

PAUL GALBRAITH

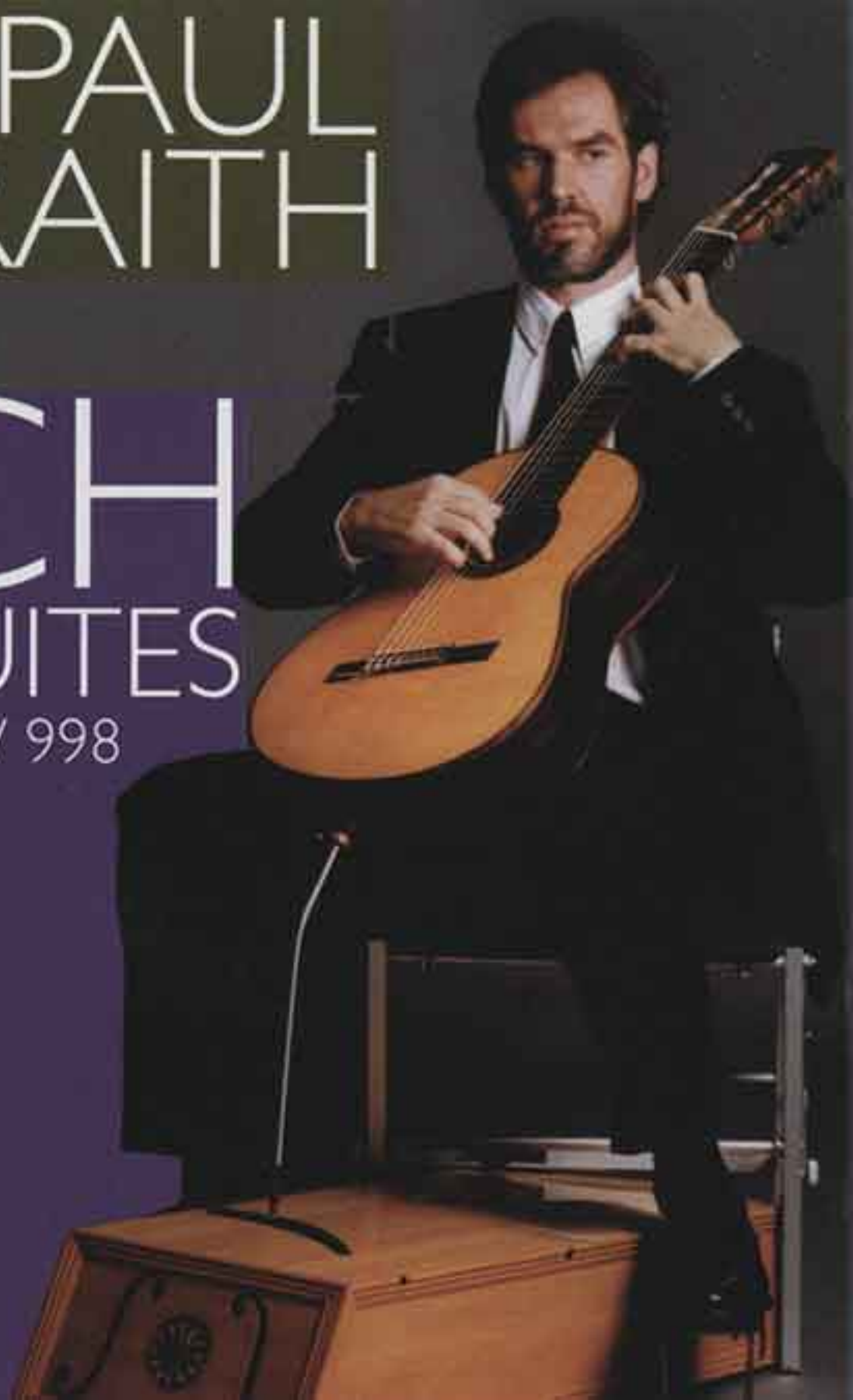
BACH LUTE SUITES

BWV 995 – BWV 998

arr. Galbraith
for
8-string
guitar



DE 3258



DE 3258

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J. S. BACH (1685-1750) WORKS FOR LUTE

