

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)  
**THE FRENCH SUITES BWV 812 - 817**  
 Andrea Bacchetti, piano, pianoforte, klavier

CD 1, total time: 70'26

|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Suite No. 1 in D minor BWV 812</b> | 21'17 |
| 1. Allemande                          | 3'48  |
| 2. Courante                           | 2'01  |
| 3. Sarabande                          | 7'47  |
| 4. Menuet I                           | 1'23  |
| 5. Menuet II                          | 2'23  |
| 6. Gigue                              | 3'55  |

|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Suite No. 2 in C minor BWV 813</b> | 15'03 |
| 7. Allemande                          | 3'05  |
| 8. Courante                           | 2'08  |
| 9. Sarabande                          | 3'27  |
| 10. Air                               | 1'45  |
| 11. Menuet & Trio                     | 1'57  |
| 12. Gigue                             | 2'41  |

|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Suite No. 3 in B minor BWV 814</b> | 16'52 |
| 13. Allemande                         | 3'40  |
| 14. Courante                          | 1'56  |
| 15. Sarabande                         | 3'20  |
| 16. Anglaise                          | 1'45  |
| 17. Menuet & Trio                     | 3'59  |
| 18. Gigue                             | 2'12  |

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <b>Suite No. 4 in E-flat major BWV 815</b> | 17'14 |
| 19. Allemande                              | 2'41  |
| 20. Courante                               | 2'04  |
| 21. Sarabande                              | 5'04  |
| 22. Gavotte                                | 1'17  |
| 23. Menuet                                 | 1'03  |
| 24. Air                                    | 2'29  |
| 25. Gigue                                  | 2'36  |

CD 2, total time: 63'10

|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Suite No. 5 in G major BWV 816</b> | 17'53 |
| 1. Allemande                          | 3'16  |
| 2. Courante                           | 1'55  |
| 3. Sarabande                          | 4'28  |
| 4. Gavotte                            | 1'17  |
| 5. Bourrée                            | 1'38  |
| 6. Loure                              | 1'48  |
| 7. Gigue                              | 3'31  |

|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Suite No. 6 in E major BWV 817</b> | 17'42 |
| 8. Allemande                          | 3'29  |
| 9. Courante                           | 1'45  |
| 10. Sarabande                         | 3'40  |
| 11. Gavotte                           | 1'16  |
| 12. Polonaise                         | 1'48  |
| 13. Bourrée                           | 1'34  |
| 14. Menuet                            | 1'29  |
| 15. Gigue                             | 2'41  |

**BONUS TRACKS:**

|                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Tocatta in E minor BWV 914</b>     | 7'33 |
| 16. - <i>Whitout tempo indication</i> |      |
| - Un poco allegro                     |      |
| - Adagio                              |      |
| - Fuga a 3 - Allegro                  |      |

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| <b>Partita No. 2 in C minor BWV 826</b> | 20'02 |
| 17. Sinfonia                            | 4'45  |
| 18. Allemande                           | 4'15  |
| 19. Courante                            | 2'14  |
| 20. Sarabande                           | 3'15  |
| 21. Rondeau                             | 1'42  |
| 22. Capriccio                           | 3'51  |

Johann Sebastian Bach  
 (Eisenach, 1685 - Lipsia, 1750)

**THE FRENCH SUITES - BWV 812-817**



Pianoforte  
 Andrea Bacchetti

Piano / Strumento / Klavier  
 Fazioli Grand Piano Model F278

Recording / Registrazione / Aufnahme / Enregistrement  
 Sacile, Fazioli Concert Hall, March 2011

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 Toningenieur / Ingenieurs du son  
 Gabriele Robotti, Matteo Costa

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 Directeurs de Production  
 Luciano Rebeggiani / Mario Marcarini

Liner notes / Note di copertina  
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 Mario Marcarini

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**Johann Sebastian Bach**  
**The Six French Suites**  
*(BWV 812-817)*

