

**JS BACH**  
ORCHESTRAL SUITES

RICHARD EGARR · DIRECTOR & HARPSICHORD  
ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC

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**AAM003**

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**JS BACH**

## ORCHESTRAL SUITES BWV1066-9

**RICHARD EGARR** · DIRECTOR & HARPSICHORD  
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## DISC ONE

## Suite No.1 in C major BWV1066

- |                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| 1. Overture         | 9'45 |
| 2. Courante         | 2'16 |
| 3. Gavotte I & II   | 2'43 |
| 4. Forlane          | 1'21 |
| 5. Menuet I & II    | 2'56 |
| 6. Bourée I & II    | 2'34 |
| 7. Passepied I & II | 2'54 |

## Suite No.2 in B minor BWV1067

- |                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 8. Overture               | 11'04 |
| 9. Rondeau                | 1'27  |
| 10. Sarabande             | 3'06  |
| 11. Bourée I & II         | 1'39  |
| 12. Polonaise<br>& Double | 2'48  |
| 13. Menuet                | 1'11  |
| 14. Badinerie             | 1'43  |

Total timing **47'33**

## DISC TWO

## Suite No.3 in D major BWV1068

- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. Overture       | 10'07 |
| 2. Air            | 4'21  |
| 3. Gavotte I & II | 3'19  |
| 4. Bourée         | 1'39  |
| 5. Gigue          | 2'57  |

## Suite No.4 in D major BWV1069

- |                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| 6. Overture      | 12'53 |
| 7. Bourée I & II | 2'46  |
| 8. Gavotte       | 1'47  |
| 9. Menuet I & II | 3'24  |
| 10. Réjouissance | 2'48  |

Total timing **46'16**

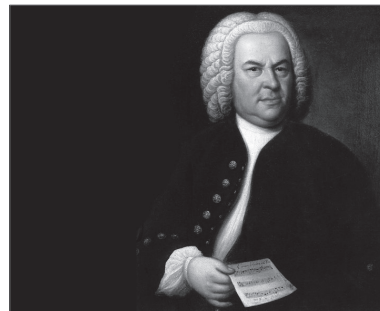
## A NEW KIND OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

For a long time, most of Johann Sebastian Bach's chamber and ensemble music was assigned to the years 1717 to 1723, when he served as Kapellmeister at the princely court of Cöthen. However, more recent studies based on original sources and style criticism have led to a thorough revision of the traditional chronology affecting this part of his output, including the four Orchestral Suites BWV1066–9.

It now seems that only the smaller part of the instrumental ensemble music (or at least the part which survives) belongs to the Cöthen period, while the greater part was composed at Leipzig — principally for the Collegium Musicum, a concert society consisting of active professional and amateur musicians as well as passive members.

Throughout the 17th century, students primarily from the University of Leipzig had formed private societies that played an increasingly important role in public musical life — they were often led by the city's most prominent professionals, such as Adam Krieger, Johann Rosenmüller, Sebastian Knüpfer and Johann Kuhnau. In 1701, the young and energetic law student and first organist of the recently rebuilt New Church, Georg Philipp Telemann, founded a new Collegium that he led for four years and that attracted the most capable musicians from within and outside the city. Bach was associated with this organisation throughout his Leipzig years, and he served as its music director from 1729 until the early 1740s.

There is no question that the Collegium directorship amounted to a major commitment. Bach was now responsible, in addition to his regular church music obligations, for preparing and carrying out a weekly series of performances throughout the year.



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750).  
Painting (1746) by Elisa Gottlob Haussmann (1695–1774)

The schedule of these “ordinaire Concerten” was made even more demanding by the additional commitments of the thrice-yearly trade fairs, when the Collegium performed twice weekly. Programmes were printed only for very special occasions such as the reception of members of the Electoral Saxon and Royal Polish Court in Dresden. However, vocal and instrumental pieces by a great variety of composers must have been included in the weekly concert series; it is impossible to reconstruct, even in the broadest outlines, any of the more than 500 two-hour programmes for which Bach was responsible.

Pertinent performing materials from the 1730s are extremely sparse. Nevertheless, among the traceable compositions are four overtures by Bach's cousin, Johann Bernhard Bach of Eisenach, the cantata

*Armida abbandonata* by Handel, four Italian solo cantatas by Porpora and Scarlatti, and a Concerto Grosso in F minor by Locatelli. Additionally, “Mr. Bach de Leipzig” is found among the subscribers to Telemann’s *Nouveaux Quatuors*, published in Paris in 1738, which suggests that he wanted these pieces for his Collegium series. Although these few works and composers cannot be considered representative at all, they confirm that the repertoire was both instrumental and vocal, and that the most modern kind of music — such as the Porpora cantatas and the Telemann flute quartets — played a role. This is definitely also the primary context for most of Bach’s extant instrumental chamber music. The concertos for one, two, three and four harpsichords and strings, for example, were among his major contributions to a new kind of instrumental music.

