Produced by Andrew Kazdin

it at home, on the phonograph or radio, played by

GLENN GOULD/BACH THE FRENCH SUITES, Vol. 1 Nos. 1-4

Side 1

FRENCH SUITE NO. 1 IN D MINOR Allemande/Courante/Sarabande/Menuet I/ Menuet II/Gigue

FRENCH SUITE NO. 2 IN C MINOR Allemande/Courante/Sarabande/Air/ Menuet/Gigue

Gide 2

FRENCH SUITE NO. 3 IN B MINOR Allemande/Courante/Sarabande/Menuet—

Trio/Anglaise/Gigue FRENCH SUITE NO. 4 IN E-FLAT MAJOR Allemande/Courante/Sarabande/Menuet/ Cavotte/Air/Gigue

The selections are in the public domain.

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The French Suites were among the first compositions in suite form written by Bach, but their exact chronology is uncertain. The first four were certainly finished by 1723, for they appear in a manuscript of that date as part of a traditional set of six but in company with two other suites (now known separately as BWV 818-9) instead of those now known as the Fifth and Sixth. It was Thurston Dart's supposition that the first four suites were composed over the period of about 1717 to 1723. Surviving bits of evidence suggest that the pieces were revised a number of times, both in their internal content and in their order. The last two of the suites were apparently added somewhat later, and the sequence as we know it does not seem to have been completed until at

The purpose of all these revisions is obvious. What had begun merely as a set of pieces in dance styles was transformed by Bach into a unified group, perhaps even to be regarded as one work. The first three of the suites, seemingly the earliest in order of composition as well, are in minor keys and are of a serious nature, while the last three are in major and show increasingly joyful qualities. The First used the (by then) archaic device of beginning all of the dances with variants on similar musical themes, a 17th-century device known as the "variation suite," while the others are more "progressive" in style. The very number of movements increases from six in the first two suites to seven in the Fourth and Fifth, and to eight in the Sixth. (Karl Geiringer suggests that the Minuet of the Fourth Suite was a later addition, evidence of another revision aimed at a musical progression.) And so far as we can determine, the exact ordering of the suites may well conform to their chronology of composition as well as an over-all musical plan. Another indication of Bach's efforts toward uniformity is found in the Fourth Suite, which was first written with a prelude. The prelude was eliminated, and all six of the suites as they now stand consist of dance movements only. (An apparent contradiction to this principle, the "Air," is explained easily: this was actually a French dance, as well as a term for

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Engineering: Kent Warden, Frank Dean Dennowitz Library of Congress catalog card manber 73-780072 applies to M 32347.

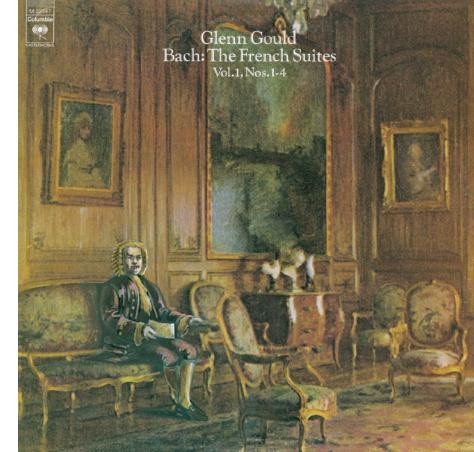
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Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750

The French Suites Vol. I

Französische Suiten · Suites françaises

Suite No. 1 in D minor BWV 812

d-Moll · en ré mineur

1	I. Allemande	1:33
2	II. Courante	1:03
3	III. Sarabande	2:50
4	IV. Menuet I	1:12
5	V. Menuet II	2:28
6	VI. Gigue	2:08

Suite No. 2 in C minor BWV 813

c-Moll · en ut mineur

		2:35
8	II. Courante	1:08
9	III. Sarabande	2:16
10	IV. Air	0:54
11	V. Menuet	0:50
12	VI. Gigue	1:44

Suite No. 3 in B minor BWV 814

h-Moll · en si mineur

12	I. Allemande	1:34
		1:34
14	II. Courante	1:10
15	III. Sarabande	1:39
16	IV. Menuet – Trio	2:01
17	V. Anglaise	0:49
	VI. Gigue	1:41

Suite No. 4 in E-flat major BWV 815

Es-Dur · en mi bémol majeur

19	I. Allemande	1:0
20	II. Courante	1:0
21	III. Sarabande	2:0
22	IV. Menuet (BWV 815b)	0:5
23	V. Gavotte	0:4
24	VI. Air	1:0
25	VII. Gigue	1:5

Total Time 39:02

Glenn Gould piano

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LP Matrix: AL 32347 [1-12], BL 32347 [13-25]

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It is useful to keep this instrument-time-place situation in mind when listening to Bach's *French Suites*, for these compositions are certainly among the least "public" or declamatory works in the entire repertoire of great music. (The late Thurston Dart, a supreme authority on the Baroque era, considered the *French Suites* best suited to the clavichord and played them himself on that instrument.) Today, we probably come closest to the original experience of the music when we hear it at home, on the phonograph or radio, played by ourselves.

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qualities of the music, particularly in the fast movements, the music was written primarily for expressive purposes – a fact that should be paramount in the minds of performers and listeners alike.

LESLIE GERBER

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