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A Performance Guide to J.S. Bach’s Suite No.5 for Violoncello Solo: The Interpretation of the ornaments, rhythm, bowing and phrasing, and polyphonic texture.

This work and its defense approved by:
Chair: Lee Fiser
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A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO J.S. BACH’S SUITE NO. 5 FOR VIOLONCELLO SOLO:
THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ORNAMENTS, RHYTHM, BOWING AND PHRASING, AND POLYPHONIC TEXTURE

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Bach’s Suites for Violoncello Solo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Form and Structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. General Form of J.S. Bach’s Suites for Violoncello Solo</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Suite No. 5 of Violoncello Solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Prelude</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Allemande</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Courante</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Sarabande</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Gavotte</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Gigue</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Interpretation of Baroque Practice in The Suite No. 5 for Violoncello</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ornamentation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rhythm</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bowing and Phrasing</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Polyphony</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tempo</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dynamic</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tuning System</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. Conclusion ................................................................. 51
VI. Music of J.S. Bach’s Suite No. 5 for Violoncello Solo ............... 53
VII. Bibliography ............................................................. 73
INTRODUCTION

This document is undertaken primarily to help guide inexperienced musicians, such as beginners, amateurs, or even college students, to develop a systematic method of preparing Baroque music for performance and to bring a wider and clearer awareness of Baroque performance practice, with emphasis on Bach’s fifth suite, for the large cello community, who may not necessarily be aware of certain aspects of correct performance practice. The performance of Baroque music has increased extensively in the last few decades. However, there still remain stylistic concerns when playing Baroque music. For example, some musicians, who play Baroque music, play Bach “as it is written” and consequently make numerous errors. Perhaps they do not know the differences between the notation and the actual sound of Baroque music. This lack of information in modern editions badly influences Baroque music performance of today in ornamentation, articulation, rhythm, dynamic and even analysis of musical structure. Although a few editions have a few general explanations about Baroque performance practice, they do not help the non-Baroque expert very much at all. The following quotation is from Thurston Dart’s book, “The Interpretation of Music”:

“The musical notation in use today is the logical development of that used in earlier times, but the present day significance of the symbols may be, and very often is, utterly different from their significance in the 18th century France or 16th century England or 14th century Italy. Modern notation is far more precise in matters of tempo, dynamics, rhythm, instrumentation, pitch, the duration of notes and so on, than it has been in any earlier century … A composer of the 18th century used notation in accordance with the conventions of his own time, and there is therefore every chance in the world, that a 20th century performer will entirely misinterpret his music through an inadequate knowledge of these conventions, for the most part
obsolete and forgotten. In a word, when a modern performer looks at a piece of early music he must not take for granted the significance of any of the symbols he sees.”

Following the composer’s conception, the interpretation of music anticipates an intimate knowledge of performance practices in the composer’s time. However, the interpretation is a subject which can trigger many contentions. Therefore, the interpretation of early music is the most complicated subject, and the primary evidence, musical notation, has to be examined with the greatest care. Performer’s interpretation must necessarily be based on the musical notation. An interpreter must find a way into all of the composer’s ideas in order to feel and be able to communicate the expression. That said, there are different ways to interpret music without distortion or mutilation of its character.

Because the suites for violoncello solo by J.S. Bach could be presented in a wide variety of ways, every performer must find a way of the interpretation of Bach’s music and what he wanted to say through his music. Therefore, the interpretation of music needs a wide search for greater intimacy, more knowledge about musical structure, and thereby more understanding of composer’s intention of music. The following quotation is from “Geigenschule” by Leopold Mozart

“Before beginning to play one must consider the piece thoroughly; every effort must be made to discover the character, the tempo and the kind of movement proper to it . . . Finally, in performance, one must spare no pains to arrive at and render correctly the emotions which the composer wished to express, and since the sad and the joyful often alternate one must

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take care to give to each its proper character. In a word, one must play
everything in such a way that one is moved by it oneself.”

Many musicologists have published books and treatises about the interpretation of
Baroque performance practice. These materials are intriguing because they were described
in so many different ways to interpret them, many quite convincing, but none complete
enough to help much. Despite this resource material, many 19th and 20th century performers
have published stylistically inaccurate editions of the suites. Moreover, in the Baroque era,
there were differences in the understanding of many things, such as rhythm, bowing,
phrasing, and so on. Some musicians did not publish their concepts of Bach’s work, but
instead they have recordings which have served as their own interpretations. Therefore, it
is necessary to compare and combine the editions and recordings of Bach suites with books
or treatises about Baroque performance practice for representing more accurate
performance in Baroque style. The result of this comparison and combination will be a
more accurate approach to Bach’s music.

The main purpose of this document is propose to provide a more complete
performance guide of J. S. Bach’s Suite No. 5 in c minor for violoncello solo. This
document will explain the interpretation of the suite by defining Baroque performance
practice through modern notation. There are many categories of Baroque performance
practice, rhythm, ornamentation, bowing and phrasing and polyphonic texture, and matters
such as tempo, dynamics and tuning. Scordatura is specific to this piece and designates a
tuning other than the normal, established one.

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Originally from “Geigenschule” by Leopold Mozart
Moreover, this guide will also provide a carefully edited even rewritten transcription of the suite which, I believe, reproduces the composer’s intentions as accurately as possible. Although there are more than 80 different editions of these suites today, this guide will be in different notation on notes, rhythms, and so on. This transcription is intended primarily for performance purposes because it will follow the actual sound of Baroque performance, instead of just notation.
THE SUITES FOR VIOLONCELLO SOLO

Johann Sebastian Bach’s six suites for violoncello solo are an essential part of every modern cellist’s repertoire. These pieces are primarily dance suites with Baroque dance titles. Most musicians, theorists, and musicologists believed that J. S. Bach wrote suites for violoncello solo, BWV 1007 – 1012, in his Cöthen period (ca. 1720). Because no autograph of these suites by J.S. Bach survived, nobody knows the exact date of these compositions composed. However, there is autograph of the partitas and sonatas for violin solo, BWV 1001 – 1006. Perhaps this fact reflects the original relation between the autographs of these suites. The title on the surviving autograph of the violin sonatas and partitas is “Sei Solo. / a / Violino / Senza / Basso accompagnato./ Libro primo./ da / Joh. Seb. Bach./ ao. 1720”. It can be assumed that the manuscript of violin sonatas and partitas originally continued with the cello suites as its “libro secondo”. Therefore, the cello suites can be dated approximately to some time around 1720.3

Unlike his former Weimar period and the following Leipzig period, Bach’s main focus of the Cöthen period (1717 – 1723) was on instrumental works because Bach was not responsible for church music but simply for court music. The circumstances during his Cöthen period gave him opportunities to experiment with various forms of instrumental music. In this period, Bach wrote mostly secular instrumental music, including 6 sonatas and partitas for violin solo, two suites for clavier which are French and English suites, and suites for flute solo. It is unknown for whom Bach composed his suites for violoncello. Probably, Bach had in mind a musician like Christian Ferdinand Abel, the gambist and

cellist of the Cöthen court chapel, or Christian Bernhard Linike, a cellist employed at the Cöthen court.

