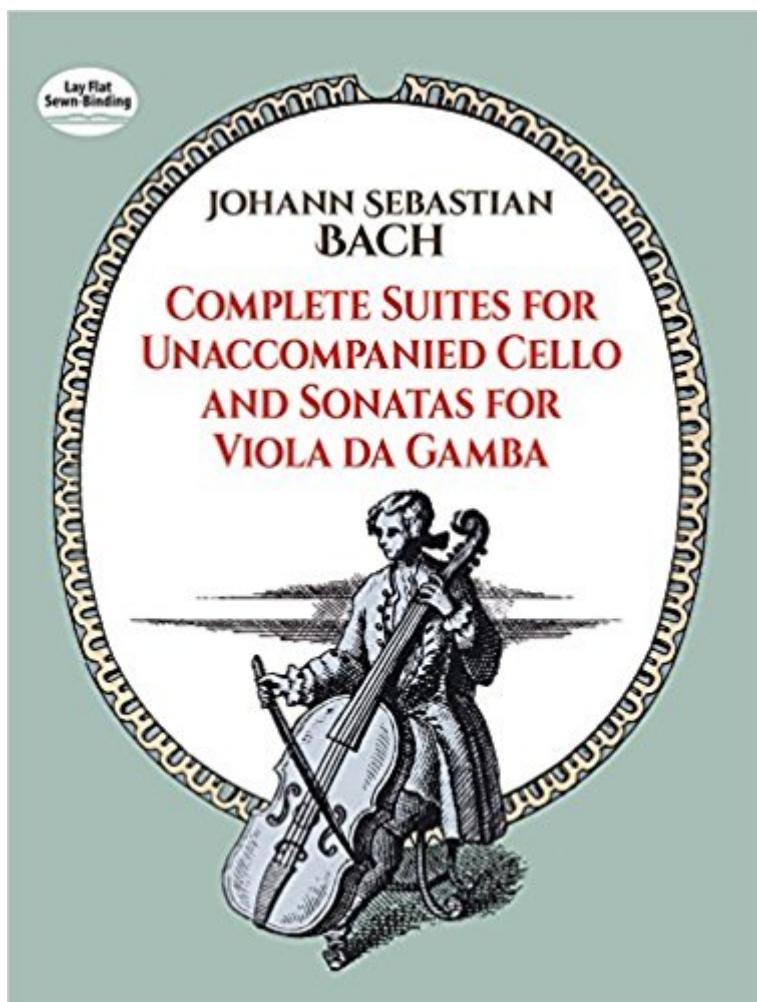


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# Complete Suites For Unaccompanied Cello And Sonatas For Viola Da Gamba (Dover Chamber Music Scores)



## Synopsis

This superbly produced volume brings together a group of Bach's most performed compositions: nine works that masterfully reveal the deeply resonant glories of the cello and the viola da gamba. Reprinted here from the definitive Bach-Gesellschaft edition published by Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipzig, they include the six suites for unaccompanied cello (BWV 1007-1012) and three sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord (BWV 1027-1029), the latter most commonly played today on the cello. Alternative versions of the last two cello suites — providing notation at concert pitch for the scordatura Suite No. 5, and normal cello clefs in place of the original alto and soprano clefs of Suite No. 6 — appear in an appendix. The cello suites, long neglected until Pablo Casals began to perform them early in the twentieth century, richly demonstrate Bach's intuitive feel for the cello, and his technical grasp of this instrument's extraordinary capabilities for musical expression. The three sonatas, among the few duo sonatas Bach composed, exuberantly demonstrate how Bach freed the harpsichord from a mere accompanying role and made it an equal partner in the duo texture. This sturdily bound playing edition features wide margins and large noteheads clearly printed on fine-quality paper. It offers both amateur and professional musicians — along with music lovers who enjoy following a live or recorded performance, score in hand — a lifetime of pleasurable study and intimate enjoyment of a select group of Bach's most universally loved and admired works.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Love this cello book-the print is large and easy to read, and the binding has held up through much use.

It's what I expected. What would be nice if it were comb bound or spiral bound, but this is a problem with most books like this. I wish they would all take the lesson. Intended or not, heavy use usually ends with the pages being torn out, which might be a good idea in the first place then take them to your local Staples and have it rebound.

