ABSTRACT

This dissertation project focuses on J.S. Bach’s Six Suites and explores the ideology of the Suites as etudes versus concert pieces. It is my belief that the evolution of the rank of the Suites in a cellist’s repertoire today represents more than just historical coincidence. My premise is that the true genius of the Suites lies in their dual role as both efficient teaching pieces and superior performance works. Consequently, the maximum use of Bach’s Six Suites as pedagogical material heightens both technical ability and deeper appreciation of the art. The dual nature of the Suites must always be emphasized: not only do these pieces provide innumerable opportunities for building cello technique, but they also offer material for learning the fundamentals of melody, harmony, dynamics, phrasing and texture. It is widely accepted among academic musicians that Bach’s keyboard music serves as perfect
compositions -- the model for music theory, music form and music counterpoint. I argue that we should employ the Cello Suites to this same end.

The order in which the Suites are presented was deliberately chosen to highlight the contrasts in the pieces. Because the technical demands of each suite grow progressively from the previous one, they were performed non-consecutively in order to balance the difficulty and depth of each recital. The first compact disc consists of the Third Suite in C Major and Fifth Suite in C minor (with scordatura tuning), emphasizing the parallel keys. The Second Suite in D Minor and the Fourth Suite in E-flat Major comprises the compact disc. Finally, in the third compact disc, the First Suite in G Major and the Sixth Suite in D Major (composed for the five-string cello piccola, but played here on a four-string cello) highlights the progression of the Suites.
BACH TO BASICS: A PERFORMANCE STUDY OF THE SUITES FOR SOLO CELLO BY JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, BWV 1007-1012

By

Adele Hall Carter

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts 2006

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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. ii
Chapter 1: Compact Disc 1 ................................................................................................. 1
Chapter 2: Compact Disc 2 ................................................................................................. 2
Chapter 3: Compact Disc 3 ................................................................................................. 3
Chapter 1: Compact Disc 1

DMA Recital One
Adele Carter, Cello
Live Recording, December 11, 2005: Ulrich Recital Hall, University of Maryland

[1]-[6] Suite No. 3 in C major, BWV 1009

[7]-[12] Suite No. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011
Chapter 2: Compact Disc 2

DMA Recital Two
Adele Carter, Cello
Live Recording, April 18, 2006: Ulrich Recital Hall, University of Maryland

[1]-[6] Suite No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1008

[7]-[12] Suite No. 4 in E-flat major, BWV 1010
Chapter 3: Compact Disc 3

DMA Recital Three
Adele Carter, Cello
Live Recording, October 8, 2006: Gildenhorn Recital Hall, University of Maryland

[1]-[6] Suite No. 1 in G major, BWV 1007

[7]-[12] Suite No. 6 in D major, BWV 1012
Bibliography


_____.*Cello-Suiten*. Mstislav Rostropovich. EMI Records, Ltd., D273269-1.

_____.*The Unaccompanied Cello Suites*. Yo-Yo Ma. Sony Classical, 1SK678751.


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