

# Johann Sebastian Bach



## The Six Partitas

Judith Lambden (piano)

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685 – 1750)

### DISC 1:

#### Partita no. 2 in C minor, BWV 826

1	<i>Sinfonia</i>	[5.18]
2	<i>Allemande</i>	[5.12]
3	<i>Courente</i>	[3.00]
4	<i>Sarabande</i>	[4.44]
5	<i>Rondeaux</i>	[1.39]
6	<i>Capriccio</i>	[3.00]

#### Partita no. 1 in B flat major, BWV 825

7	<i>Praeludium</i>	[2.22]
8	<i>Allemande</i>	[1.53]
9	<i>Corrente</i>	[3.39]
10	<i>Sarabande</i>	[4.30]
11	<i>Menuet I</i>	[1.45]
12	<i>Menuet II</i>	[1.56]
13	<i>Giga</i>	[2.30]

#### Partita no. 6 in E minor, BWV 830

14	<i>Toccata</i>	[9.05]
15	<i>Allemande</i>	[4.15]
16	<i>Corrente</i>	[6.01]
17	<i>Air</i>	[1.52]
18	<i>Sarabande</i>	[7.20]
19	<i>Gavotta</i>	[2.22]
20	<i>Gigue</i>	[6.25]

**Total playing time** [79.48]

**DISC 2:****Partita no. 5 in G major, BWV 829**

1	<i>Praeambulum</i>	[2.36]
2	<i>Allemande</i>	[5.27]
3	<i>Corrente</i>	[1.58]
4	<i>Sarabande</i>	[5.31]
5	<i>Tempo di minuetto</i>	[1.29]
6	<i>Passepied</i>	[2.25]
7	<i>Gigue</i>	[3.31]

**Partita no. 3 in A minor, BWV 827**

8	<i>Fantasia</i>	[2.23]
9	<i>Allemande</i>	[4.09]
10	<i>Corrente</i>	[3.32]
11	<i>Sarabande</i>	[3.21]
12	<i>Burlesca</i>	[1.53]
13	<i>Scherzo</i>	[1.15]
14	<i>Gigue</i>	[3.48]

**Partita no. 4 in D major, BWV 828**

15	<i>Overture</i>	[5.57]
16	<i>Allemande</i>	[11.50]
17	<i>Courante</i>	[4.48]
18	<i>Aria</i>	[2.30]
19	<i>Sarabande</i>	[4.29]
20	<i>Menuet</i>	[1.46]
21	<i>Gigue</i>	[4.12]

**Total playing time** [79.52]

## BACH AND THE PARTITAS

When Bach came to Leipzig from Cöthen, he was already aged 38, and had written numerous compositions, but amazingly, only one work (a cantata in 1708) had ever been published. Bach now decided it was time to publish by himself some of his works, and brought out the *Partitas* as his Opus 1. For this self-publishing project he could take advantage of the flourishing engraving and printing resources available then in Leipzig.

Bach published the first Partita in 1726 and each year brought out another, until 1731, when he published the complete set. He had great success with them - distribution was wide and they were even sold from Bach's own house! At Cöthen he had had to write a new Cantata for each of the Sunday church services, but he also had time to compose the six French Suites and the English Suites. Bach had written the *Six Brandenburg Concertos* and the first volume of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* as well.

In his new post as Cantor of St. Thomas', Director of Music of three other churches and of the University of Leipzig, Bach had a very busy life. He also had to audition and rehearse choirs and instrumental groups and was in charge of choir boys of St. Thomas' school. In earlier years Bach had written simple dances and little Preludes, Minuets, Gavottes, and Chorales for his children, especially for his son Wilhelm Friedmann Bach, then aged about nine. In addition to this, for his young second wife, Anna Magdalena, who was keen to learn Clavier playing from Bach, he wrote the Anna Magdalena Notebook of 1725. This already included Partitas Nos. 1 and 6.

The French Suites were slighter than the Partitas, each beginning with an *Allemande*, then continuing through six or seven dance movements. The English Suites each began with a grand *Prelude* then the usual seven or so dances. In the Partitas, however, which are more virtuosic and complex, Bach inventively made each of their first movements quite different:-

No. 1: Praeludium

No. 2: Sinfonia (A great tripartite piece with a dramatic *Grave Adagio*, a lyrical *Andante* and a fugal *Allegro*.)

No. 3: Fantasia (though this is rather like a two-part Invention)

No. 4: Overture, with majestic dotted rhythms in the introduction, followed by a lengthy *Allegro*.

No. 5: A brilliant Praeambulum with chordal cadence points.

No. 6: Toccata – A grand opening, repeated at the end with a reflective fugue in the middle.

After these varied openings, the Partitas continue with the usual Baroque Suite movements:-

*Allemande* – a serious contemplative dialogue in quadruple time.

*Courante* or *Corrente* – Generally a shorter fast six/four time dance in the French or Italian style.

*Sarabande* – is the slow movement, in triple time, with much ornamentation, to be played very expressively.

*Gigue/Giga* – in rollicking six/eight time fast, with playful spirit. In some Partitas this becomes complex double fugue. Partita no.2, however, varies from the rule, ending in a *Capriccio*. Notably, the use of French and Italian in the movement titles is not consistent.

Between the *Sarabande* and the *Gigue* there are usually one or two short tuneful dances. These take the form of a pair of *Minuets* in No.1, *Rondos* in no. 2, a *Burlesca* and *Scherzo* in No. 3, a single *Minuet* in no. 4, a *Minuet* and *Passepied* in No. 5 and a *Gavotte* in No. 6. In addition, Partitas 4 and 6 have a *Air (Aria)* played as the fourth movement, prior to the *Sarabande*.

Regarding the key system (B flat, C minor, A minor, D, G and E minor, there is a pattern. Each successive key goes outward in a wider interval ascending and descending. (Had Bach written a seventh Partita, it would have been in F).

Bach wrote in preface to the Partitas - “As refreshment for the spirits of lovers of music.” They are certainly amongst his greatest works.

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## **JUDITH LAMBDEN**

Judith was born in Crestwick, 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 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 'Il Sole Barocco' there have been many tours and recitals including dates 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 and as well as this CD is now extremely busy recording most of J.S. Bach's keyboard works and other repertoire.

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