

The Big Bach Lutebook

Lute versions created by Clive Titmuss

Volume I:

BWV 995, 996, 997, 998, 999

Volume II:

Six Cello Suites BWV 1007--12

Volume III

Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas

BWV 1000/1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006/1006a

Updated November, 17 2009

The Big Bach Lutebook

Music by Johann Sebastian Bach

Volume I:

Suite pour la Luth par J. S. Bach, BWV 995, in the original key of G minor
Praeludio con la Suite auf's Lautenwerk, BWV 996, in E minor, transposed to F minor
[Partita in C minor], BWV 997, transposed to A minor
Praeludium, [Fuge, Allegro], BWV 998, in E flat
Praeludium pour la lute, BWV 999, in C minor

Volume II:

Six Suites for Cello, original title:

6 / Suites a / Violoncello Solo/ senza / Basso / composeés / par / Sr. J. S. Bach,
Maitre de Chappelle

BWV 1007, G major, transposed to E flat
BWV 1008, in D minor, arranged for theorbo in A in the original key
BWV 1009, in C major, arranged for theorbo in A in the original key
BWV 1010, in E flat, transposed to B flat
BWV 1011, in C minor, transposed to A minor,
(a different arrangement from BWV 995 above)
BWV 1012 in D major tuning (upper six courses: f#, d', a, f#, d A)

Volume III:

Sonatas and Partitas for *Violino senza basso*:

Sonata I in G minor BWV 1001, Partita I in B minor BWV 1002,
Sonata II in A minor BWV 1003, Partita II in D minor BWV 1004
Sonata III in C major BWV 1005
all complete in the original keys,

Partita III in E major BWV 1006a, (Bach's own arrangement of BWV 1006,
transposed to F)

BWV 995/1011, 996, 998, 1000/1002, 1006a and 1012 have been prefaced with a foreword by the editor

Lute tablature by Clive Titmuss, updated November 17, 2009

The Big Bach Lutebook

Preface by the editor:

The music of Johann Sebastian Bach is unique in western cultural history. No other composer has demonstrated Bach's personal combination of sheer effort, mastery of numerous forms and media, his lyrical and narrative gifts, and his unchallenged understanding of musical architecture. It was this combination that first attracted me, while still a student of the guitar, to his music, and it was the promise of being able to play it in something resembling its original form that induced me to play the lute. I acquired a lute before beginning formal post-secondary music education, and soon after my first baroque lute, a 14-course lute by Sandro Zanetti in the late 17th century tradition with two pegboxes. Almost immediately I started transcribing the music of Bach into lute tablature after the shocked discovery that aside from a few pieces, no tablatures existed.

My first efforts with the Prelude, Fugue and Allegro BWV 998 led to more shocked discoveries--more and more of the music appeared to be written in a form not playable on the lute. The contemporary tablatures had critical problems. After working through the idea, I came to the point where it became clear that not only had Bach, as I then thought, misunderstood the lute, but he hadn't, according to my understanding, written anything for it. Everything appeared to have insuperable difficulties. Even if one could make the notes fit, by transposition, by judicious editing, one could only count success with actual performance of the music. That was the test. You could make your lute version, but could you actually play it convincingly. In no other medium in which Bach is played do musicians have to contend with this conundrum. Can it be imagined that a violinist, cellist, or keyboard player would have to spend hours fretting over his copy, then practising for literally years just to play even a relatively simple piece. They take up the piece and play.

After graduating from my studies, I began another line of attack. Could the lute be the key? I ordered a beautiful big Widhalm/Tieffenbrucker 13-course lute by Robert Lundberg, which I still play with great joy. Later I began making lutes, trying this and that, single strings, theorbo tunings, smaller, bigger, various spacings, copies of originals, unheard of things, to see whether the situation might be ameliorated by ingenuity of lutherie. And to some extent, it has. I did find out that the choice of lute matters greatly. And fortunately I have created a wall of lutes from which to choose.

Now more than thirty-eight years later, hundreds of concerts, some devoted entirely to the music of Bach played on the lute, I have added more and more pieces to the group of tablatures which I began as a student. Many of them have seen great changes since their initial versions. Sometimes I have thrown the whole thing out, transposed to a new key (BWV 996 in D minor, then F minor; BWV 998 in D, 1006a in D; BWV 997 in C minor, then A minor; BWV 995 in G minor, then A minor) only to return to the beginning.

With the advent of computer tablature typesetting and the web I have made individual pieces available for some time, since 1996. Now I am making my versions of the usual suspects and my versions of the cello suites (which make very fine lute music, as Bach himself realized) and some violin pieces available in a single printable and viewable edition. They are newly corrected, revised and compactly laid out to minimize use of paper or screen and with minimal page turns, together with revised and extended forewords for some of the pivotal pieces (BWV 996, the piece least likely to be for the lute, and BWV 995, the most likely). I hope you will enjoy and benefit from my work.

