

PREFACE

to the complete edition of the transcription for guitar of the lute works by Johann Sebastian Bach

It is a fortunate fact for the guitarist today – at the time this edition is prepared – that the entire range of critical appraisals of sources on Bach's works for lute are readily accessible. The use of reference works, such as the comparative complete editions of Bach's lute compositions as published by Paolo Cherici (Ed. Suvini Zerboni) or Tilman Hoppstock (Prim Verlag), has become standard practice among guitarists. Now it is time for a new generation of guitar arrangements of the works for lute, whether as individual or collected editions, to introduce a more personal artistic approach. The present complete edition, which is based upon the available sources, addresses the need for a practical version for the performer. It is the result of more than twenty years of working on and with these compositions, not only at the desk but also, and especially, in the recital hall. It thus intends to provide guitarists ready to study the music of Bach with a helpful resource that accounts for the state of contemporary guitar technique. Furthermore, this edition includes a number of additional benefits:

The works BWV 995 and BWV 998 are not only printed in the keys in which they are commonly heard but also in their original keys (without resorting to a capotasto), making use of simple scordaturas. Similarly, the Fugue BWV 1000/1001, an individual work, can be found in two versions: Apart from the transcription of the violin edition, there is a transcription of Bach's own version for organ. This gives the guitarist the option of trying out the composer's numerous new ideas as found in the organ version (a pastime only the most advanced players will find enjoyable). In the case of the e-minor suite BWV 996 I took the liberty of writing a second, simplified version of the Courante so the movement may be played in a metre that is musically adequate (counting minims).

In developing the fingerings for this edition I attempted to find a solution that is both musically and acoustically pleasing, generally (not always) striving for elegance and ease of performance. Some of the fingerings will make sense only when viewed in context with the right-hand fingering. In most cases, I decided that marking right-hand fingerings would be superfluous, and that providing explicit fingering for each individual note was unnecessary. Anyone poised to tackle Bach's lute works should have acquired a certain level of independence in his or her musical thinking and possess the required knowledge regarding performance practice and style. This essential knowledge is assumed to be present in the reader and performer. In particular, this applies to the suggestions for ornamentation and the associated detail fingering.

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