There are three contemporary manuscript copies remaining of these suites, none in Bach’s handwriting. The most easily accessible and most famous is the copy by Anna Magdalena who was J. S. Bach’s second wife. Another manuscript copy was by Johann Peter Kellner (1705 – 1772). He was an organist at Grafenrode, and he copied several of Bach’s works. A third copy is made by Johann Jacob Heinrich Westphal (1756 – 1825). These copies do not have many or consistent bowing marks, and they differ from each other in many details. For example, slurs appear to have been rather carelessly placed, some chords are missing, and occasionally the part-writing is incomplete.

Composing music for an unaccompanied melodic instrument was a very common idea in the eighteenth century. However, these suites for violoncello hold a unique place in the literature of the cello. Not only are these the only pieces for violoncello written by J. S. Bach, but also these suites have very unique styles when they are compared with other unaccompanied works by the late 17th century Italian composers, such as Giovanni Battista Degl’Antonii, Domenico Gabrielli, and Domenico Galli. In contrast with the violin partitas, the cello suites concentrate less on chordal structure but rather its elegance and its melodic grace.4 According to D. Markevich in his book “Cello Story”, he said about suites as follow:

“The idiom most frequently used by Bach in these suites is the melodizing of harmony. Chords are used to underline and emphasize the cadences, while sustained monody without accompaniment is used only occasionally and just for contrast. The composer displays great skill in

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giving the impression of several voices, although the writing is on one simple melodic line.\footnote{Dimitry Markevitch, \textit{Cello Story}. Translated by Florence W. Seder. (Princeton, New Jersey: Summy-Bircher Music, 1984.), P159.}

Although they are generally ignored in the historical studies of Bach written in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, these works have always have been of great importance to cellists. In the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the suites were treated merely as technical studies, but more recently they have been accepted as standard concert works. The first published edition did not appear until 1825, slightly more than 100 years after they were written. The title under which they were published, “Six Sonatas or Studies,” indicates the use for which they were intended.

Pablo Casals, arguably the greatest cellist of all time, can be given credit for having brought out the interest in the study and performance of the suites. He said that he began to play these suites with indescribable excitement. Until then, the suites for solo cello had suffered in the general neglect. To include any movement from one of these suites in a concert was a rarity.

When, at the turn of the century, Casals presented to the public a suite in its entirety with all repeats, not only the fact of his performance, but his interpretations of the suites were considered revolutionary. Since his first performances of the suites, which stunned the musical world, they have become increasingly important in the literature for violoncello. Casals recounted as follow:

“When I played the Suites for Cello Alone, for the first time in Germany, the purists said that this was not Bach, and the others said that it was a real discovery. Now the Bach at that time was played like an exercise,
without any real musical meaning. They were afraid to put something in it; they were afraid! And even now, many of the artists of today are afraid to play Bach because they have accepted the bad theory that the music of Bach is “objective” … Bach was thought of as a professor who knew very well his counterpoint and fugue – and nothing else. That narrow way of explaining Bach – very sad! Bach – the “Herr Professor” – he has every feeling: lovely, tragic, dramatic, poetic … always soul and heat and expression. How he enters into the most profound of ourselves! Let us find that Bach.”

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FORM AND STRUCTURE

GENERAL FORM OF J. S. BACH’S SUITES FOR VIOLONCELLO

Suites were one of the most important genres in late Baroque music. In the Baroque era, there were two different kinds of suites. One was by French clavecinists who produced the formless collections of suites known as ordre, and the other by German composers. In Germany, the suites by 1700 always featured four dances of varying meter, tempo, and national origin in a set order: allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. The origins of each dances are as follow: the allemande is of German origin, the courante is primarily French, the sarabande is Spanish, and the gigue is of Anglo-Irish origin. Among these dances, the courantes have French and Italian forms, each with different rhythmic characteristics. A suite might also contain an introductory prelude or one or more optional dances placed either after the gigue or before or after the sarabande.

Compared to Bach’s partitas and sonatas for violin solo, the cello suites are more consistent in the order of their movements. The keys of the suites are G, d, C, E-flat, c, and D, and each of the six suites for violoncello begins with a Prelude, which is followed by Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, two Galanterien, and a Gigue. Bach used the same arrangement in his English suites for clavier, which may have been written at about the same time. Among these dances, two Galanterien, inserted between sarabande and gigue, are Minuet I and II in the first and second suites, Bourée I and II in the third and fourth suites, and Gavotte I and II in the fifth and sixth suites. Most of these dances in the suites were often danced at both court festivities and country festivals during Bach’s time. All the movements are in binary form except the preludes. Normally both sections are repeated,
perhaps with some ornamentation added by the performer in a suitable national style.\textsuperscript{7} J. Matteson (1681-1764) wrote following descriptions of these dances and their individual characteristic in his work, \textit{Der vollkommene Kapellmeister} of 1739:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Allemande}: portraying a satisfied mood, enjoying order and repose.
\item \textit{Courante}: sweet hope, full of joyous cordiality.
\item \textit{Sarabande}: expressing no passion other than pride.
\item \textit{Minuet}: a measured joy
\item \textit{Bourée}: as its name depicts – replete, satisfied and pleasant.
\item \textit{Gavotte}: a leaping movement is property of the Gavotte, without having the least semblance of running.
\item \textit{Gigue}: The common – or English – gigues have the characteristic of impetuosity and ardor. The French gigue was not written to be danced. It is impelled by a great speed: “from something which seems unvarying at first, and which then accelerates to the flow of a small torrent.”\textsuperscript{8}
\end{itemize}

\textbf{SUITES NO. 5 FOR VIOLONCELLO SOLO}

\textbf{PRELUDE}

Originally the prelude was a wholly improvised instrumental piece, generally used for introduction of the suites, and its style was that of a fantasia. The prelude of the fifth suite is in the form of a French overture: a slow fantasia opening section followed by a fugue in 3/8 meter. This fugue is one of Bach’s longest fugues, and a single line has to impersonate the voices of a fugal texture. Although the fugue is not as elaborately worked out as those in the solo violin sonatas, Bach’s achievement here is an impressive example of implied counterpoint.

\textsuperscript{7} Elizabeth Cowling, \textit{The Cello}. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975, Revised 1983.), P98.

Sometime there are incomplete entries of voices, but both performer and listener expect to fill them with their subconscious. The rhythm is traditional French overture style which will be explained in the later chapter. In the dancing quasi-fugue protest emerges with whimsical fantasy. About this prelude, Mstislav Rostropovich, who is one of the greatest cellist of the 20th century, said:

“The faster section is not actually a fugue, but due to the polyphonic element it seems like a fugue. As each voice enters, the previous one does not continue but remains implied in the background. If all three voices really existed it would be virtually impossible to play on the cello, though possible on the piano, so in performance you must compensate with your subconscious.”