Before I finish, here's a scenario imagined by one of my teachers, Eugen Dombois, from a comment made by Agricola (which I have liberally embellished in the finest Baroque tradition). It may serve better than the most exacting musicology to put the Bach and the lute into some sort of context:

One day a distinguished musician came to visit the Bach household in Leipzig. It was none other than the famous lutenist, Sylvius Leopold Weiss, taking time from his posting in Dresden to visit friends. A few letters had passed between them, and Bach, being a sociable and engaging host, asked Weiss whether he would spend a few hours with the Cantor.

Bach was something of a practical joker. He liked the broad humour of the German people, he enjoyed puns, and he often wrote funny things into his music. The quodlibet at the end of the Goldbergs is a good example: "Cabbages and Turnips Have Driven Me Away" combined with

"You've Been Gone So Long". You can almost hear the guffaws. He decided to play a little joke on Weiss. Meeting him at the door, he said:

"Well to tell the truth I've been trying to play the lute a little lately. I used to fool around on it when I was a 'Bub', but the instrument always confounded me--all those strings! I got a much better instrument from my dear friend Hofmann in the Lautenkrankenstrasse, and I've been completely taken with it. I've been working night and day on one of my old suites to play for you, to see if you have any suggestions. But I'm still a bit shy with it, an old man trying to do something new, you know, it's a bit silly. So if you don't mind I'm going to go into my Schreibzimmer, just sit here and listen."

With that he repaired to his composition room and went behind an old curtain that he had dividing the room to keep his family out. When Bach was behind the curtain, he was incommunicado. That was the rule. After a bit of tuning and few odd notes and chords the most fantastic uninterrupted veil of flawless lute-playing erupted. Weiss instantly recognized the signature tune of every student violinist in Saxony--the Prelude of the E major violin Partita. It was incredible, without error, perfectly in tune, not even a mis-fretted "n" (the twelfth fret of the lute). That piece quickly concluded, Bach began playing something entirely new.

"Here's something I've just been working on" he said, peering out from behind the curtain, and from his room came the now utterly familiar strains of the beautiful opening bars of Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E flat.

Weiss expected him to stop, but the flow never ceased. Ten minutes later, as the last notes died away, Weiss was plainly aghast. After all, Weiss had spent a lifetime playing the lute, struggling with its idiosyncrasies, the tuning, strings, the pegs, the frets, the sheer uncertainty and unpredictability, a spider's web of deceit, a device calculated to drive musicians mad—here, the great genius of music, old Bach himself--had managed to master the instrument after only a few months of effort. How was it possible? Weiss was dumbfounded. Finally the portly master drew aside the curtain.

"How do you like my new toy", said Bach and motioned to a three-manual lute-harpsichord built by his uncle.

Weiss, true to his name, turned the colour of a sheet, and let out a sigh: He had been fooled.

"Du lieber Gott", he exclaimed, "you nearly gave me a heart attack".

After that they had a little belt of schnapps (well, maybe a couple of them) and started talking about the ongoing rivalry between the soccer teams of the Dresden Frauen-Kirche and the Leipzig's St. Thomas Schule.

Weiss took a copy of Bach's new piece home to see whether he might be able to make something of it. Just to confound his student Lobkowitz, who was as dense as a plank of maple, Weiss scrawled "Praeludio per il Liuto" at the top of the page.

"This will keep him awake for a year", he chuckled to himself, exhaling a cloud of pfeffermint vapour. "D-flat in the bass...hah!"

He wandered down the path into the town, tipsily singing a ditty from his student days:

"Ich bin ein diplomierte Lautenisten,
Ich trage immer neunzehn lautenkästen..."

Later, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach wrote to a friend: "Something very special in the way of music was heard on that occasion!"

Suite pour la Luth par J. S. Bach (BWV995), Suite a Violoncello Solo senza Basso [V] in C minor (BWV1011)

Foreword:

If there is a case for Bach as a composer for the lute, it rests principally on his own arrangement (BWV 995) of the fifth cello suite (BWV 1011). The autograph arrangement of this cello suite with its specific reference to the lute in the title is the only authorial evidence that he was at all interested in setting himself the challenging task of writing idiomatically for the instrument. Careful observance of way he transposed and reworked earlier material with the lute in mind gives us a clear picture of Bach's understanding of the lute's capacity for a mix of contrapuntal and free-voiced textures, its dynamic capacities and its suitability to typical late 17th century dance forms and rhythms. His interest in the exploitation of its sonority stems from his vantage point as a composer of wide experience with an unsurpassed ear and social and musical contact with professional players.