ARRANGED BY PAUL GALBRAITH FOR 8-STRING GUITAR

Suite in G Minor, BWV 995 [trans. A Minor] [16:03]

- 1** Prelude; Presto (5:28)
- 2** Allemande (3:50)
- 3** Courante (1:51)
- 4** Sarabande (1:48)
- 5** Gavotte I (1:10)
- 6** Gavotte II en Rondeau (1:32)
- 7** Gigue (1:23)

Suite in E Minor, BWV 996 [13:54]

- 8** Prelude; Presto (2:23)
- 9** Allemande (2:24)
- 10** Courante (2:04)
- 11** Sarabande (4:40)
- 12** Bourrée (:48)
- 13** Gigue (1:35)

Suite in C Minor, BWV 997 [trans. B Minor] [20:01]

- 14** Prelude (4:22)
- 15** Fugue (6:39)
- 16** Sarabande (4:31)
- 17** Gigue (2:29)
- 18** Double (2:50)

Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-flat Major, BWV 998 [trans. D Major] [9:40]

- 19** Prelude (1:57)
- 20** Fugue (5:18)
- 21** Allegro (2:24)

Paul Galbraith, 8-string guitar

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 59:38

These four lute works span practically the entire length of Bach's composing life, from the E Minor Suite, written in his twenties, through the "middle-period" G Minor Suite, written probably while he was at Cöthen, to the C Minor and E-flat works, written during Bach's final composing years.

Despite a marked shift in style across these different periods, there can be felt, nevertheless, a common thread which (albeit loosely) ties these works together, a thread which reflects Bach's highly individual response to the lute.

For all the lute works (including BWV 1006A, issued separately on Delos 3232) are based, unusually, on sacred themes, taken from the St. Matthew Passion, the B Minor Mass, the Christmas Oratorio, and, in the case of the E Minor Suite, a hymn tune, "*Was bist du doch, O Seele, so betrübet?*" ("Why art thou yet, O soul, so troubled?")

Bach seems to have invested the lute with a specific "symbolic" image. It's known that he enjoyed symbolism of different kinds, including that of musical instruments, which he apparently developed, at least in part, from references to music in the Bible (one of his Bibles is full of underlinings and annotations to this effect).

Furthermore, he seems to have felt a special fondness for the sound of the lute, for not only is this select group of pieces highly

inspired, even by Bach's standards, but there is also the fact that Bach even went so far as to develop a keyboard instrument, the *lautenwerk*, designed to sound like a lute.

The *lautenwerk* allowed Bach very cleverly to have it both ways. On the one hand he could write pure music, uninhibited by the technical restrictions of which the lute (like the guitar!) has many; on the other hand he could see to it that, through keeping within certain well-defined boundaries, he created an oeuvre for lute which was feasible and playable, if not always idiomatic!

It's likely also that the lute reminded Bach of the clavichord, Bach's professed favorite instrument from childhood on (when he would steal up into the attic late at night and practice on the clavichord so as not to disturb the rest of the household, especially since he'd been warned that music was strictly off-limits!) The two instruments sound remarkably similar, and it's interesting that Bach ended up with a kind of synthesis of the two instruments in the *lautenwerk*.

The varying styles of the suites reflect both Bach's own changing tastes and influences generally, as well as his adoption of the principal lute techniques and tendencies of the time.

Thus, the earlier suites tend to be very French and ornate, reflecting Bach's youthful

fascination with French style which was so intrinsically bound up with their strong and influential lute traditions, while the two late works are contrastingly Germanic, and reflect Bach's relatively laconic and pure late style, as well as the German lute traditions with which he would have been made familiar through his lutenist friends Kellner and Weiss, among others.

Bach uses the Sarabande as the cornerstone of his suite structures, and so it's only natural that we should find the thematic "quotes" in these central movements. The G Minor Suite (BWV 995) quotes the *et incarnatus est* ("and the word was made flesh") section from the Credo of the B Minor Mass. On the lute, this theme sounds wholly idiomatic, as it falls within "style brisé" (broken-chord style), a lute technique in which a chord is spread out to form a melodic line. This is the only one of Bach's lute works to come down to us in Bach's own hand, and curiously it's also the most playable. This suite also exists in a version for cello (the 5th Cello Suite), and it's debatable which version came first. (Either way, it's interesting to note how different this work is from its companion suites in the set of six for cello).