Until Bach’s time it was traditional to end movements composed in a minor key with a major chord. This kind of ending was known under the name “Tierce de Picardie, (Picardi Third)” and can be found in the original edition for the cello. However, in the lute version of the suite, which was written in a Leipzig period, Bach abandons the effect, Picardi Third, and ends the movement in the minor mode.

**ALLEMANDE**

The scholarly book, “Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach,” by Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, has only limited discussion of the allemande because, by Bach’s time, they no longer reflected a particular dance form. In a study of allemandes of this period, the

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authors discovered neither clear choreographic roots nor distinguishable recurring rhythmic patterns; nor did they find any choreographies.\textsuperscript{11}

The allemande is a calm walking dance in moderate tempo and duple meter. And it usually is polyphonic in texture, with all parts sharing in a continuous flow of music written in small note values. Normally, the allemande begins with an upbeat. Although this allemande is German origin dance music, it has French style dotted rhythms and rapid scalar upbeats, especially the allemande of the fifth suite. The chords and wide leaps are also characteristic of French viol playing. This allemande of the fifth suite is not the type of gently flowing melody customary with allemandes of the other suites. The characteristics of this allemande are as follows: the scope is considerably enlarged, motivic germs are fully developed with extensive figuration, and dotted rhythms are prominent.

\textbf{COURANTE}

Originally Courantes were considered as slow dances. In 1725, Pierre Rameau wrote that the courante is a very solemn, nobler style dance in grander manner than the others, it is also very varied in its figures, and the courante has dignified and distinguished movements.” In the book “\textit{Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach}”, the authors also said that the French courante was variously described as serious and solemn, noble and grand, hopeful, majestic, and earnest.

The authors of the book “\textit{Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach}” call these movements “Correntes” instead of “Courantes.”, and they also define Correntes as follow:

“The early eighteenth century Italian corrente is a virtuoso piece for violin or keyboard. It usually consists of continuous elaboration in eighth or sixteenth notes over a bass in fast triple meter, with simple textures, slow harmonic rhythm, and phrases of varying lengths … Techniques of elaboration include arpeggiation, sequential repetition, two melodic parts combined into a single line, figures resembling an Alberti bass, and passage-work covering several octaves.” 12

This definition seems to fit most of the courantes in the cello suites by Bach, and the only true courante, according to “Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach” is in the c minor, fifth suite. Interestingly, all of the known Bach cello suites source manuscripts label these movements as courantes, while the first known published edition labels them all, including the one in c minor, as correntes.

The courante of the fifth suite is typical French style which is 3/2 meter instead of 3/4 and dotted rhythms and instead of a steadily flowing melodic line. It is somewhat stately, though particularly masculine and vigorous, possessing a clenched power. This French courante has a much more sophisticated rhythm, with a very characteristic alternation of simple with compound triple time, mainly 3/2 and 6/4. To make this rhythm effective, a steady tempo and a pointed style are needed: no longer running in the literal sense.

SARABANDE

The sarabande is usually a slow and majestic dance, beginning without upbeat and in triple meter, usually 3/2. It is generally more homophonic than the allemande and courante. It consists normally of four or eight-bar phrases. Another characteristic is an

accented dotted note on the second beat. However, the second beat should not be consistently emphasized in the sarabandes of the suites, especially that of the fifth suite. This is apparent in the choreographies for the sarabande, where not all the steps lend themselves to emphasizing the second beat. Instead, the emphasis should vary from measure to measure, which greatly adds to the musical interest of the piece. This should become clear when one looks at Bach’s sarabandes in the suites. Emphasizing the second beat in each measure would sound a little odd.

The sarabande of the fifth suite has a very beautiful single melodic line without any double-stops, and it contains perhaps the least number of notes of any other movement. The expressive gestures of the melody have also to serve as bass and accompaniment, since the pitch range of the notes is so wide. This unique sarabande is enigmatic, harmonically desolate, its loneliness being emphasized by the complete lack of double stops. In contrast to all the other sarabandes in the cello suites, this one is not clothed in full harmonies but unfolds as a single line, its appoggiaturas sounding poignant against the chords that the line so subtly suggests.

GAVOTTE

The gavotte was one of the most popular dance forms during 17th and 18th centuries, appearing in various forms, such as dance suites, solo works, trios, choruses and cantatas. The gavotte is a graceful and flirtatious walking dance in moderate tempo. Usually it has four-measure phrases that begin and end in the middle of the bar, and its meter is 2/2. It
uses simple rhythmic motives. The general characteristic of the gavotte should sound skipping or hopping, not running. In the fifth suite, the two gavottes are both in the minor mode. The primary features of the first gavotte are leaps and chords, and in the second flowing triplet passages.

GIGUE

The gigue is mainly in quick tempo and in compound duple or triple meter, such as 6/8, 9/8, or 12/8. Occasionally the gigue used 4/4 meter and dotted rhythms. Features of the gigue are the use of triplets and frequent wide leaps in its melody, and imitative counterpoint. Usually, a gigue begins with an eighth-note upbeat, and often the second section of the binary-form movement starts with a mirror inversion of the opening motive.

This gigue of the fifth suite has the dotted 3/8 triplet rhythm, and it ends the suite on a melancholy tone. “Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach” further reinforces the notion that the gigues are not meant to be danced to. They divide gigues into three subcategories, such as the French Gigue, Giga I, and Giga II, the latter two clearly being instrumental instead of dance music. They refer to the c minor Gigue as a French Gigue, of which they write:

“The most distinctive feature of this characteristic French dance is its graceful lilt, produced by the almost constant use of the “sautillant” figure: dotted eighth, sixteenth, eight.”  

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THE INTERPRETATION OF BAROQUE PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

ORNAMENTATION

Music of J.S. Bach flourished for two hundred and fifty years. At that time, composers did not write music in detail. Sometimes a player had to add an appoggiatura because the composer did not write a note which represents the culmination of the phrase. Therefore, occasionally playing without ornaments or an additional note may result in a distortion or mutilation of the musical line. As ornamental signs could be understood in many different ways, the composer had to depend on the performer’s feeling for style, as well as his knowledge of the rules of performance practices. In the *Performance Practice of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Frederick Neumann defined ornamentation as follow:

“Ornamentation, like rhythm, is a complex phenomenon and therefore difficult to define. In music, as well as in the visual arts, an ornament is generally conceived as an addition to structure, in the sense that structure embodies what is of the artistic essence while ornamentation serves to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the structural elements, most typically by adding elegance, grace, smoothness, or variety.”\(^{15}\)

A general meaning of an ornament is a short melodic method which can decorate a melody to make it more brilliant. The ornaments were originally from oriental music and common in medieval music. However, in Renaissance music, they were not treated as important features. The treatises of the later 16\(^{th}\) century contain few descriptions only which are not detailed.