The Bach household owned a lute, listed in his *Nachlass* (the inventory of his possessions is reproduced in English in The Bach Reader, 1945, revised edition 1966, Mendel and David, editors). He knew a number of professional lutenists: Rudolf Straube, Johann Ludwig Krebs; both his students, Sylvius Leopold Weiss, and M. Schouster (to whom BWV 995 is dedicated). Jurist and lute-player Johann Christian Weyrauch, the identified intabulator of *Fuga* BWV 1000 and movements of the [*Partita in C minor*] BWV 997, was a close family friend. He may also have known with Adam Falckenhagen, who lived in Leipzig and is credited (by P. Kiraly, T. Crawford, primarily on orthographic evidence) with the intabulation of Bach's arrangement of BWV 1011.

Nevertheless, our picture of Bach as a composer of lute music is clouded by the questionable attribution of other of Bach's works which were probably not intended for the lute, but have historically been associated with it. The *Suite in E minor* BWV 996, the *C minor Partita* BWV 997, *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro* BWV 998, the *Little Prelude* BWV 999, and the *Partita in E major* BWV 1006a, have all been claimed with anachronistic sensibility as legitimate repertoire for the lute, despite prescriptive additions to the sources—"auf's Lautenwerk" for BWV996 and "por la luth. ò Cèmbal" for BWV 998—and despite unidiomatic keys, technical impossibilities and obvious keyboard stylistic traits.

It is the *Suite pour la Luth* in which Bach clearly applies himself practically to the question of what is the lute capable in regard to texture, the use of its diatonic bass courses, and its ability to ornament and fill out a basic texture as established in the cello suite. Unlike the works above, in this piece our view is not clouded by a nagging suspicion that we are looking at thin-textured keyboard music with a tenuous historical connection to the lute.

With these doubts in mind we must ask whether Bach himself was technically equipped to make a successful lute version of his own earlier work. Before dealing with this

question an examination and comparison of the two principal sources is rewarding. In making his transcription, Bach set himself the task of filling a spare texture, transposing it to a key more suitable to the tessitura and compass of the lute, adapting string music *brisé* textures to something more in line with contemporary lute practice, adding imitative material in the lower voices while long notes are held, and creating a sense of drama, continuity, and gestures consistent with the techniques favoured by lute composers in his circle.

It should also be noted that in the 1740's, when Bach made his arrangement, he chose a piece which he is likely to have written around 1720 with the rest of the suites for solo cello. This would have been considered an atavistic work, hearkening back to the 17th century. It is entirely French; there is little evidence of Italian influence. There are many gestures typical of the young Bach, similarities with BWV 996 and other early works, and a distinct preference for the aphoristic *basso continuo* lute style of Reusner or Bittner, rather than the Italianate violinistic idiom of Weiss or Falckenhagen. We may wonder at his choice of pieces for revival and arrangement. Was it a favourite work, like BWV 1006, BWV 1000 (with a violin, organ and lute version), or a choice made by the dedicatee? By comparison, pieces written in the 1740's with a lute-influenced voice, such as BWV 997 and 998, show many cognate passages with the *empfindsam* works found in *Das Wohltemprirte Clavier* of 1744 or the published works of the *Clavier-Übung I*, the *Six Partitas* BWV 825-30, (1726-31) for harpsichord.

For example, in the long Prelude in French *Ouverture* style, Bach elected to compress some rhythms, subdividing them further, perhaps in keeping with the quicker response and rapid speech of a plucked instrument. He also employed a time-filling device in the opening measures not often used by contemporary lutenists but common on the keyboard, sounding a bass note, then its lower octave on the second beat. In the *Allemande*, he compressed sixteenth notes tied to longer notes. The two *Gavottes* are altered mainly in their texture, with chord tones added and a completion of the bass line. In the *Gigue*, Bach filled the long note-values native to the cello by adding imitative activity in the lower voice. Each of these additions makes a basic change to the rhetorical nature of the piece, giving us a window into performance practice of the period, and into his thinking as it relates to the lute.

Bach's use of rests is notable. Without a large inventory of lute tablature transcriptions into pitch notation from the 18th century, it's difficult to say how these would have been handled by a musician familiar with the keyboard-to-lute conversion. Modern transcribers usually notate the length of bass notes in keeping with metre, but Bach has populated the bass with relatively short-duration tones followed by rests, a practice also seen in *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro* BWV 998.

A casual perusal of the work of Weiss or Falckenhagen to find comparable passages will confirm that Bach's choices were very personal solutions to the problem he set himself, and they frequently rest on his experience as a composer of keyboard music. Despite having titled the work "*pour la Luth*", Bach appears to have made a transcription better suited to the lute-harpsichord, entirely in keeping with his other works in that genre.

In making a tablature version of Bach's arrangement, I was struck by the frequent feeling of the work simply being too large for the instrument. There are often more chord tones in rapid two-voiced passages than a contemporary lutenist would play, for example. The bass line is often busier than we would expect from his contemporaries, particularly in the Prelude's *Presto* and the *Courante*. Some movements succeed more than others: the *Courante* and *Sarabande* seem not quite to equal their models, while the *Allemande*, *Gavottes* and *Gigue* are in many ways more rhythmically interesting and lively.