A characteristic of the hymn-tune in the E Minor Suite (BWV 996) is the use of questioning dotted rhythms and flowing responses, devices which are also defining motives

of French overture style, and of which the suite's opening movement (like that of BWV 995) is a succinct example. In this way, mere stylistic formalities are transformed from within, as it were, into specific expressive gestures. The richly embellished Sarabande elaborates the hymn-theme almost beyond recognition, but its essential motives remain clearly defined nonetheless.

The remaining two lute works on this disc appear to belong together. Sharing the same key-signature, one (BWV 997) in dark and sombre C minor, the other (BWV 998) in the warmly contrasting (and here, complimentary) relative major — E-flat — the one seems to lead on from where the other leaves off. This isn't merely a question of fortuitous sequencing, as they both share several structural ties beneath their contrasting surfaces.

The themes Bach uses here are the final chorus of the St. Matthew Passion — *Wir setzen uns mit Tränen nieder* ("We sit down with tears and call to thee in the grave") in the case of the C Minor Suite, and the Christmas carol "*Von Himmel hoch, da komm ich her*" ("From the skies above, I come to you") — originally by Luther, and a particular favorite of Bach's — in the case of the Prelude, Fugue and Allegro.

The latter Christmas theme is used as the subject of the E-flat fugue in an adapted (partially inverted) form, both to meet the

local requirements of this fugue, as well as, arguably, to create a clear counterpole to the subject of the C Minor fugue.

The skeleton outlines of the two fugue subjects are remarkably similar. Both map out the same type of *gestalt* or shape, beginning and ending on the tonic and "crossing" either side (symbolic of the cross?), both by way of the dominant, with the C minor reaching stepwise toward it, and the E-flat arriving "home" (also stepwise) from it. The contrast between these two displacements couldn't be more intense, with the one open-ended and beseeching, and the other introverted and comforting.

The overall structures of both works are entirely unique. The Prelude, Fugue and

Allegro has a clear triptych structure (which its central fugue echoes). The C Minor Suite's five movements, by converging around the central movement, can be interpreted as an extended triptych structure through pairing the flanking movements. Its fugue also has an identical type of triptych layout.

The Prelude, Fugue and Allegro was reportedly the great harpsichordist Wanda Landowska's favorite instrumental Bach work ("a perfect jewel"), and taken individually or as a related pair, it and the C Minor Suite surely represent Bach at his most sublime and uncompromisingly personal — something for which we "pluckers" must be eternally grateful!

Paul Galbraith, January 2000

Executive Producers: *Amelia S. Haygood, Carol Rosenberger*
Recording Producer: *Ramiro Belgardt*
Recording Engineer: *Jeff Mee*
Editing: *Ramiro Belgardt, Chris Landen*
Production Associate: *Phyllis Bernard*

Recorded November 24, 26, 27, 1999
First Congregational Church, Los Angeles

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Console: *Soundcraft Spirit Folio*
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Paul Galbraith first won public acclaim in Great Britain when at the age of 17 his performance at the Segovia International Guitar Competition won him the Silver Medal. Segovia, who was present for the competition, called his playing "magnificent." The following year he went on to win a BBC TV Young Musician of the Year Award.

These awards helped launch an international career including performances with some of the finest orchestras in Britain and Europe (Royal Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, BBC Philharmonic, Scottish Symphony Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Orchestra, Scottish Baroque Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra and Scottish Chamber Orchestra among them). Concert tours have taken him to the U.S., Canada, Spain, Italy, Greece, the Czech Republic, Norway, Hungary, Brazil, China, India and Iceland.

Galbraith's unique playing position was first revealed at the Edinburgh Festival in 1989. His guitar is supported by a metal end-pin (similar to that of a cello) which rests on a wooden resonance box. The instrument itself was designed by Galbraith in collaboration with renowned builder David Rubio. The eight strings and extraordinary design of this guitar effectively increase the instru-

ment's range and possibilities to an extent never before possible.