The four Orchestral Suites belong here, too. Their sources definitely point to Leipzig, even though it remains unclear whether they were specifically written for the Collegium Musicum or perhaps for Bach’s activities outside of Leipzig. One needs to keep in mind that the Thomaskantor maintained the position of titular court Kapellmeister after leaving Cöthen until the death of Prince Leopold in 1728, and that he immediately accepted another titular Kapellmeister appointment at the ducal court of Saxe-Weißenfels in 1729, followed in 1736 by the appointment as Electoral-Royal court composer in Dresden.

Moreover, a recently analysed inventory of the old St Thomas School library indicates that at least some of the Orchestral Suites and the Brandenburg Concertos were used for student performances. This happens to be corroborated by some extant early copies of scores and performing parts that

point to their use even during the decade after Bach’s death. There is new general evidence that instrumental music played a much larger role in the life of the St Thomas School students than heretofore assumed. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries the school produced a significant number of professional musicians so that it earned the reputation of a true conservatory of music. The use at the School does not mean, however, that any of Bach’s instrumental ensemble works were composed for this purpose, it only suggests their broader function. The principal sources of the Orchestral Suites indicate that the first and fourth originated from around 1725 whereas the third Suite can be dated to 1731. No.2, with its hybrid mixture of concerto elements and suite form and the extraordinary virtuosity of its flute writing, dates from 1738–39 and hence counts as Bach’s very last orchestral work.

In terms of format, the Orchestral Suites differ significantly from the keyboard suites in that they do not adhere to any kind of pattern in their organisation of movements. However, they all have in common an Overture that serves as an opening movement — a tradition going back to the ballet suites in 17th-century French opera. Apart from this, no suite resembles any other and taken together they offer the broadest possible spectrum of traditional dance types and modern gallantry movements: Courante, Gavotte, Forlane, Menuet, Bourée, Passepiéd, Rondeau, Polonaise, Badinerie, Air, Gigue and Réjouissance — presenting a much more innovative mixture than can be found in the keyboard suites. In quite a few movements Bach also takes an adventurous approach. Characteristic examples in this respect are on the one hand in No.3 the tantalizing and lilting melody of the

“Air on the G string” that put Bach right next to the very best tunesmiths in the business, and on the other the daring venture of strict canonic treatment of the outer voices in the Sarabande of the B minor Suite.

Another differentiating element consists in the orchestral scoring of the works. Nos. 3 and 4 resemble each other the most because both of them make use of three trumpets and timpani, two and three oboes, respectively, and a standard string ensemble. Suites Nos. 1 and 2, however, feature two completely different orchestral sounds: oboes, bassoons and strings versus solo flute and strings. Above all, the four Orchestral Suites serve as a vivid reminder of the general importance of Bach’s art of dance composition that Forkel so rightly emphasised in his 1802 biography. This art transcends the genre proper as it indeed affects all facets of instrumental and vocal music, notably the arias and their

expanded expressive range. By composing dances Bach significantly refined his musical language, not so much in the basic realm of vocabulary, syntax and grammar but notably in the area of articulation and expression. Nowhere else but in his suites of dances do we encounter a more systematic, sophisticated and far ranging exploration of the subtleties of musical articulation and along with it the fine tuning of musical expression.

© 2013 **Christoph Wolff**

*Professor Christoph Wolff is renowned as the leading Bach scholar of his generation and is Adams Professor of Music at Harvard.*

*In 2000, his biography Johann Sebastian Bach: the Learned Musician was short-listed for the Pulitzer Prize.*

## DIRECTOR’S NOTE

As with our recording of the Brandenburg Concertos (HMU 807461.62) we have chosen here to perform JS Bach’s magnificent “Ouvertures” with single players and at a low pitch. Using one player per part creates a wonderful chamber-music feel and allows the flexibility that is essential in Bach’s music. Also, any balance issues with the trumpets are obviated by playing at a low, “French” pitch and by not requiring the players to blast over a full string section.

In recent years there seems to be mounting competition to see who can play the Orchestral Suites faster — and more metronomically! — than the last ensemble. We cannot agree with this trend. To do so would be to neglect the character of the dances themselves, particularly that of the Boureé, which should have a slightly mucky, farmer-like tread.