In order to play the work in Bach's version, I made a fourteen-course German-style theorbo and played the work for many years in its original key of G minor, despite the fact that such an instrument is a re-construction of something not found among the instruments of the period as far as we are aware. (My original transcription is here, as BWV 995 in G minor, for those who wish to make comparisons, while the A minor version is here as BWV 995/1011)

In making that transcription my work was shaped by Falckenhagen's frequent transposition of the bass into a lower octave, especially in the first three movements. But having played the work many times I became increasingly unhappy with the impression of a hippo dancing in a tutu. The lightness and rapidity of articulation that Bach's dance movements imply was not well served by Falckenhagen's anachronistic *emfindsam* sensibility. His addition of numerous ornaments struck me as impeding the forward momentum, and his adaptation of the *Gigue* and *Presto* of the *Ouverture* is clumsy. The disjunct harmonic motion of the bass in modulating passages is poorly suited to the open diapasons of the baroque lute, and Bach's original lines are often more too light-footed to be effectively rendered in the lower octave of the lute's range.

There is the question of the pitch. It was common for harpsichords and single manual instruments of the period (1740's) to have their lowest tone extending to FF or GG. The compass of several of the other works mentioned above is often no lower than C'. This is true for BWV 996, 999—later arrangements stemming from the 1740's, Bach's Leipzig period, while BWV 1006a, BWV 997 and BWV 998 include A' or A' flat as the lowest tone. So-called short-octave tuning may have been used on a smaller keyboard to achieve this. Bach's use of these low notes is much more restrained than that found in contemporary lute sources. The highest note in Bach's arrangement is c', a fourth below the highest notes used by Weiss. Increasing the range upward by adding frets to a lute's body is simple, but adding courses below is more than a simple matter of alterations to the pegbox and bridge.

Simply adding a note (GG) to the typical 13-course D minor lute is not really a viable design solution, since the fundamental pitch, string length and size of the entire instrument needs to be considered. J. C. Hofmann increased the size of the bodies of his lutes when he added two courses in the bass to his standard eleven-course lute design, already larger than the eleven-course lutes of his father Martin.

Taking this into consideration, it seemed a better idea to start with a "clean sheet of paper" approach, to transpose the work up a tone, keeping the original bass line in principle, thereby raising the highest note to d'. The alteration of pitch makes the bass line in original form more under the control of the left hand, and therefore more articulate. Some of Bach's dramatic bass line chromaticism (*Prelude*, *Allemande*, and *Sarabande*) is also more easily rendered in the original octave.

I also occasionally thinned the keyboard-style texture by taking out chord tones which seemed to hold the piece back, especially in the *Presto* and *Allemande* and *Courante*, and by reducing doubling (especially those chord tones already sounding as octave strings). The biggest change I considered making was the return to an opening closer to the cello original, altering the voicing of chords and changing the rhetorical emphasis by placing the low chord tones on the first beat. Thus the player will find that the opening has been entirely re-cast. The cello original is more generous with string-writing phrase marks, a valuable interpretive indication, while with the exception of the *Sarabande*, Bach's transcription has only a few.

My transcription has few if any slurring marks in order to highlight the original phrase marks as provided by the composer. The player may also add slurs *ad libitum*. The tablature placement of some notes is clearly chosen for slurring purposes. Note how often in this and other cello and violin solos, Bach slurs over the accented beat in order to break up the groupings. This feature may also be observed in the music of French composers such as Couperin, Mouton, De Visée and others. It is also worth noting that in the lute music of Weiss slurs often occur in descending passages rather less than ascending.

Clive Titmuss,
Kelowna, August, 2009

Suite pour la Luth par J. S. Bach: Prelude

BWV 995

Handwritten musical score for Suite for Lute by J.S. Bach, Prelude, BWV 995. The score is written for a lute and consists of 87 measures. It features a single melodic line with various ornaments, slurs, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 3/8. The score is divided into systems of five measures each, with measure numbers 7, 13, 19, 23, 37, 47, 57, 67, and 77 marking the beginning of new systems. The notation includes notes, rests, and accidentals, with some notes marked with 'a' for ornaments. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the 87th measure.

97 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

107 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

117 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

127 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

137 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

147 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

157 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

167 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

177 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

187 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

197 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

207 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

217 Musical notation system with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a treble clef and a key signature with one flat.

Allemande

BWV 995

Handwritten musical score for Allemande in G major, BWV 995 by Johann Sebastian Bach. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. It features a single melodic line with various ornaments and fingerings. The piece is in 3/4 time and consists of 36 measures. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'f' and 'a'. The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 4, 7, 10, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 32, and 36 indicated. The final measure (36) ends with a double bar line and a fermata.

Gavotte I

BWV 995

Musical score for Gavotte I, BWV 995. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of 16 measures. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. The notes are: 1. G4, 2. A4, 3. B4, 4. A4, 5. G4, 6. F#4, 7. E4, 8. D4, 9. C4, 10. B3, 11. A3, 12. G3, 13. F#3, 14. E3, 15. D3, 16. C3. The score includes various ornaments and fingerings.

