

Produced by Andrew Kazdin

M 32347

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

Side 1

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

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

Side 2

**FRENCH SUITE NO. 3 IN B MINOR**  
Allemande/Courante/Sarabande/Menue—  
Trio/Anglaise/Gigue

**FRENCH SUITE NO. 4 IN E-FLAT MAJOR**  
Allemande/Courante/Sarabande/Menue/I  
Cavotte/Air/Gigue

The selections are in the public domain.

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It is useful to keep this instrument-time-place situation in mind when listening to Bach 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 clavicord and played them himself on that instrument.) Today, we probably come closest to the original experience of the music when we hear

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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 to 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 a song.)

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or "English" as part of the title. Bach's first biographer, Johann Nicolaus Forkel, said the name had been given to these works "because they are written in the French taste," but that explanation has been discarded along with Forkel's wrong guess that the English Suites were "made for an Englishman of rank." (There is, however, still validity in Forkel's description of the music: "By design, the composer is here less learned than in his other suites, and has mostly used a pleasing, more prominent melody.") Bach biographer Philipp Spitta wrote that "the name 'French' was given to them on account of the meagre form of their component sections, which, even in external dimensions, adhere as closely as possible to the dance type on which they are founded." But he admits that "there is no idea of imitating or carrying out any specially French characteristics; none such are to be discerned anywhere in Bach, nor could they be possible except in his very earliest work." All we know for certain is that both titles, "English" and "French," were added after the fact by an unknown hand and that they do make convenient handles.

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Engineering: Kent Warden, Frank Dean Demowicz  
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# Glenn Gould

## Bach: The French Suites

Vol. 1, Nos. 1-4



G010003290830D

## 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

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

#### **Suite No. 2 in C minor BWV 813**

c-Moll · en *ut* mineur

<b>[7]</b>	I. Allemande	2:35
<b>[8]</b>	II. Courante	1:08
<b>[9]</b>	III. Sarabande	2:16
<b>[10]</b>	IV. Air	0:54
<b>[11]</b>	V. Menuet	0:50
<b>[12]</b>	VI. Gigue	1:44

#### **Suite No. 3 in B minor BWV 814**

h-Moll · en *si* mineur

<b>[13]</b>	I. Allemande	1:34
<b>[14]</b>	II. Courante	1:10
<b>[15]</b>	III. Sarabande	1:39
<b>[16]</b>	IV. Menuet – Trio	2:01
<b>[17]</b>	V. Anglaise	0:49
<b>[18]</b>	VI. Gigue	1:41

#### **Suite No. 4 in E-flat major BWV 815**

Es-Dur · en *mi* bémol majeur

<b>[19]</b>	I. Allemande	1:09
<b>[20]</b>	II. Courante	1:08
<b>[21]</b>	III. Sarabande	2:09
<b>[22]</b>	IV. Menuet (BWV 815b)	0:57
<b>[23]</b>	V. Gavotte	0:45
<b>[24]</b>	VI. Air	1:04
<b>[25]</b>	VII. Gigue	1:55

Total Time 39:02

#### **Glenn Gould** piano

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