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The origin of Baroque ornamentation was the vocal music of the Renaissance. In Baroque era, a huge vocabulary of ornament signs developed. In *The Interpretation of Early Music*, Robert Donington lists more than one hundred and twenty-five signs that have been used for ornaments, one way or another, in early music. However, mainly the appoggiatura and the trill were highlights of Baroque music.

Bach wrote the explication of ornaments at the beginning of the *Clavierbuchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, in January 1720 in the same year known as composing the suites for unaccompanied cello. In this Explication, Bach explained that how to play various ornament signs, some ornaments playing as following example:

![Ex. 1]

The appoggiatura, often indicated by small notes, can make more smooth line of the melody, and it is basically a dissonance. The general length of the appoggiatura is half of the principal note, taking away its accent, and thus, it becomes part of the musical line.

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In the early Baroque period, regardless of its actual length in performance or the length of principal note, an appoggiatura was almost always written in an eighth note. However, later composers indicated its exact duration for better results of performance to follow their intention. Regarding the length of the appoggiatura, C. P. E. Bach gives the following rule:

“According to the general rule regarding the length of these appoggiature, we find that they take half from the following note, if duple, and two thirds of its value, if triple.”\(^\text{18}\)

As J. J. Quantz said in his treatise as follow: “in the Baroque era, uses of appoggiaturas are not only as ornaments, but also necessary elements. Without using them, the tune would often be very dry and plain.” Even if J. S. Bach did not indicate appoggiatura, he might be expected to put some appoggiatura by the performer because it was a tradition of Baroque music. Therefore a performer can put in appoggiatura some place where it is needed. This is definitely up to the performer’s ability or feeling.

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Originally from *Versuch über die wahre Art Klavier zu spielen.* (Chapter II, Section II, 11) By C. Ph. E. Bach.
With dotted notes, the appoggiatura assumes the whole value of the principal note, the latter the value of the dot, plus half of its value, which is taken from the following short note. The following quotation about dotted note is by Leopold Mozart:

“With dotted notes the appoggiatura is held the same length of time as the value of the principal note. In place of the dot, however, the written note is taken first, and in such a fashion as if the dot stood after it. Then the bow is lifted and the last note played so late that, by means of a rapid change of stroke, the note following it is heard immediately after.”

Thus, between the dotted note and the short note, a gap is created, and then the short note will become part of the next phrase. This dotted rhythm will be given a full explanation in the later section.

An appoggiatura can remove the natural accent of the principal note, and to avoid this, Italian composer, Tartini suggests adding a short trill instead of an appoggiatura. A trill means a free and rapid alternation of the main note with an upper accessory note a tone or semitone above it. Bach used “t” or “tr” for indicating ornaments in his solo works exclusively. These signs can indicate both appoggiatura and trill.

The trill in the Baroque period was used as a harmonic ornament. The Baroque trill generally starts from its upper accessory note, well accented to mark the ensuing modification of the harmony, and often to a greater or lesser extent prolonged so as to give this modification still greater prominence. If a trill ends with a turn, the latter is shortened by half its value unless the ornament has been written out in full by the composer himself.

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There are two ways of termination of cadential trills. One is with a turn. This way of termination contains two little notes at the end. These two notes are tied to it and played with the same speed. (Ex.3) However, these two notes are not always indicated by the composer. Therefore, the performer has to add notes at the end of the trill, if needed. As without them, the trill would not be the role of complete cadence and brilliant enough.

![Written](Ex. 3) ![Playing](Ex. 3)

Another is with an anticipation of the principal note. (Ex.4) In this way of termination, a trill must end on its main note with a certain emphasis, for this to be properly felt, and the principal note has to be always distinctly heard at the end.

![Written](Ex. 4) ![Playing](Ex. 4)

A trill consists at least two repercussions, giving four notes as in example 5. This double repercussion is called as the half trill, however, its correct German name is Pralltriller. The Pralltriller occur generally in stepwise descending passage.\(^{20}\) This Pralltriller starts also with its upper note. There are no added notes at the end of the trill.

The trill ends on its main note, held long enough to make a distinct effect. The function of the half-trill is hardly harmonic at all. It is to some extent melodic, but it is primarily rhythmic, particularly in its shortest examples.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Written} \\
\text{Playing}
\end{array}
\]

(Ex. 5)

The following quotation is about Pralltriller by C. P. E. Bach in his treatise:

“The half-trill, or Pralltriller, which differs through its sharpness and shortness from all the other trills … is the most indispensable and most agreeable of all the ornaments, but also the most difficult to perform. It must really bounce … and be played with such an extreme speed, that all the notes in this trill only be heard with difficulty. This Pralltriller can only occur on a descending step of a second.”

The continuous trill can make a melodic line more brilliant. Although they make sound very similarly, their functions were different. While its shortest examples serve essentially a rhythmic function, its longer examples appear as melodic function. However, there is no case where a continuous trill served as primarily a harmonic function. It starts usually with the upper note, and this is well accented in the shortest examples, but much less accented in the longer examples. The trill must remain the same speed until the end of trill.

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Although Bach indicated ornaments in his works more precisely than his contemporaries, sometimes he also indicated very unclear or ambiguously. Actually many errors are found in Bach’s works especially in works that have survived only in copy like the cello suites. Compared with early manuscripts, some signs have been found in different places, and some places have used different signs. However, there is no absolutely right way for adding ornaments, but many ways, each valid in certain circumstances. The performer must always have the historical and musical support for his interpretation of ornamentation, if he wants to make his ornamentations convincing.

RHYTHM

Although the rhythm should be notated mathematically, the inside value of the rhythm is not mathematical. The time value of the rhythm can be varied by various circumstances or performers. All performers have modified the notated rhythm, such as sharpening, softening, or something else, when they play music through their own interpretations. Performers of the Baroque period carried these modifications to extremes some of which could at least approximately have been shown in notation.

In the rhythmic differences between modern and Baroque music, dotted rhythm is the most distinctive feature. In present notation, the dot is used as extending the value of the notes before it by one half. Thus, this dot can be called the dot of augmentation in proportional notation. However, in Baroque notation, though this extension of note value by one half

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was the general meaning of the dot of augmentation, it was also used to mean any convenient prolongation, whether by less than one half, or by more. The extent can be quite free and un-mathematical, except when other parts move across the dot, then it is better to prolong it, if at all, in mathematical proportion.