Gavotte II en Rondeau

BWV 995

Musical score for Gavotte II en Rondeau, BWV 995. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of 16 measures. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. The notes are: 1. G4, 2. A4, 3. B4, 4. A4, 5. G4, 6. F#4, 7. E4, 8. D4, 9. C4, 10. B3, 11. A3, 12. G3, 13. F#3, 14. E3, 15. D3, 16. C3. The score includes various ornaments and fingerings.

Gigue

BWV 995

The image displays a handwritten musical score for the Gigue BWV 995. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. It begins with a forte (f) dynamic marking. The notation includes a variety of rhythmic values, primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Above the notes, there are numerous handwritten ornaments, including mordents and grace notes, which are characteristic of Baroque lute music. The piece concludes with a repeat sign and a final cadence. The score is annotated with various performance instructions such as slurs, accents, and specific fingering numbers (e.g., 5, 6, 7).

lute version by Clive Titmuss © 2004

Praeludio con la suite da Gio. Bast. Bach auf's Lautenwerk (BWV 996)

Foreword:

The *Lautenwerk* suite is one of the earliest surviving pieces from the composer in keyboard notation, supposed to have been composed before 1712. Its style is in keeping with other keyboard works by Bach written in this period, including the *Toccatas* BWV 910-916 and the *Capriccio on the Departure of His Beloved Brother* BWV 992. An examination of those works will reveal many similarities to BWV 996. Bach exhibited great stylistic growth in his lute-influenced keyboard style, culminating in BWV 997 and 998 from the mid-1740's.

There is little reason to suppose that BWV 996 was written with the lute in mind. The inscription is supposed to have been added by Johann Gottfried Walther, who prepared many keyboard sources of Bach's works. The work gradually assumed its present spurious identity as "Lute Suite No. 1" supported in print by the advocacy of influential German scholars Wilhelm Tappert, Albert Schweitzer, Hans Neeman and F.G. Giesbert, who for more than a generation promulgated the concept of a Bach who played and composed for the lute. BWV 996 was first published Leipzig in 1866.

In his article *Was Johann Sebastian Bach Lautenspieler?* (1964), Hans Radke attempted to reverse the characterization of Bach as the composer of four lute suites whose organization is comparable to the suites for violin, cello or harpsichord. But the image--as a composer conversant with the lute's idiom, and its technical and musical potential as a vehicle of large-scale suite composition--has remained.

Beginning in the 1950's Walter Gerwig, Michel Podolski and later Eugen Mueller-Dombois and Michael Schaeffer began playing Bach on the lute, and in the 1980's and 90's "complete lute music" recordings on the lute began to appear, beginning with Narcisco Yepes. Subsequently, other lutenists have weighed in on the matter with recorded versions, but so far nobody has really managed to dispel the confusion about Bach and the lute.

A recently-written reference work, the dictionary-style *Oxford Composer Companion guide to J. S. Bach*, edited by Malcolm Boyd, follows the precedent of the Bach-Gesellschaft and Neue Bach Ausgabe, listing the suite, along with BWV 995, 997, 998, 999, 1000 and 1006a, as being among Bach's "lute" works. A commendably even-handed assessment of the personalities, arguments and evidence about Bach's lute-related repertoire in this volume by T. Crawford throws light on the traditional classification.

Several makers now offer reconstructions of the *Lautenwerk* and recordings of Bach's music (including BWV 996, 997, 998 and 999) have appeared on what is probably the intended instrument. The *Lautenwerk* is a keyboard instrument with which Bach is closely associated. Bach certainly owned one, (listed in his possessions after his death) and his uncle Johann Nikolaus made them. Its general specifications are well documented by authoritative sources (Jacob Adlung in *Musica Mechanica Organoedi*, 1768, Johann Christoph Fleischer, 1718), though 18th century instrument has survived.

Bach also appears to me to have observed the strictures and exploited the advantages in his other writing for the instrument, BWV 997, 998, possibly also 999 and 1006a. In these pieces one hears single-note bass lines very far separated from the alto and soprano voices which they accompany, more freedom in form (da Capo Fugues for example), inherent or implied block dynamic changes, a loosening of the strict counterpoint familiar to us from Bach's other keyboard works, liberal use of rests in the left hand, and occasionally striking dramatic and rhetorical devices usually found only in his later music.

If we adopt the view that the lute had only marginal influence on Bach's musical thinking in this suite (and in several others), it frees us from the view that we don't understand the lute or its music adequately, widely echoed or implicit in practical modern guitar editions of the piece. This was probably the case when the work was included in the first Bach complete publication Bach Gesellschaft

(1936), or the Neue Bach Ausgabe, (V/10, 1982, T. Kohlhase ed.). The latter publication rationalized the earlier speculative grouping by titling the revised publication with a uniquely German-language compromise: *Werke für Lauteninstrumente*. Normally a keyboard instrument would not be considered to be in the lute family, whatever its tone-colour and stringing.