This is a clean, inexpensive copy of the Bach Gesselschaft edition, much less error prone than some of the the Gesselschafts. The only real problem here is the perverse clef choice. The cello parts are written with bass clef, occasionally using an alto clef when it goes up high, while the gamba sonatas use bass clef with the tenor clef for high parts. This is opposite of standard practices. As a viol player, I can read the cello parts with no problem (apart from the occasional drop below the range), but the tenor clef is completely confusing. There are alternative versions of the cello suites in the appendix with tenor, but the viol player is out of luck.

This is one of 94 published versions of the Suites. They are the ultimate cello music for all players and are even played on many other instruments. I like this publication because of the phrasing marks and the page layouts, as well. It is possibly the lowest cost book on these pieces. It was bought for a granddaughter who only started the cello a year ago (from me) but has made very good progress, already playing in a little orchestra.

A lot of Bach for a good price, nice paper and printing. 5 Stars to this paperwork, Bach Cello Suites are the essence of the Cello music!

If you don't happen to have the complete Bach Gesellschaft edition in your library, you can get bits of it very cheaply. This is indispensable music. Even I, a guitarist, find I have to have this around. These suites are often played on other instruments, including guitar. Ever since they were rediscovered by Pablo Casals in the early part of the last century, they have been the sort of music that lies at the heart of what music really is. Music for solo cello is a bit like an anti-MTV--not just empty spectacle, but everything except the absolute essence of music has been removed. There is a seriously funny moment in one of Patrick O'Brian's novels of the British Navy when Aubrey says to Maturin regarding some odd music he had found in a London shop: "Bach had a father!" Of course

they had been playing things by J. C. Bach, one of J. S. Bach's sons known as the 'English Bach'. It is funny because Maturin's reaction makes it clear that it is an accepted fact that nearly all of us have fathers. But the passage continues with some lovely writing about Bach's music. And yes, as I recall, the oeuvre in question is a cello suite. Or was it a violin partita? In any case, buy this book. It is the greatest music, it is cheap, it is an unimpeachable edition and you are helping keep back the forces of darkness.

This is a photographic reproduction of the 19th-century Bach-Gesellschaft Edition. At the time it was originally published it represented the first attempt at a scholarly synthesis of the available sources. It has since been surpassed in this respect by the 21st-century Baerenreiter edition which reproduces in facsimile the four 18th-century manuscript sources and which makes no judgement about bowings, which are haphazardly marked in all four manuscripts, to say the least. The Baerenreiter does offer a clear choice when the player is confronted by textual variants. The present edition makes those choices for the player and the editors are silent about the reasons for their choices, making it a less scholarly choice. With the above in mind, there are still good reasons to buy this Dover reproduction in tandem with a more modern scholarly edition: 1. The layout of the original Bach-Gesellschaft was much more compact and for the most part there are far fewer page turns than in the Baerenreiter. 2. The 19th-century typeface is quite beautiful and legible. 3. Dover uses very high-quality paper which can withstand a lot of abuse and which can take multiple erasures of pencilled markings. 4. As someone else remarked, the Bach-Gesellschaft reproduces the original clefs in the Sixth Suite, which are seldom if ever used by modern cellists; Dover has in an appendix included a version printed in standard cello clefs (bass, tenor and treble). Amusingly, this is obviously a reprint of the Vandersall Edition which is in turn a ripoff of the 1950 Baerenreiter edition edited by August Wenzinger (an excellent edition in its own right). If you don't believe me, just compare the typesetting of the Wenzinger edition and look at the amateurish attempts to conceal Wenzinger's slur markings, where an editor's hand has obviously first erased the slurs with something like Whiteout and then tried, shakily, to re-connect the staff lines where the erasures left gaps. Nevertheless it is very useful to have this appendix.

I cannot actually rate the quality of the book (so I gave 5 stars to Bach), but I wanted to comment about another's review, that he/she wished there were more dynamics and markings. As I understand it, Bach provided virtually no dynamics, on purpose, for these pieces. This is why various CD's by differing artists can show quite a bit of difference in playing style. I've heard

comparative playback of some of these by various cellists, and it is quite interesting. Bach left these out purposely, so feel free to provide your own interpretation.

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