The Baroque dotted note was generally one of the ingredients of melody, and it had some flexibility which is an expression of standard length subject. However, when the melody contains mostly dotted notes, it would become dull indeed, if played literally. Then, in Baroque music, it was the custom to sharpen them by lengthening the dot or following short note, thereby delaying or shortening the note after the dotted note. This is often called “double-dotting”. But since the extent is variable, according to Donington in his book *The Interpretation of Early Music*, a better term is “over-dotting”. 24

According to Donington, Over-dotting means that the dot after a note is to be lengthened by a second or even a third dot, or a corresponding silence, and that the short note that follows the dot is to be played as late as possible. (Ex. 6)

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Although this way of performance was internationally popular, it appears always in the some of the dance movements and overtures which are French style, that this manner of performance would have been most suitable, and its usage mandatory.  

French Overture style is one of the most influential styles of Baroque music. This French Overture has a certain character of composition which originated in the slow introductory movement, and this idiom spread to many other contexts and countries. This French overture has its special feature, which is a mostly rhythmic matter, especially dotted rhythm and rushing scale-passages. These rhythmic matters are often intended to be exaggerated in performance. The dots are strongly “over-dotted”. And they are taken wholly or largely as silences of articulation. The scale-passages, some three to seven notes long, are left as late as possible, and then taken very rapidly, but detached.

When the scale-passage is notated as the up-beat after a dotted note, it is a particular instance of ordinary over-dotting. When it follows the beat after a short rest, the rest will be prolonged, and the result may be regarded as an extension of the over-dotting principle. The entire effect is one of wild flexibility on a foundation of strength and poise. In a literal performance, this effect is lost, and the music merely sounds heavy. French Overture style depends even more than most Baroque music on the invigoration given it by conventional departures from the written music. J. J. Quantz has the following to say in his treatise:

“The dotted note must be accented and the bow must be stopped for the value of the dot … and in case the dot is being followed by three or more thirty-second notes, the latter, especially in slow movements, should not be played in accordance with their value, but at the extreme end of their allotted

time value, and with utmost velocity: as is customary in Ouvertures, Entrees and Furies. Each of those short notes should be played separately, very rarely slurred.  

It is more convenient that there is a short rest between note with dot and short note to follow Quantz. As a result, this dotted rhythm should be played as followed example 7.

![Original notation](image1) ![Actual sound](image2)

Dotted rhythm in measure 20 of Prelude in the Suite V

![Original notation](image3) ![Actual sound](image4)

Dotted rhythm with scale passage in measure 1 of allemande in the Suite V

(Ex. 7)

Rhythms, especially dotted rhythm, need to have the disparity between the lengths of the notes emphasized. Otherwise they will sound sluggish. A short rest between the dotted note and the short note will improve the articulation. But neither Bach nor his contemporaries usually bothered to write them out in full, nor to indicate the exact length of short notes in pieces that make use of dotted rhythms. All dotted rhythms should be

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adjusted so that they fit the shortest one in the piece. Furthermore, the other movements, such as allemande, courante, and gigue, have also dotted rhythm but these are not French overture style. However, these movements have typical characters of French style as mentioned earlier. This means that dotted rhythm in those movements has also to follow the tradition of French style which is overdotting as following example 8.

Original notation    Actual sound

Measure 1 – 2 of Gigue in the Suite V (Ex. 8)

Therefore, almost all dotted note in the French style music of Baroque period, especially this suite, should be played as example 7 and 8.

BOWING AND PHRASING

The performers of Baroque music attempt to produce the actual sound of Baroque music with the performance practice of the Baroque period when playing the suites, since Baroque musicians had very different instruments, bows, and strings, different concepts of intonation and articulation, and different musical goals. As previously stated, the sound of Baroque music was very different from today’s, and articulation in the Baroque period was also very different. For example, when Baroque performers played two-note slurs, they played shortening the second note slightly, separating it, in other words, from the following note and making a slight diminuendo from the first note to the second. They tended to play notes with more separate bows, instead of slurring them together, playing such notes fairly
short and a bit separated from each other. Also, chords were played in a more arpeggiated manner, instead of being crunched out triple and quadruple stops. These kinds of articulations showed that Baroque musicians also had a different aesthetic, a different concept of what a sound was, and had different musical goals.

Actual slurs are a normal part of the technique of bowed instruments, and are to be used even in the music of periods at which it was not customary to show them at all. Among the bowing signs, the slur was common, but the détaché, symbolized by a stroke or a wedge, and the staccato were used much less often although they were certainly known. Actually these signs, the détaché and the staccato, were often used interchangeably to mean what we today call staccato. The stroke and the dot were also used occasionally in combination with the slur. In the preface to the edition of Bach’s Suites for Cello in the Barenreiter Verlag, August Wenzinger writes the following quotation:

>“Bach’s articulation makes special demands on bowing technique. The modern cellist is almost exclusively trained in legato playing for the presentation of romantic and post-romantic music and for the augmentation of tone. However, for the 17th and 18th century string player non-legato playing, a broad détaché bowing, was the primary style. He was accustomed to present a continuous musical line detached bowing. The slurs had the object of distinguishing and picking out a group of notes as a figure from the uniform flow.”

In instrumental music, the slur has various meanings. The most common meaning of the slur is to indicate legato, or the connection of tones. The other meaning is to distinguish the phrases which require punctuation. Thirdly, it is to make more manifest

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certain rhythmic groups by showing their separate relationship or their individual conformation.

In his treatise, Leopold Mozart says, “if the composer has forgotten to mark the slurs or has himself not understood how to do so, then the performer must use good taste and sound judgment.” Performers often assume to play with separate bow on each note when they play unslurred music, but this assumption is wrong. Many treatises and books about performance practice have explained the exception to this, such as arpeggiated passages in which each note was often played with a separated bow. Of course even then they did not always agree with each other.  

In later Baroque music, sometimes long slurs are found, however, they are not bowing marks, but clearly phrasing marks, or may possibly indicate phrase-groupings. For example, in the mid-17th century English manuscript Christ Church, Oxford, 732, which is the Canto part of fantasies for viols in two to four parts by Giovanni Coperario and Orlando Gibbons, long slurs even pass across rests. Also in the first measure of prelude in the suite No. 5, there is a long slur, and this slur can hardly be played in one bow because of its slow tempo. Thus some editions divide slurs two or three to a bow. Therefore, it is understood as a phrase mark not a bow mark. (Ex. 9) Phrasing may often be brought out clearly by using the appropriate bowings.

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This is another example of long slur which is found in the suite IV.
Bach’s indication of slur is often not very exact, and many slurs appear shifted to the right. These facts have led editors to believe that this is always due to negligent writing. As result, they included one or more of the preceding notes in the slur, which resulted in incomplete phrasing and inaccurate voice-leading. According to the copy by Anna Magdalena, J. S. Bach indicated only few slurs in his cello suites. Among those slurs some of them are phrasing marks not bowing marks.

