices in the overall compositional structure, though, it is evident that the linearity of the music is of primary importance, whereas the chordal structure is secondary. Any limitations the trombone has in performing the multiple stops,

then, have little detrimental effect on the basic compositional structure of the music. Although from a purely stylistic point of view this point is open to criticism when considering the viability of transcribing the 'cello suites for wind instruments, the only other answer from the trombonist's viewpoint is to simply not play the suites.

In the area of articulation, the trombone is one of the most versatile of all wind instruments because of its capacity for natural slurs, legato tonguing, tenuto tonguing, and staccato tonguing. This is significant, since articulation in the suites stands as a major musical element providing variety and contrast which would otherwise be provided only by dynamic and timbral elements. Every edition of the suites presents a different interpretation of articulation, mainly because the irregularity of markings in the earliest manuscript (Anna Magdalena Bach) provides at best only basic slurs which can be used as a general guide. Articulation, then, is the key to much of the phrasing, especially in the faster movements.

The trombonist's choice of articulation can be derived from either of two schools of thought. First, he can emulate the basic articulation style and resultant sound of the 'cello by using the legato tongue and all its variations. For instance, separated notes in the *detache* style on 'cello can be imitated on the trombone by separation of notes with a soft *dah* tongue and slightly broken airstream. The legato

tongue can also simulate the 'cello's capacity for playing extremely smooth slurred passages. The second way to approach articulation would be from a purely trombonistic point of view. That is, to tongue or slur as the music and style dictate, though not necessarily resulting in the essentially smooth manner of the 'cello. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate these two approaches to articulation.

ALLEMANDE (♩ = 72-76)

Fig. 5--Suite No. 2: Allemande, measures 1-6

ALLEMANDE
Moderato, meno mosso

Fig. 6--Suite No. 2: Allemande, measures 1-6

Ornamentation in the suites consists primarily of trills and mordents that occur frequently. True trills are not possible in many of the instances in the suites on trombone

because they lie in a register that is too low to allow lip trilling. In these cases, it is prudent to substitute a mordent or a turn for the trill, or leave out the trill entirely. The execution of the mordents and other ornaments besides lip trills involves the use of a rapid legato tongue. Lip trills are performed by a quick embouchure change from the written note to the next upper partial, often involving the interval of a third instead of the intended second. This factor often causes the trombonist to substitute the mordent for the trill.

The accurate performance of Baroque music necessitates proper tempi, especially in the case of the traditional dance movements of the suites. While the tempi of most movements are fairly traditional and clearcut, those of the preludes are not. 'Cellists themselves do not seem to agree on the tempi of the preludes, as is evidenced by the following quote from Joseph Salmon, a renowned 'cello teacher in Paris in the early 1900s:

This morning Hugo Becker visited me. I asked him as a favour to play for me the Prelude of the Third Bach Suite which is in C major. He consented and played it very spiccato, very clearly and cleanly, so rapidly that the tempo was that taken by violinists when they play the Moto perpetuo by Paganini. In the afternoon it just happened that young Pablo Casals also visited me and I asked him to play the same Bach prelude that Mr. Becker had played in the morning. He played it in the Casals style of deeply felt interpretation so deliberately in tempo that it was actually Andante con moto.¹³

¹³Paul M. Gruppe, "The Six 'Cello Suites of Johann Sebastian Bach," American String Teacher, 22 (1972), 15.

Another performance problem of the suites for the tenor trombonist is that of low range, even for players with an F attachment. Problems of playing in the extreme lower range on trombone are presented in the suites through wide leaps to low notes and an occasional low passage which might require a slight embouchure change. With the exception of pedal tones, tenor trombonists are usually capable of playing down to E but no further. For the trombonist without an F attachment, Marstellar has altered the suites through melodic inversion so that the music is accommodated within the normal low range of the instrument. In doing so, he changes the sound and flow of the music. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate these editorial changes by Marstellar in the Courante from Suite No. 1 and the Gigue from Suite No. 2.

COURANTE

Allegro non troppo

f energico *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

p *mp* *cresc.*

f *mf* *p subito* *mf*

Fig. 7--Suite No. 1: Courante, measures 1-9

Fig. 8--Suite No. 2: Gigue, measures 60-76

The prelude of the second suite ends with a series of five, three-note chords in a cadential pattern of V-I, I_4^6 -V, I. Stylistically, this passage is open to a variety of interpretations. According to some scholars, the chords can be viewed as notational shorthand that was used at cadence points in Baroque music. Thus, in actual performance, what is played during those measures merely reflects the progression with whatever rhythm and note pattern the performer chooses. It is clear that such interpretation provides many possible alternate versions of the cadential pattern. The other solution would be to play only the three-note chords, as written, to conclude the prelude. On trombone, this version would consist of ascending broken chords. Three versions of this cadential pattern are illustrated below

including: Figure 9, ascending broken chords; Figure 10, a variation on the chords reflecting the pattern that occurs in the previous two measures; and Figure 11, the original three-note chords played in a sixteenth note broken chord pattern simulating crossing strings on the 'cello.



Fig. 9--Suite No. 2: Prelude, measures 58-63

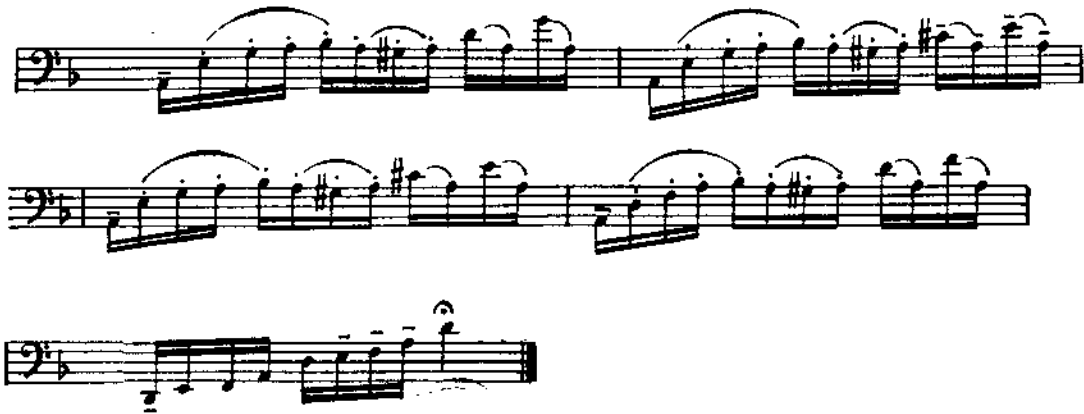


Fig. 10--Suite No. 2: Prelude, measures 59-63



Fig. 11--Suite No. 2: Prelude, measures 58-63

In conclusion, the 'cello suites of J. S. Bach represent the culmination of several hundred years of dance music tradition. They constitute one of the remarkable works in the literature of any solo instrument. In spite of the various problems inherent in trombone performance of the suites, these pieces are clearly adaptable to the trombone for study and performance. They can be performed effectively by a skillful trombonist and/or provide valuable training in the teaching studio. They are timeless in their suitability for performance and represent an infinitely complex musical challenge for any musician wishing a lifetime of musical learning.

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