Since its initial appearance in the Bach Gesellschaft edition (in its E minor and A minor versions, the latter transposition intended for the harpsichord) the suite has been widely published in many guitar transcriptions, appearing first in Bruger's transcription for guitar/lute hybrid with additional basses and subsequently in guitar transcriptions by Stingl, Wensieki, Bream, Bellow, Willard, Scheit, Teuchert, Koonce, et. al. Julian Bream's foreword to BWV 996, for example, referred to "...bold figurations so characteristic of the lute". None of these publications has discredited the widespread perception that Bach wrote this piece and the other suites specifically for the lute, and in fact most of them do not question this assumption. Paradoxically the piece seems easier to play on the guitar overall, partly because of the suitable key, with a tuning dominated by fourths, partly because the guitar is well-adapted to music dominated by the left-hand, unencumbered by open bass strings.

Though there are clear passages of *luthée* style (arpeggiated presentation of a fundamentally chordal texture), particularly in the *Allemande* and *Courante*, the other movements are obviously outside contemporary lute practice in their thick texture (including three and four voice counterpoint, parallel thirds in the bass line) and uncharacteristic elaborations and ornamentation. The uncomfortable key, ill-suited to the standard D minor tuning of the baroque lute, is the greatest obstacle to playing the piece.

D. Rhodes published possibly the first modern lute tablature transcription (self-published) of BWV 996 (transposed to G minor) in 1976 in which he speculatively argues for lute origins: "...the profundity of technical skills which this excessively difficult work demands points to an extraordinary player, as we know S. L. Weiss to have been..." The tablature transcription puts sections of the *Gigue* and *Praeludio* into uncomfortably high positions on the fingerboard, in addition to transposing many bass notes into the lower octave. His adventurous solutions include a change of pitch, single stringing and a mid-stream re-tuning. But the piece in this form is difficult to perform even for experienced and technically accomplished players.

In making this arrangement, I have adopted the view that the work is an early experiment written specifically for the *Lautenwerk*, textually and stylistically within Bach's usual keyboard practice. The piece is emphatically not written to "imitate" the lute, but freely uses textures current in the keyboard traditions of the period which would have sounded convincing on an instrument intended to mimic the sonority of the lute. The piece employs a thicker texture than was the contemporary lute practice, a small compass of C' to c", standard keyboard ornament signs, a rhythmically active contrapuntal bass line, including chromaticism and figuration impossible on the lute, and a key rare among lute composers.

Without resorting to anachronisms, judicious, even radical, editing is necessary in order to make the work playable on the lute within the confines of observed contemporary practice in a manner which I see as being technically and musically feasible in performance. Where there are octave doublings of the bass in the tenor or alto, I have eliminated them since they are taken care of by the octave stringing of the lute. When the texture or disposition of notes made the piece unwieldy and unidiomatic, I have been guided by contemporary models in finding a performable solution. What results is obviously a personal answer to the problems, which lays no claim to authority by being faithful to the text.

Most importantly perhaps, I have moved the entire work to a tessitura more comfortable for the lute, transposed to F minor. In keeping with the original, I have been conservative with the use of open bass notes, transposing the bass into the lower octave only where necessary to intensify the effect of their use, and maximizing the possibility of articulation by the left hand. I have set the piece for eleven course lute, (with bracketed suggestions for 13-course realization) since the adoption of the thirteen course lute in 18th century Germany can easily be dated to 1719, well after the composition of the piece. For more details on this matter, refer to S. L. Weiss' dated pieces of the British Museum MS.

Particularly troublesome are the impossibilities of bass line of the *Gigue* and some chords in the *Passagio* and *Presto*. Even if the notes are arranged in a more playable manner, the musical effect on the lute is scrambled and frantic. In the *Passagio* I altered the mode of chord repercussion and in the *Presto* removed parallel sixths and some doubling. In the *Gigue*, I adopted a similar procedure and have reduced the bass line especially at the end to an essentially homophonic re-enforcement of the upper voices.

The tuning of the sixth course to B flat was a common scordatura for the lute in the late 17th c. The suites by Esias Reusner, found in his collections *Delitiae Testitudinis* and *Neue Lauten-Fruchte*, provided a model for the transcription, ornamentation and chord disposition. An early F minor suite by Weiss in the British Museum MS (copied into the Dresden MS) is another model, though the tuning is conventional.

There seems to be little point in trying to accurately reproduce keyboard ornamentation on the lute. Lute-style ornamentation may be added freely, including appoggiaturas or trills, slides (or *coulées*), measured or arpeggiated *separées*, mordents, turns, the note-bending known to clavichord players as *bebung* and idiomatic chord filling. The half cross found in the bass at the end of the *Presto* is used to notate a rest, not normally found in lute tablatures of the period. For stopped notes the left hand is simply lifted; for open ones, the thumb is used.