This can be a slur or not. Because moving notes have to be emphasized and following notes are like pedal tone sound, moving notes using down bow on moving notes and up-bow with following note can produce better results than a slur. Each down-bow can make an exaggerated sound of moving quality, and separated bowing can make a more ringing sound for pedal tone (Ex. 11). However, each one should be taken on another string because of two notes belonging to different voices.
Moreover, there is no slur on the three notes and one note group which can be found many places, for example, measure 29, 31, 49, and so on. Between two stated notes, it can be understood as a neighboring note, so it will be realized in the following rhythm (Ex. 11). As a result, many editions indicated a slur on the first three notes. However, it is not necessary to be slurred if performers correctly realize the rhythmic figure which is a three and one note group.

According to Lully’s rule, every strong beat should be played with a down-bow. This rule was thought to be of great importance in the 17th century, and it was still being observed in the 18th century. This rule grew out of a strong feeling for the metre, however,
it could only be disregarded in quick movements. Georg Muffat said following quotation in “Florilegium primum” (Augsburg, 1695):

“The first note in a bar, starting without a rest (i.e. exactly on the beat) should be played with down-bow, whereby its value is of no importance. This is the most valuable and almost indispensable rule of the Lullyists.”

There are no problems following the rule when the measure contains an even number of notes. However, there are difficulties when a measure in 3/4 contains three quarter-notes, or a measure in 3/8 three eighth notes. Leopold Mozart gives a rule for this condition:

“When in triple time only quarter-notes occur, two notes of the three must always be taken together in one stroke.” (Ex. 13) However, it has caused many arguments with contemporary musicians and theorists. Even Leopold Mozart gives an example where only every second bar starts with a down-bow. Actually, in quicker movements, Lully’s rule cannot be strictly followed.30

Measure 25 – 26 of Gigue in the Suite V (Ex. 13)

Early music is very commonly under-phrased. Although the performers understand the phrasing, he does not realize how extremely articulate much early phrasing needs to be, especially in Baroque music, in order to make the sense and structure really audible.

Phrases may contain various aspects, which include the rise and fall of a dynamic, a suggestion of rallentando, and so on. They are separated by silences within phrasing which range from scarcely perceptible to very conspicuous. A sense of phrasing is so intimate and incommunicable a part of interpretative musicianship that very little attempt is made to suggest it in notation.

POLYPHONY

When Bach wrote music for a solo instrument, such as violin or cello, he tried to imply polyphony in a single melodic line. However, it still tends to be seen as simple monody by modern string players, especially music students or amateurs. Bach implies chordal structures by using a large melodic range or many leaps in single melodic line. With a little adjustment, such as omission of passing tones and the like, any performer can convert any of the cello suite movements into a choral style piece as a series of vertical, multi-voiced chords. Most of the time in any movement in the suites a consistent number of voices will be implied in the melody, usually two or three voices. When the polyphonic melody has been converted into choral style, it will be noticed that the voice-leading of each line is carefully worked out. To address modern authentic performance practice, it is, therefore, correct for the performers to bring out the vertical structures, or harmonies, because polyphonic melody can be seen as a variation of chordal style.

In Bach’s music chordal types were recognized by a combination of melodic lines, but not as a progression of chordal roots within a key. Bach recognized them more as figured bass structures. All the vertical dissonances in Bach’s music are related to the bass
note and receive proper contrapuntal treatment in relation to the bass note. The vertical structures were not only chords as harmonic progression but also the combination of multiple melodic lines. In the Baroque era, composers were properly taught that certain vertical structures were used as polyphonic melodies. Bach realized vertical structures in a figured bass way, and in what context certain ones appeared. However, for him, melodic and contrapuntal considerations were more important and shaped his music to a greater degree.

Also demanded of the performer in the interpretation of Bach’s suites is a profound feeling for the polyphonic writing which is such as the essential feature of the style. Suite’s huge technical difficulties, especially the continuing use of multiple stops, are not just virtuoso features but are the natural result of the complexity of his musical ideas. Bach seems to break through the technical limitations of the instrument with his desire to produce polyphony.

Because Bach intended to produce polyphonic texture in these suites, the problem of reading its polyphonic texture of these suites deserves much attention. In these suites, real polyphony is produced when two or more voices are played simultaneously; however, often independent voices intertwine which creates the problem of a single note implying polyphony. By means of multiple stops, occasional leaps, and even single melodic lines, Bach suggested interplay of independent voices. Often the presence of another voice can
only be detected by following the continuation of the musical line. A lower note in the melody, or of a chord, may reveal another voice (Ex. 14).\footnote{Richard R. Efrati, \textit{Treatise on the Execution and Interpretation of the Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin and the Suites for Solo Cello by Johann Sebastian Bach}. (Zurich: Atlantis, 1979.), P135.}
Two voices divide into two staves

Measures 8 – 12 of Courante in the Suite V (Ex. 14)
In the lute version of the suite, it is easier to find two voices and harmony.

To differentiate between the different voices is the most important thing for the phrasing. They should be taken on different strings whenever possible. Often the pattern of the musical line shows the existence of a pedal point. The notes may be tied in pairs, or played separately, depending on the character of the music (see example 10). Sometimes different voices appear alternately by measure, not simultaneously, on different strings (Ex. 16).
Measure 63 – 66 of Prelude in the Suite V (Ex. 16)

Tone quality is a means of giving another dimension to the musical line. The different tone qualities of the strings render it possible to bring out clearly the inner symmetrical structure of phrases. Bach understood how to make use of the tone-qualities of open strings and harmonics, in contrast to stopped tones, to bring out the voice-leading more clearly. It should be observed that the note on the first beat of bar 12 of the Courante, Suite V, has two stems pointing in opposite directions. For the voice-leading, this tone should be played both stopped and as a harmonic simultaneously (see example 13).

Each string has its own characteristic. Because of this, a stringed instrument used for the performance of polyphonic music as the ideal medium. Polyphony is ever present in Bach’s music and the interpreter should attempt to bring out this characteristics of each string very clearly, making use of all possible tone colours which his instrument offers him. Phrases may be made to stand out from each other by playing them on different strings.32

TEMPO

In the performance of Baroque instrumental music, one of the most disputed subjects and problematic matters is tempo. The choosing of the correct tempo can greatly

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influence perception by the listener, and the contemporary performer’s interpretation of
tempos varies greatly. So choosing the exact tempo is a matter of the utmost importance.
In Bach’s lifetime many treatises dealt with the question of tempo. Although this period
was a hundred years before the invention of the metronome, the treatises were usually
content to give a rough indication of the relative speed, for example that a certain tempo
should be taken at a lively pace, and that another should be less lively.

Most of Bach’s music has come down without any tempo marks. Bach assumed
that the performers would be able to presuppose the right tempo from the time signature,
the rhythmic patterns, the choice and disposition of certain note-values, the text underlay,
and titles of movements. In many works the intended tempo is completely clear, even
today. However, dances have always had their general tempi primarily determined by the
movement of the body.

