

**BACH'S LUTE WORKS FROM THE GUITARIST'S PERSPECTIVE
VOL.1, SUITES BWV 995/996**

Tilman Hoppstock

Translated by Lindsay Chalmers-Gerbracht

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This, the first in a three volume series written by an eminent recitalist, must be acclaimed as a truly remarkable work of scholarship and a great pleasure to read. Moreover, it comes with a compact disc (ninety-nine tracks) giving a multiplicity of examples, the majority performed by Tilman Hoppstock himself.

Within the book every particle of information hitherto known about the lute suites is presented to the reader and debated. The facts about Bach and the baroque lutenists of his age, are given in a thorough introductory chapter, along with discussion of the lute in chamber music, instrumentation, lute tablatures, and ornamentation, as well as an essay on the significance of appropriate tempo relations.

On page 43 exploration of *Suite* BWV 995 begins, with its origins, comparison with the version for cello, details of the lute arrangements, instrumentation, its form and character, the musical editions, and further editions for piano, organ, viola, etc. Having dealt with the essential background, the author then proceeds movement by movement through the suite itself, dealing with linear structure, bass notes, specific ornamentation, and every possible complexity of each aspect.

Thus with regard to the *Tres Viste* after the *Prélude*, there are also fully written out examples of a three-part fugue arranged by Hoppstock, Joachim Raff's nineteenth century keyboard version, and Leopold Godowsky's virtuosic piano transcription described as 'a Neo-romantic display of fireworks'. What is more, these three interpretations are all on the compact disc provided.

Similar coverage is allotted to the individual movements of the rest of the suite, each page characterised by an abundance of examples. No other publication has lavished such critical attention on every element of this music. Yet the analysis is communicated in a lucid and enjoyable way, propelled along by a superb translation into English by Lindsay Chalmers-Gerbracht.

From page 163, the same process is brilliantly applied to *Suite* BWV 996. Hoppstock points out the 'high degree of compositional mastery' in this suite, perhaps 'less pronounced' in similar works by Bach written over the same period. Such evaluative remarks are stimulating, challenging the reader to listen to *Ouvertures* BWV 820 and 822 as well as *Suites* BWV 823 and 833. Over one hundred pages of discussion of *Suite* BWV 996 follow, a fascinating journey broadened by numerous illustrations on the enclosed compact disc.

Facsimile copies of original manuscripts of BWV 996 are given before the book concludes with an amazing list of musical editions, once more in immense detail. A staggeringly inclusive bibliography is the ultimate scholarly *tour de force* offered.

Every serious guitarist, guitar student, or guitar teacher will need to read this book. Every college library should have a copy but this is a jewel to buy and treasure, not just something to be borrowed and read hastily. It is also a beautifully produced publication, with excellent quality paper and a supremely high level of design in its setting of both the text and music examples.

Tilman Hoppstock is to be congratulated on a flawless example of dedicated scholarship and publishing, broadening our horizons and offering new and exciting perspectives. It is to be hoped that the next two volumes, completing the panorama, will be available very soon!

Graham Wade