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Praeludio con la Suite auf's Lautenwerk

J.S.Bach (BWV 996)

Passagio

The Passagio section consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. It features a series of sixteenth-note runs and trills. The second staff continues with similar rhythmic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff shows a sequence of eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff contains a series of sixteenth notes with some rests. The fifth staff concludes the section with a final cadence and a fermata. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *f* and *h*.

Presto

The Presto section consists of six staves of music. It begins with a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. The first staff features a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues with similar rhythmic patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff shows a sequence of eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff contains a series of sixteenth notes with some rests. The fifth staff concludes the section with a final cadence and a fermata. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *f* and *h*.

57 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

64 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

71 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

Allemande

BWV 996

4 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

7 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

10 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

13 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

16 *f* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*

Courante

BWV 996

Handwritten musical score for Courante BWV 996. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of 21 measures, with measure numbers 3, 4, 7, 11, 15, 19, and 21 indicated. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes), rests, and ornaments (trills, mordents). Dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *a* (accanto) are used. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in the final measure.

Sarabande

BWV 996

Handwritten musical score for Sarabande, BWV 996. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are written in a cursive, handwritten style. The second staff includes a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The third staff features a fermata over a note and a second ending bracket. The fourth staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, and *ff* are present throughout the piece. Fingerings and articulation marks are also visible.

Bourée

BWV 996

Handwritten musical score for Bourée, BWV 996. The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are written in a cursive, handwritten style. The second staff includes a first ending bracket. The third staff features a second ending bracket. The fourth staff includes a fermata and a first ending bracket. The fifth staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. Dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, and *ff* are present throughout the piece. Fingerings and articulation marks are also visible.

Gigue

BWV 996

7 3 3 a
3 3 a r d d a d e d b r a
5 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
3 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
7 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
9 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
11 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
13 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
15 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
17 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e
19 3 a r d f d r a b a r d r a b e

lute version by Clive Titmuss ©2004

[Partita]: Fantasia

J. S. Bach (BWV 997)

Handwritten musical score for J.S. Bach's Partita in G major, BWV 997, Fantasia. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. It features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Ornaments are shown above notes in measures 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, and 29. The piece is in 3/4 time and consists of 32 measures. The notation includes slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'f'.

Fuga

BWV 997

The image displays a musical score for a fugue, BWV 997. It consists of ten systems of musical notation, each with a system number (7, 13, 19, 25, 32, 37, 43, 50, 54, 58) written to the left. The notation includes notes, rests, and various musical symbols such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Above the notes, there are handwritten annotations in red and black ink, including numbers (1-4) and letters (r, a, e, g, h, f) indicating fingerings and articulation. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and sixteenth-note runs. The overall style is that of a detailed performance edition or a study score.

62 66 70 73 76 80 85 90 94 99 103 107

dal segno al Fine

Sarabande

BWV 997

Handwritten musical score for Sarabande, BWV 997. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The time signature is 3/4. The piece is in G major. The score consists of 31 measures, with measure numbers 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 21, 25, 28, and 31 indicated. The notation includes various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes), rests, and ornaments. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The score is heavily annotated with handwritten markings, including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'ff'. The bass line features a complex sequence of notes and rests, often with fingerings and slurs. The treble line is more melodic, with many slurs and ornaments. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Gigue

BWV 997

Handwritten musical score for Gigue, BWV 997, in 3/4 time. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. It consists of 48 measures, divided into systems of five measures each. The notation includes various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes), rests, and dynamic markings (f, f). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The piece concludes with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.

Double

Handwritten musical score for Double, BWV 997, in 3/4 time. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. It consists of 12 measures, divided into systems of four measures each. The notation includes various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes), rests, and dynamic markings (f, f). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The piece concludes with a repeat sign.

4 *B B B B B B B B*
drada *br a br* *ara r dr a ad* *drar a a r a d r a*
a r d r a d r a *r a d b a d* *b a a* *a a*

8 *B B B B B B B B*
dr r dr a h g h k *h g h k h i f i k f* *ara e a a r d r a d* *ra r b r r a r a a r a*
a *a* *a* *a*

12 *B B B B B B B B*
ra d r d r *dar a d r* *bd ar d b r d ad br* *bd ad* *br eb b d r a* *ge fe h er er g*
a *a* *a* *a*

16 *B B B B B B B B*
r r d *h g h* *g g g h g h* *g a a d r* *r e a d* *f h f a r* *a e r a r a e a*
a *a* *a* *a*

21 *B B B B B B B B*
ra e a a a a a ad *r d ar d a a* *r e f r d r e f r f* *ad ar a a r a d*
a *a* *a* *a*

25 *B B B B B B B B*
r *a e* *a a r r a a f g* *d r b r d a r d* *r d r d r a r e* *r d a b a r a h*
a *a* *a* *a*