The year 1802 marks chronologically a significant point in defining the name with which the Six Suites for keyboard BWV 812-817 are known nowadays. The first important Johann Sebastian Bach's biographer, the musician and critic Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818), wrote in that year that these scores were usually called "French Suites" because the composer created them being inspired by the French style. This practice was consolidated because previously another musician, the critic and theorist Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718-1795), had laid the basis for this definition, that derives from his admiration for a maestro who was able not only to master the ancient German keyboard tradition (as his imposing toccatas, or also his fugues, variations and canons, exhibit), but also to make the typical styles of many different national schools his and transport them on keyboard. This talent is plain in the amazing Italian Concerto, BWV 971, in the Overture in the French style (Ouvverture nach Französischer Art BWV 831) or in the exercises on dance forms, that are considered in three distinct groups: the French Suites, the English Suites (BWV 806-811) and the German Suites (the Partitas, BWV 825-830). In fact, most advanced musicology recognizes clear and precise references to Italian style too in the Six Suites for keyboard BWV 812-817, as also Christophe Rousset, one of the finest and most influential executors and academics, has evidenced in a recent text, but the "architectural"

form of these six compositions can still validate the inspiration to France. In the middle of the classical formal scheme of the Suite (Allemande-Courante-Sarabande-Gigue), Johann Sebastian Bach inserts a great number of dances in vogue at the court of Versailles as Menuet, Gavotte, Bourrée and Loure. Surely the Composer was not lacking in the knowledge of French harpsichordists' style, that he learned at home when he was young and in his stays at Lüneburg, where he also probably studied French. We also know that, in his youth, Johann Sebastian frequently went to the town of Celle that is almost one hundred and sixty miles far from Lüneburg, where an orchestra financed by George William, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, was playing. Yet almost fifteen years were to pass before the French Suites could see the light. Bach probably composed these Suites in the last part of his stay at the little court of Prince Leopold, in Cöthen (1717-1723). Here, Bach was able to focus particularly on the instrumental and secular side of his art: Cöthen, in fact, was Calvinist and did not have any choir or organ to accompany religious ceremonies. In this context, the long and structured Suites were born. Though being surely less complex than their sisters, the English Suites, both for concept (there are no Preludes) and for pure technique, the French Suites are equally enchanting and involving, concerning beauty of their melodies, since Bach composed them - as he always did - with his well known mastery and formal cure. The six Suites alternate proportionally minor and major (three Suites for mode), and they are all composed in seven movements, except the first Suite, that has only six movements, and the last one (VI), in which movements are eight.

Apart from their number, all the movements refer to a dance style (that obviously loses his choreutic destinations). Generally, we can say that Suites I, II and III seem remarkably more severe and introspective, also because of minor. The few executive difficulties, which are lower than in other similar works, favor the hypothesis that the French Suites were used with scholastic purposes, a fact proven by the inclusion of some of these scores in the *Notenbüchlein* for Anna Magdalena and in the one for Wilhelm Friedemann. The high number of manuscript copies, written within the circle of students of Johann Sebastian Bach, also favored a relative movement of the French Suites, now permanently included in concert programs and in almost every pianist's portfolio.

**Mario Marcarini**

*(Translated by Laura Casale)*

Born in Genoa in 1977, Andrea Bacchetti showed a precocious talent for music and took his first piano lesson at age 4, and his orchestral debut came at age 11 with I Solisti Veneti and Claudio Scimone in Milan (Italy). After gaining his diploma from the Genoa Conservatory, he was noticed by Herbert von Karajan at the summer course held at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and with warmth and generosity the great conductor gave him precious guidance. Around about the same time he met Rudolf Baumgartner and appeared with the Festival Strings Lucerne under his baton at major festivals, including the Lucerne Festival in 1996 and 1998, and at prestigious venues.

Also in Lucerne, he met and felt an immediate affinity with Mieczyslaw Horszowsky (1892-1993); the brilliant Polish pianist coached him and they spent moments of great emotion together. Nikita Magaloff and Luciano Berio also gave him the benefit of their experience, and the latter had a lasting influence on his development both as an artist and a human being. After completing his advanced studies at the Piano Academy of Imola "Incontri col Maestro", Andrea Bacchetti embarked on a brilliant international career as a concert pianist.



Luciano Berio