In the Baroque music, especially in Bach’s music, the role of the dance provides
important tempo indications that nevertheless must be used with great care. By their nature,
the dances had standardized tempi that are generally well known, at least for specific times
and places. Many French and German theorists wrote descriptions of the nature and forms
of the various dances, including information about their meter signatures, number of beats,
and affects with their implications for tempo. With a few exceptions, these descriptions are
notable for overall agreement.

Griepenkerl was an editor who added metronome markings to Bach’s works. He
provided a detailed description of dance movements of Bach’s suite in the preface to the
volume of partitas in the old Peters edition. He concerned some aspects with tempo in the
Bach’s suites are as follows:

“The Allemande has a serious German character… Its tempo most closely approximates to our allegro moderato… The Courante has very strict rules as a dance… A rapid allegro is well suited to it… The Sarabande begins on the down beat, and has two sections, usually of eight bars, which are both repeated. It requires a slow movement… Its character is a certain grandeur in the expression of all the more profound feelings of sublimity, dignity, and majesty. Religious texts could even be added to some of J.S. Bach’s sarabandes… The Gavotte is written in 4/4 time alla breve… It begins on the up-beat with the third crotchet and consists of two-bar sections, which thus always begin on the third beat. The fastest notes are quavers. Its movement is moderately gay, its character exultant joy. The Gigue, as music for dancing, is a small, gay piece in 6/8, 12/8, or 12/16. It has two sections which are repeated… and in which notes are largely of the same. In gigues only designed to be played, these laws are significantly disregarded. Thus in J.S. Bach’s suites there are gigues in 9/16, 4/2, 4/4, and 3/8 time…”

Although Bach or any other source materials did not give any written indications for the interpretation of the suites, it can be assumed that everyone understood the tempi of the dances. However, Bach’s cello suites really are not meant to be danced to, because Bach’s dances should be understood as stylized dances. A true Baroque dance piece has an obvious tune, a clear sense of pulse and clear, regular phrasing, usually eight bars in length, and dance music in the Baroque era tends to be very predictable. Not many of the movements in the Bach’s cello suites meet these requirements. Bach used the dance forms as mere starting points and, through his boundless imagination, he stretched and molded them to suit his own fancy. Bach’s cello suites are much more complicated than the

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Baroque music that was specifically written for dance, and that the tempos should be approached with this in mind.34

Bach had completely broken with the traditional dance form in these cello suites. The music was too irregular to be appropriate for dancing. Bach also completely deviates from the dance form when he inserts the cadenza-like passage which is great as an instrumental effect, but not great for dancing (Ex. 17). The piece also lacks the clear melodic character that true Baroque dance music has.

Although these suites are not necessarily music to be danced, the names of the dances in the suites can still give an approximate idea of the speed at which to play the various movements. Therefore the tempo of the movements in the suite can be approximately assumed. Following are suggested tempi for the fifth suite for cello solo.

- Prelude: Largo – Allegro moderato
- Allemande: 60 beats per minute (quarter note)
- Courante: 60 beats per minute (quarter note)
- Sarabande: 40 beats per minute (quarter note)
- Gavotte: 132 beats per minute (quarter note)
- Gigue: 176 beats per minute (8th note)

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Compared with tempi of original Baroque dances, allemande and courante might seem to be a little slow, but choosing these tempos more closely mirrors the character of French style dance.

However, it is unnecessary to try and establish the correct tempo in every case, since contemporary views differ widely in this respect. Furthermore, many dances have changed their character in the course of time together with the speed of execution. There are also national differences which have to be taken into consideration. It may safely be assumed that interpreters have taken the tempi to a great extent according to their personal taste, as happens also in the present day. In any case the tempo must be convincing.

Fine music has depths and shades of meaning which cannot all be fully brought out in the same performance. Not only may different performers find different affinities in the same music; the same performers may do so at different times. And one of the main changes involved in such changes of interpretation is a changes of tempo. In actual performance the tempo chosen depends on a variety of factors, external, such as the size of hall and its acoustic properties, as well as emotional. Having decided on a basic tempo, performers have to apply it with the necessary flexibility. Both evidence and experience confirm that the ordinary flexibility to which performers are accustomed in later music were required for earlier music too, in a perfectly normal way.

DYNAMIC

In the Baroque music, there were very few dynamic indications written by the composers. Thus, this important matter has been left to the taste of the performer. Like
other composers of his period, Bach also used dynamic markings very rarely. In his partitas and sonatas for solo violin, the few dynamic markings are only to be found in the Fuga and Allegro of Sonata II, and in the Preludio, Bourrée and Giga of Partita III.

However, it is naturally ludicrous to perform these compositions in a monotonous fashion, without any interpretations of dynamics. Various volumes are very effective to emotion and relaxation of both performers and audiences. This happens in all music, and it is a complete misunderstanding to confine Baroque music within a range of what has recently been called terrace dynamics. In Bach’s time, terrace dynamics, alternations between forte and piano over a long time span, were generally used. (Ex. 18)

Edited by H. Becker

Measure 1 – 6 of Prelude in the Suite V (Ex. 18)

In the early manuscripts or editions of the suites, almost all dynamic markings were used as echo effect in short repeated phrases. These echo effects were common in the performances in Bach’s time, especially in Italian music and in works influenced by Italian
composers. In other words, repeated phrases had to be performed with this echo-principle. This echo effect was one of the unwritten laws of the Baroque style. (Ex. 19)

![Ex. 19, Measure 1–6 of Prelude in the Suite IV](image)

Although echo effect was a main principle in Bach’s time, composers also wrote for instruments which cannot produce the effect of crescendo and decrescendo very well. This means that all music of this period would not necessarily have to follow the rule of echo-principle. However, the interpretation of music for the instruments which can produce those effect, such as stringed instruments, does follow this rule of echo-principle. Being used to performances where emphasis by harmonic or rhythmic implication was a natural way of playing, the lack of written dynamic indications would not have been seen as a problem to an expressive performance.

TUNING SYSTEM

The fifth suite for cello solo is called the “Suite Discordable” because Bach has prescribed scordatura, whereby one or more strings are tuned to intervals other than a fifth in order to facilitate chord playing. In this case the A string has to be lowered to G.
According to “The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians”, Scordatura means as follow:

“A term ‘Scordatura’ applied largely to lutes, guitars, viols and the violin family to designate a tuning other than the normal, established one. Scordatura was first introduced early in the 16th century and enjoyed a particular vogue between 1600 and 1750. It offered novel colours, timbres and sonorities, alternative harmonic possibilities and, in some cases, extension of an instrument's range. It could also assist in imitating other instruments, and facilitate the execution of whole compositions or make possible various passages involving wide intervals, intricate string crossing or unconventional double stopping.”

