Johann Sebastian
BACH

Partita No. 3 in A Minor, BWV 827
Partita No. 4 in D Major, BWV 828
Partita No. 5 in G Major, BWV 829

Wolf Harden, Piano

1. Partita No. 3 in A Minor, BWV 827
   d. Sarabande (4:12) e. Bourrée (6:36)  f. Scherzo (1:05)
   g. Gigue (2:53)

2. Partita No. 4 in D Major, BWV 828
   g. Gigue (3:29)

3. Partita No. 5 in G Major, BWV 829
   a. Præambulum (2:02)  b. Allemande (4:01)  c. Courante (2:45)
   d. Sarabande (4:12)  e. Tempo di Minuetto (2:08)
   f. Passepied (1:41)  g. Gigue (3:25)

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58 Pak Tai Street, 9/F., Tokwawan, Hong Kong.
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

During the course of his life Johann Sebastian Bach, one of the leading keyboard virtuosos of his time, published four volumes of keyboard pieces under the title of Clavier-Uebung, apparently in acknowledgement of the work of his predecessor as Thomaskantor in Leipzig, Johann Kuhnau, whose two sets of Clavier-Uebung had appeared in 1689 and 1692, each containing seven suites, the second with an additional sonata.

Bach’s Clavier-Uebung began with a set of six Partitas, published between 1726 and 1731 and was followed in 1735 by a second volume containing two contrasted works, the Italian Concerto and the Overture in the French Style. The third volume, published in 1739, contained a collection of organ music, and the fourth, published in 1741 – 1742, the Goldberg Variations.

The choice of the word Partita as a title for the suites that form the first volume of the Clavier-Uebung again echoes Kuhnau, whose Neuer Clavier-Uebung had consisted of seven Partien, a use of the word that was to become current in Germany, although originally it seems to have been used in Italian to describe sets of variations, as in Bach’s own organ chorale variations or Partite.

The six Bach Partitas of the Clavier-Uebung are built around the traditional dances of the Allemande, Courante and Sarabande, and all of them end with a Gigue, except the second, which has six instead of seven dance-movements, and ends with a Caprice. Although works of this kind tended to be published in sets of six, Kuhnau had included seven Partien in each of the parts of his Clavier-Uebung, and Bach seems originally to have intended to include a similar number. Kuhnau’s suites were grouped into one set in major keys and the second in minor keys, and Bach’s set includes three major and three minor, although they are not presented in any particular order of keys.

The Partitas open with a number of different forms of movement, giving each its own character. The first has a Praedulium, the second a Sinfonia, the third a Fantasia, the fourth an Ouverture, the fifth a Praeambulum and the sixth a Toccata. The title-page of the first complete edition of the Partitas, which had appeared singly from 1726, promises sets of Preludes, Allemandes, Courantes, Sarabandes, Giques and andern Galanterien. This final category turn out to include a Capriccio, a Burlesca, a Rondeau, and a Passepieled, among other things.

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2. Allemande
3. Corrente
4. Sarabande
5. Burlesca
6. Scherzo
7. Gigue
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1. Fantasia
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5. Burlesca
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7. Gigue
Partita No. 3 in A minor, BWV 827, opens with a Fantasia in two parts, similar in form to a Two-Part Invention. The Allemande is followed by an Italian Corrente, the dance that occurs in four of the Partitas, while two have French Courantes, the former a more spirited dance than the more solemn French dance, with its rhythmical ambiguities. The Burlesca and Scherzo are not derived from dances, although they are in characteristic dance form. The first of these seems to have no striking peculiarities or quirks of humour, and appears, in any case, as a Minuet in the collection of pieces assembled for the use of Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena. The Scherzo is light-hearted enough and represents the only use of the term by Bach. The Partita ends in a Gigue.

Partita No. 3 in A minor, BWV 827
1. Ouverture
2. Allemande
3. Courante
4. Aria
5. Sarabande
6. Menuet
7. Gigue

Partita No. 4 in D major, BWV 828, opens with an Overture in the French style, its solemn introduction, in dotted rhythm, followed by a livelier fugal section. The Allemande and Courante are succeeded by an Aria and the expected Sarabande, a brief Menuet leading to the final Gigue.

Partita No. 4 in D major, BWV 828
1. Praeambulum
2. Allemande
3. Corrente
4. Sarabande
5. Tempo di Menuetto
6. Passepied
7. Gigue

The Praeambulum which opens Partita No. 5, BWV 829, provides an introduction in concerto style. The Allemande is again paired with an Italian Corrente, followed immediately by a Sarabande. The Tempo di Menuetto has curious cross accentuation in its simple texture, and leads to a Passepied, a triple-time dance of French derivation, and a final Gigue.

Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829
1. Praeambulum
2. Allemande
3. Corrente
4. Sarabande
5. Tempo di Menuetto
6. Passepied
7. Gigue
Partita No. 3 in A minor, BWV 827, opens with a Fantasia in two parts, similar in form to a Two-Part Invention. The Allemande is followed by an Italian Corrente, the dance that occurs in four of the Partitas, while two have French Courantes, the former a more spirited dance than the more solemn French dance, with its rhythmic ambiguities. The Burlesca and Scherzo are not derived from dances, although they are in characteristic dance form. The first of these seems to have no striking peculiarities or quirks of humour, and appears, in any case, as a Minuet in the collection of pieces assembled for the use of Bach’s second wife, Anna Magdalena. The Scherzo is light-hearted enough and represents the only use of the term by Bach. The Partita ends in a Gigue.

Partita No. 4 in D major, BWV 828

1. Ouverture
2. Allemande
3. Courante
4. Aria
5. Sarabande
6. Menuet
7. Gigue

Partita No. 4 in D major, BWV 828, opens with an Overture in the French style, its solemn introduction, in dotted rhythm, followed by a livelier fugal section. The Allemande and Courante are succeeded by an Aria and the expected Sarabande, a brief Menuet leading to the final Gigue.

Partita No. 5 in G major, BWV 829

1. Praeambulum
2. Allemande
3. Corrente
4. Sarabande
5. Tempo di Menuetto
6. Passepied
7. Gigue

The Praeambulum which opens Partita No. 5, BWV 829, provides an introduction in concerto style. The Allemande is again paired with an Italian Corrente, followed immediately by a Sarabande. The Tempo di Menuetto has curious cross accentuation in its simple texture, and leads to a Passepied, a triple-time dance of French derivation, and a final Gigue.
Wolf Harden

The German pianist Wolf Harden was born on 15th May, 1962, in Hamburg and studied the piano with Eckart Besch at the Musikschule in Detmold. In 1977 he began his career as a soloist and as a player of chamber music and three years later joined with colleagues to establish the Fontenay Trio, studying with the Amadeus Quartet in Cologne and with the Beaux Arts Trio. In 1983 he won the Mendelssohn Prize and in 1985 the first prize in the German Musikwettbewerb.

Wolf Harden has appeared throughout the German Federal Republic in many European countries and in South America. In addition to broadcasts and television appearances, he has a number of recordings to his credit, appearing as soloist, accompanist and chamber music player for Harmonia Mundi, Musica Viva and Hong Kong Records.

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Recorded at Festuburgkirche, Frankfurt,
FRG, in December, 1986.
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Music Notes: Keith Anderson
Artwork: International Art
Promotions Center

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