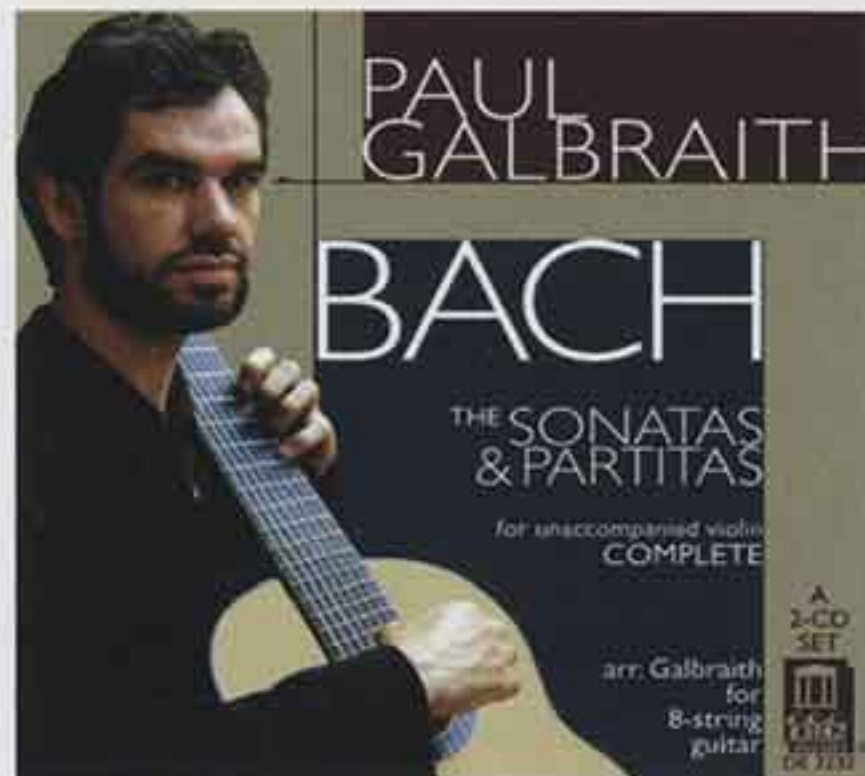
Paul Galbraith was born in Scotland, and has lived for extended periods in Malawi, Greece, London, and, currently, Brazil, where he is a founding member of the Brazilian Guitar Quartet (whose debut CD, "Essência do Brasil, was released on Delos). His principal teacher, since 1983, has been the Greek conductor, pianist and philosopher George Hadjinikos.

In 1995, Galbraith gave the world premiere of his transcription of Bach's complete solo violin sonatas and partitas at the Philadelphia Bach Festival, and in 1996 he performed them at the Edinburgh Festival. BBC TV chose to film this concert and broadcast part of it across Great Britain as one of the highlights of the festival.

Paul Galbraith's double CD of the Complete Solo Bach Violin Sonatas and Partitas (Delos) was nominated for a 1998 Grammy® Award in the category of Best Solo Instrumental Album. This recording was also chosen as one of the two best CDs of 1998 by *Gramophone Magazine*, which called it "a landmark in the history of guitar recordings." This recording received a "Four Star" rating in *Stereo Review*, and reached the TOP 10 of the classical charts in *Billboard Magazine*.

Reviews of

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★ ★ ★ ★ “British guitarist Paul Galbraith has made something of a sensation in the guitar world... extraordinarily skillful, cohesive and (the right word here) passionate performances... sensational guitar music with a remarkable depth of feeling.” — *Stereo Review*

“His interpretations, no matter how idiosyncratic, are always interesting... his enlarged guitar echoes the wide range of the Baroque lute (for which Bach himself transcribed some of this music) while affording a plush tone... his playing has a firm spiritual core.” — *The New Yorker*