“Although the normal cello tuning is C–G–d–a, and any deviation from this may be regarded as scordatura, the tunings B♭–F–c–g (associated with the Bass Violin in the 16th and 17th centuries) and C–G–d–g (the so-called ‘Italian’ tuning, employed by Domenico Gabrielli, B.G. Marcello, Giuseppe Torelli and others at the end of the 17th century) were also occasionally used as established tunings, and are thus not always scordaturas as such. However, the earliest known instance of a cello tuning being considered by a composer to be a variation from the normal is, in fact, C–G–d–g: the ‘Capricio’ from Sonata no.2 of Luigi Taglietti’s Suonate da camera, op.1 (1697), bears the instruction ‘discordatura’ and indicates this tuning by an incipit. The earliest example of a cello transposition scordatura is found in Jacob Klein’s VI sonates op.1, bk3 (1717); all six sonatas employ the tuning D–A–c–b. In Klein’s VI duetti op.2 (1719), C–G–d–g is employed only in the sixth duet. J.S. Bach’s solo cello suite no.5 in C minor (BWV1011) is the latest example of cello scordatura from the Baroque period and uses the ‘Italian’ tuning.”

“Cello scordatura was abandoned as a technique for most of the 18th century and was used sparingly in the 19th-century chamber music repertory (e.g. Schumann’s Piano Quartet op.47, which uses B♭–G–d–a). 20th-century chamber and orchestral works that employ cello scordatura include Alban Berg’s Lyric Suite, Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring and Respighi’s Pini di Roma, which all employ the tuning B♭–G–d–a. Solo works for cello scordatura include Kodály’s Sonata op.8 (which uses B♭–F–d–a) and Ralph Shapey’s Krosnick Soli (A♭–G–d–a).”

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In the early 18th century, there were two kinds of instruments of similar shape named as violoncello, but different size. One is mainly used for church music and in processions, which is the larger size. Another, which is a smaller size, is used for secular music. This smaller size cello is comparable to today’s cello and used for a concert instrument at the end of the 17th century, later became as a solo instrument. These instruments can be named as violoncello da chiesa and violoncello da camera. These names were according to their size, and also where and what kind of music they have been played. They both were generally four strings, tuned in the following way (Ex. 20):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{da chiesa: } & \quad B^\flat, F, C, G \\
\text{da camera: } & \quad C, G, D, A
\end{align*}
\]

(Ex. 20)

The tuning of violoncello da chiesa was the most logical, because it allowed the entire violin family to tune together to the same open G string and to cover a continuous range. However, there being no need for the longer, heavier strings necessary for low notes, their use gradually disappeared. Thus, with the da camera, the tuning of violoncello da chiesa was raised one whole step, which became the standard tuning of today’s cellos. For a time, the following tuning was also widely used to retain the advantage of having the G common with the other instruments as violoncello da chiesa. (Ex. 21):
The scordatura in the fifth suite is a very unique style in Bach’s works. Here the A string is tuned down to G, thereby causing all notes played on the first string to sound a whole tone lower than written. (Ex. 22)

The notes sounding g and a-flat can be written for the g or the d string.

There was no other piece for any string instrument using scordatura by J. S. Bach, and it is uncertain why he used scordatura in this piece. Maybe in this suite, Bach wanted to obtain certain effects of sonority which are impossible to achieve on a normally-tuned cello. The two strings tuned in octave G’s produce, by sympathetic vibration, an amplitude of sound and a particularly rich and colored quality. Although it can be played with the more conventional tuning, the scordatura allows chordal spacings that would not otherwise be possible and it also affects the resonance of the instrument, creating a color distance from that of the previous suites. Moreover, by using this way of tuning, perhaps Bach
intended to give a darker tone colour to the high A-string and enlarged the coloristic and technical possibilities.

Possibly he was reviving a tuning which not so long before had been a regular one for the cello. Or perhaps he had an eye on the French tradition of music for solo bass viol, an instrument tuned in 4ths. Equally plausible, however, is the theory that the suite is based on an earlier composition for an instrument tuned C-G-d-g, perhaps a lute. This change in tuning also offers the advantage of a much greater ease of execution, proving once again the thorough knowledge Bach had of the resources of the instrument.

The tuning required for this suite was at the time not so exceptional. Domenico Gabrielli used it in his Ricercari (1689) and in his sonatas, as did Giuseppe Torelli and probably Vivaldi. The ricercari can be played without any problems on a cello tuned normally. However, if the fifth cello suite by J. S. Bach is played on a normally-tuned cello, the original intent of the composer is disregarded, and many notes in the chords must be left out.
CONCLUSION

The autograph of the suite for lute by Bach has survived, and Bach rewrote suite for lute with the fifth cello suite in his Leipzig period, c. 1730. Thus, it was later than the cello version. Bach did make this lute version of the fifth suite much more brilliant. He added ornaments, bass notes and multiple stops. He indicated a tempo mark in the fugue of the prelude as tres viste which means presto. Since Bach emphasized the inflections of the musical phrase of the suite harmonically in the suite of the lute version, it is very instructive in structural analysis, phrasing, and interpretation. For this reasons, it is appropriate to present this work in a second version, incorporating from the lute all the elements playable on the cello as well. Although no autograph of the suites has survived, using Bach’s transcription of the fifth suite for the lute, it is possible to correct the mistakes which appear in early manuscripts, such as Anna Magdalena’s, and to reconstruct parts of the lower voice which were left incomplete.

Modern performers always have disputes with the interpretation of the Bach’s cello suites. Instead of an autograph of Bach’s cello suites, three manuscripts, which were hand-copied from the original, have remained as best sources. These manuscripts are by Anna Magdalena Bach, who is Bach’s second wife, J. P. Kellner, and J. J. H. Westphal, the latter two being avid music collectors in Bach’s time. These manuscripts have very many differences from each other.

The errors, contained in these manuscripts, have caused many arguments among performers of the suites. Therefore, when the suite is played by a performer who chose one of these manuscripts, it can bring out many questions. Many different interpretations of
these suites have been given by various performers, and they can delight audiences. Moreover, on various recordings of the suite by many different performers, there is very little agreement to the answers of these questions. This probably means that there is no single correct interpretation of the suites. It seems that the best one can do is learn as much as one can about the outstanding issues, and then make informed choices.

The music of this performance guide of Suite No. 5 for Violoncello Solo, which is a carefully edited even rewritten transcription of the suite, is presented on the following pages. This music of the guide, I believe, reproduces the composer’s intentions much more accurately than many present editions.
Suite V
BWV 1011

Prelude

Discordable

Largo

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Allemande
Courante

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mf
Sarabande

Largo \( \frac{4}{4} \)

\( \frac{6}{4} \)

\( \frac{31}{32} \)
Gavotte I

Allegretto \( \frac{d}{=32} \)

\[ \text{mf} \]

\[ \text{p} \]

\[ \text{cresc.} \]

\[ \text{cresc.} \]
Gavotte II
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