Recordings of the opening fugal sections of the first movements are often ludicrously frenetic, especially so in interpretations of Suite No.4. As this music also appears in the opening chorus of Cantata BWV110 (written for Christmas Day 1725), I recommend the listener look at and listen to the content and meaning Bach associates with it before considering the speed at which it should be performed instrumentally. The text Bach originally set with this music could very well sum up our best hopes for performing all of these wonderfully joyous pieces:

*May our mouths be full of laughter  
And our tongues full of praise!*

© 2014 **Richard Egarr**

## RICHARD EGARR · DIRECTOR & HARPSICHORD

The AAM's Music Director Richard Egarr is a brilliant harpsichordist and equally skilled on the organ, fortepiano and modern piano. He is an accomplished conductor, and his zeal for music-making has led to his being described as "the Bernstein of Early Music" by USA National Public Radio.

Egarr trained as a choirboy at York Minster, at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and as organ scholar at Clare College, Cambridge. He later studied with Gustav and Marie Leonhardt.

Egarr was appointed Music Director of the AAM in 2006. He is involved with various other historically informed orchestras, including Boston's Handel and Haydn Society. Outside the period-instrument world, he is Associate Artist with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra

and Principal Guest Conductor of the Hague Philharmonic. He also conducts the Philadelphia, Royal Concertgebouw and London Symphony orchestras.

As a soloist he has performed throughout Europe, Japan and the USA. His acclaimed solo recording output includes a cycle of JS Bach's keyboard works as well as music by Couperin, Purcell and Mozart. For many years he formed an "unequaled duo" (*Gramophone*) with violinist Andrew Manze, with whom he has recorded music from Biber to Schubert.

Richard Egarr is Visiting Artist at the Juilliard School in New York, and also teaches at the Amsterdam Conservatoire.



Richard Egarr

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FINANCIAL TIMES, 2012

In 2006 the harpsichordist and conductor Richard Egarr succeeded Christopher Hogwood as Music Director. Since then Egarr has toured with the orchestra to major concert halls throughout the Far East, USA, Australia and Europe. His recordings with the AAM have won Edison, *Gramophone* and MIDEM awards and include a cycle of Handel's complete instrumental music Opp. 1-7 and the world-premiere recording of music

by 17th-century English composer Christopher Gibbons. In June 2012 Egarr directed the AAM in a performance of Handel's *Water Music* as part of The Queen's Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. Since launching its own record label in 2013, Egarr has directed the inaugural disc *Birth of the symphony: Handel to Haydn* and a recording of JS Bach's *St John Passion*.

The AAM enjoys ongoing relationships with a superlative roster of guest artists. Alongside the stewardship of Richard Egarr, regular guest directors and artists include violinist Alina Ibragimova, mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly, counter-tenor Andreas Scholl, conductor Bernard Labadie and the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.

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The AAM is Associate Ensemble at the Barbican Centre in London and Orchestra-in-Residence at the University of Cambridge.

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JS BACH · ORCHESTRAL SUITES

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**Pavlo Beznosiuk**

(Mathuys Hofmans, Antwerp, 1676)

### VIOLIN II

**Bojan Čičić**

(R. Ross, 2002, after A. Stradivari)

### VIOLA

**Jane Rogers**

(Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow, 2008, after models by Guarnerius)

### CELLO

**Andrew Skidmore**

(Mathias Thir, Vienna, c.1770)

### DOUBLE BASS

**Judith Evans**

(Anon, Italy, c.1750)

### FLUTE

**Rachel Brown**

(Rod Cameron, 1987, after Scherer, c.1725)

### BASSOON

**Ursula Leveaux**

(Olivier Cottet, Paris, 2012, after Charles Bizet, early eighteenth century)

### OBOE

**Frank De Bruine**

(Olivier Cottet, 2008, after G.A. Rottenburgh, Brussels, c.1740)

**Lars Henriksson**

(Pau Orriols, 2012, after I.H. Rottenburgh, Brussels, c.1720)

**Gail Hennessy**

(Olivier Cottet, 2008, after G.A. Rottenburgh, Brussels, c.1740)

### TRUMPET

**David Blackadder**

(Frank Tomes, 1990, after William Bull, 1690)

**Phillip Bainbridge**

(Robert Vanryne, 2012, after Schneider, Dresden, c.1720)

**Timothy Hayward**

(Robert Vanryne, 2012, after Schreiber, Dresden, c.1720)

### TIMPANI

**Benedict Hoffnung**

(Lefima, Germany, 2012, after Anon, eighteenth century)



Pavlo Beznosiuk



## AAM RECORDS

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★★★★★

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BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE, 2013

## JS BACH

### ST JOHN PASSION

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Bojan Čičić

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Jonathan Manners & Adam Binks · executive producers  
Philip Hobbs · producer & engineer  
Julia Thomas · editor  
Gary Haslam ([www.processstudios.net](http://www.processstudios.net)) · design and artwork  
Patrick Harrison ([www.patrickharrison.com](http://www.patrickharrison.com)) · photography (unless stated)

Performing editions prepared by Richard Egarr from original scores.

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Ursula Leveaux