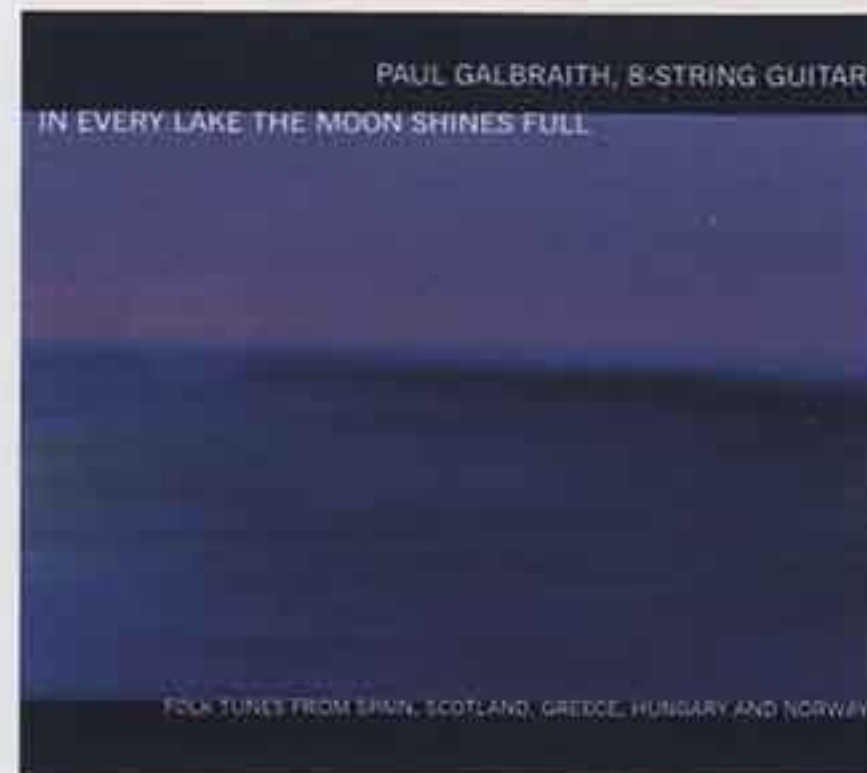
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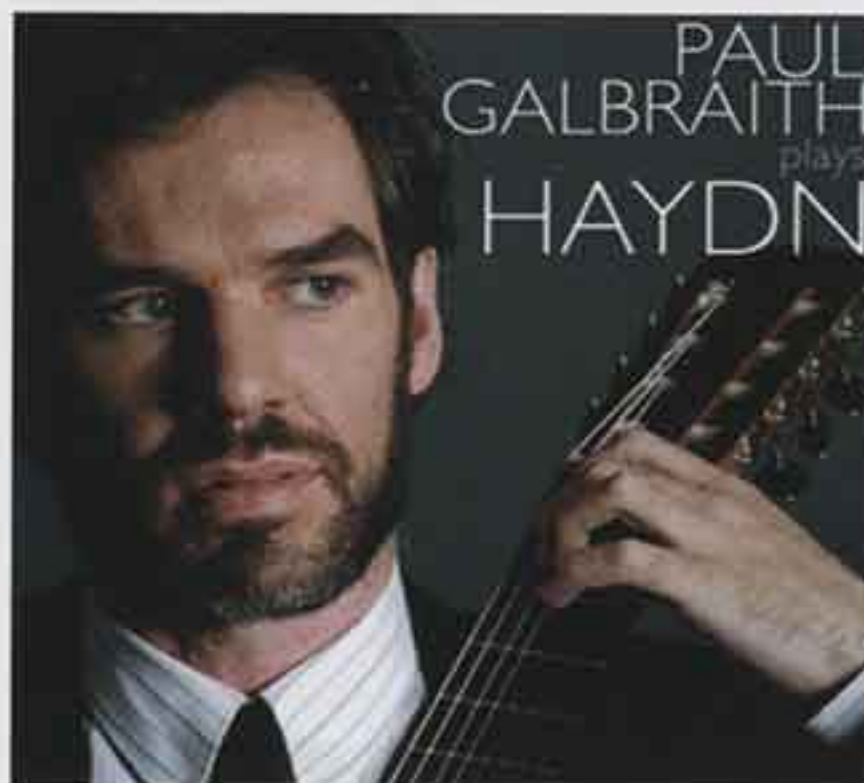
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arr. Galbraith for 8-string guitar

- [1] - [7] Suite in G Minor,
BWV 995 [trans. A Minor] (16:03)
- [8] - [13] Suite in E Minor,
BWV 996 (13:54)
- [14] - [18] Suite in C Minor,
BWV 997 [trans. B Minor] (20:01)
- [19] - [21] Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-flat Major,
BWV 998 [trans. D Major] (9:40)

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