29 *B B B B B B B B*
g h i a d r d a f *ef h e g a b d r a* *r d a r d r a r d a r a* *f r e r d f r r d a r*
a *a* *a* *a*

33 *B B B B B B B B*
d *h g h* *g a r a r d e* *a r a r a* *e f a a e a d r a d*
a *a* *a* *a*

36 *B B B B B B B B*
rad r a d r a a r a d *rad b r b r* *d r d a d a d r d a d a* *d r d a d a ad f*
b b a d a *a* *a* *a*

40 *B B B B B B B B*
ra d r a d r a d r *dr a d a r b e r a r* *ra e a a r d b a d* *ra r b r r a r a a r a*
a *a* *a* *a*

44 *B B B B B B B B*
ra d r d r *ra b a d b* *ara r a a* *dar r a r* *re ar ad* *ae f d d a* *a a r d a r d a r a*
a *a* *a* *a*

48 *B B B B*
bd ar d r d ar d *a*
d r a r *a r d a*

lute version by Clive Titmuss © 2004

Prelude pour la luth ó. Cèmbal par J. S. Bach **[Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E flat, BWV 998]**

Foreword:

This piece occupies a special place among the works commonly thought to have been composed for the lute or a lute-imitative keyboard instrument. A product of Bach's later years, it was composed in the last decade of his life. The work's the triptych layout--including a rare example of a *da Capo* fugal movement in *cantus firmus* style--*empfindsam* features and harmonic novelty make it one of the most performed pieces in the lute's repertoire. The title inscription "*Prelude pour la Luth ó. Cèmbal par J.S. Bach*" is not in J.S. Bach's own hand, but may have been added by C.P.E. Bach, who owned the MS after his father's death. The other two movements are left untitled in the MS.

In order to play the piece on the lute without resorting to transposition or changes of tuning other than the normal alteration of open-string basses to the key of the piece, some adjustments have to be made. These include altering the tuning of the sixth course to A flat (used also by J. C. Weyrauch in his transcription of the *Fantasia, Sarabande* and *Gigue* of BWV 997 in C minor), changing the octave in which the bass is played and using notes stopped on the seventh and eighth courses. Occasionally I have reduced the texture by eliminating octave doubling if that note is heard as an open octave-string. Some of the bass notes have been transposed into a more usual or convenient octave (up or down) without marking them as such. In this way it is entirely possible to play the piece convincingly in its original key with little compromise.

I have expanded on the original use of dynamic markings in the [Allegro]. The use of dynamic markings is evidence that the work was designed either for the lute or to imitate it, but Bach did use such dynamic indications in two-manual harpsichord music. In the Italian Concerto (BWV 971) for example, dynamics markings are used to indicate manual changes from 8' + 8' to a solo stop on the other manual, in keeping with the appearance of soloistic material within the *concerto/ripieno* structure.

Since Bach's uncle Johann Nikolaus Bach was known to have made three-manual *Lautenwerke* (lute-harpsichords), it is possible that these indications are intended to clarify the registration. Bach ran out of paper at the end of the [Allegro] and completed the piece using New German organ tablature, so it seems that the piece was probably intended for Bach's own use at the *Lautenwerk*. For more information on this instrument, see Howard Ferguson's article *Bach's Lauten Werck, Music and Letters*, 48, 1967 p.p. 259-64. Refer to my foreword to BWV 996 for more on the *Lautenwerk* and Bach's writing technique for it.

Prelude pour la luth. ó Cèmbal par J.S. Bach

BWV 998

The musical score is presented in a single system with a treble clef and a 12-string lute or cembalo-specific notation. The piece is in D major and 3/8 time. The notation includes various ornaments, slurs, and fingerings. The final measure ends with a double bar line and a fermata.

[Allegro]

BWV 998

Handwritten musical score for BWV 998, featuring a single melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics. The score is written in 3/8 time and consists of 48 measures. The notation includes numerous ornaments (trills, mordents, grace notes) and dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, *forte*, and *pia[n]o*. The piece concludes with a repeat sign and a fermata.

Measures 1-5: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics.

Measures 6-10: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics.

Measures 11-15: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics, *forte* marking at measure 14.

Measures 16-21: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics, *pia[n]o* marking at measure 19.

Measures 22-26: *f* ornaments, *forte* marking at measure 22.

Measures 27-31: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics.

Measures 32-36: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics, *pia[n]o* marking at measure 35.

Measures 37-41: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics, *forte* marking at measure 38.

Measures 42-46: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics.

Measures 47-48: *f* ornaments, *mf* dynamics, *mf/piano* marking at measure 47.

Praeludium pour la lute

J. S. Bach (BWV 999)

3
5
9
13
17
21
25
29
33
37
41

No. 6 of Sechs Kleine Präludien
collected by Johann Peter Kellner
lute version by Clive Titmuss © 2009