

# Interpreting Bach

## Cello Suite No. 3 - Sarabande

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May 2, 2007

AHS Capstone Project

# Johann Sebastian Bach

- Lived 1685-1750
- Prolific German composer and organist
- Contributed to the Baroque period
- Wide range of works:
  - Religious and secular
  - Choir, orchestra, solo instruments

# Cello Suites Composition

- Composed between 1717-1723 while working at a court
- Autographed manuscript never found
- Four manuscripts found
  - Identical in notes
  - differ greatly in dynamics and articulation
- Most used version is a manuscript copied by Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena

# Significance

- Suites neglected long after Bach's death
- Unaccompanied cello was a rarity in that time
- Bold venture in that time period
- Standard cello repertoire today
- Transcribed for many instruments
  - Viola, violin, lute, piano, bassoon, trombone

# Interpretation

- Lack of original manuscript gives more freedom to the player
- Passed down through teachers
- Quote by Anner Bylsma:

“Nobody, it seems to me, will ever be totally happy about his [or her] performance of the Suites. There will still be so much untold...”

# Sarabande

Measures 1-4 of the Sarabande. The piece is in 3/4 time and begins with a bass clef. The first measure contains a half note G2 and a half note B2. The second measure contains a half note A2 and a half note B2. The third measure contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. The fourth measure contains a half note G2 and a half note A2.

Measures 5-8 of the Sarabande. Measure 5 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 6 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 7 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 8 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2.

Measures 9-11 of the Sarabande. Measure 9 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 10 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 11 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2.

Measures 12-14 of the Sarabande. Measure 12 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 13 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 14 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2.

Measures 15-17 of the Sarabande. Measure 15 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 16 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 17 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2.

Measures 18-21 of the Sarabande. Measure 18 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 19 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 20 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 21 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2.

Measures 22-24 of the Sarabande. Measure 22 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 23 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2. Measure 24 contains a half note G2 and a half note A2.

# Sarabande Opening

Sarabande

5

This image shows the first eight measures of a Sarabande. The music is written in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily in the right hand, with a simple accompaniment in the left hand. Measure 5 is marked with a '5' at the beginning.

Sarabande Lento  $\text{♩} = 100$

A B C

*f* *mf* *p*

2) *sempre* *well, poco a poco*

This image shows a more detailed musical score for the Sarabande, marked 'Lento' with a tempo of 100 beats per minute. It includes performance annotations such as dynamics (*f*, *mf*, *p*), articulation marks (accents, slurs), and phrasing. The score is divided into sections labeled A, B, and C. Handwritten notes at the bottom include '2) sempre well, poco a poco' and '2) p'. The key signature has one flat and the time signature is 3/4.

Make "bree" notes ring as much as possible.

Organ sound. Practice melodic line without chords

18

Sarab.

Sarabande Lento  $\text{♩} = 100$

The musical score consists of eight staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and includes annotations such as 'A', 'B', and 'V'. The second staff continues the melody with a dynamic marking of *mf* and includes the instruction '2) mp'. The third staff features a dynamic marking of *f* and includes the instruction '2) sempre cresc. poco a poco'. The fourth staff includes a dynamic marking of *p* and includes the instruction 'pAm'. The fifth staff includes a dynamic marking of *f* and includes the instruction 'poco cresc.'. The sixth staff includes a dynamic marking of *p*. The seventh staff includes a dynamic marking of *f* and includes the instruction 'cresc.'. The eighth staff concludes the piece with a dynamic marking of *f*.

guide light  
LD - coordinate  
shift

3 mins.



# Resources

- Verlag, G Henle. *Sechs Suiten Violincello solo BWV 1007-1012*. Munchen, Herbst: 2000.
- Forbes, Watson. *Six Suites for Viola by J.S. Bach*. Masters Music Publications Inc.
- Bylsma, Anner. *J.S. Bach: Suites for Violincello Solo BWV 1007-1012*. Sony Classical, 1992.
- McCarty, Patricia. *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Six Cello Suites Performed on Viola*. Ashmont Music, 2000.
- Casals, Pablo. *Bach: Six Suites for Cello Solo*. Angel Records, 1939.
- Wikipedia. *Johann Sebastian Bach*.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Sebastian\\_Bach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Sebastian_Bach)

# Shameless Plug ☺

## Kat's Viola Recital

Sunday, May 6

8:30 PM

Glavin Chapel

### Program

Bach Cello Suite No.3

A Realistic Love Song

Schubert Arpeggione Sonata

