

More About A LITTLE BACH SUITE

The great German master Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) represents the pinnacle of music's Baroque period, and is widely considered to be one of the greatest composers of all time.

In the early 1720's he wrote 2 sets of relatively easy keyboard pieces for his second wife, now known as the **Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach**. This work is still studied by most--if not all--piano students, and some of Bach's most familiar melodies are to be found there.

For this suite, I have selected 4 of the most popular of these short pieces to frame a contrasting centerpiece, the incomparably beautiful **Arioso**, which was originally the *sinfonia* from his cantata, **Ich steh mit einem Fuss im Grabe**, BWV 156. Bach must have favored this melody himself, because he later used it again as the slow movement in one of his violin concertos and in several other compositions.

Subsequent to writing and publishing this suite, I learned that the Minuet was actually composed by Bach's contemporary Christian Petzold, and has been misattributed to Bach for centuries due to its inclusion in his **Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach**, without any citation of the source of the tune. I don't know how I escaped learning that earlier, since it is a fairly major mistake for such a famous piece of music...reminiscent of Jeremiah Clarke's **Trumpet Voluntary** being attributed to Henry Purcell for all those years!

I have made 3 versions of **A Little Bach Suite**: brass quintet, woodwind quintet, and saxophone quartet.