



MARROW
THE 6 SUITES FOR SOLO CELLO
BY J.S. BACH

SÆUNN THORSTEINSDÓTTIR

M A R R O W

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Disc 1: 39:08

**1-6). Suite No. 1 in G major,
BWV 1007**

Prelude	2:43
Allemande	2:36
Courante	1:28
Sarabande	1:46
Minuet I / II	2:10
Gigue	1:06

**7-12). Suite No. 2 in D minor,
BWV 1008**

Prelude	3:44
Allemande	1:43
Courante	1:07
Sarabande	2:35
Minuet I / II	1:50
Gigue	1:29

**13-18). Suite No. 3 in C major,
BWV 1009**

Prelude	3:54
Allemande	2:10
Courante	1:44
Sarabande	2:24
Bourrée I / II	2:36
Gigue	1:55

Disc 2: 51:11

**1-6). Suite No. 4 in E-flat major,
BWV 1010**

Prelude	3:56
Allemande	2:17
Courante	2:03
Sarabande	2:28
Bourrée I / II	3:21
Gigue	1:31

**7-12). Suite No. 5 in C minor,
BWV 1011**

Prelude	6:40
Allemande	3:06
Courante	0:59
Sarabande	2:09
Gavotte I / II	2:55
Gigue	1:22

**13-18). Suite No. 6 in D major,
BWV 1012**

Prelude	4:39
Allemande	3:41
Courante	2:05
Sarabande	2:40
Gavotte I / II	2:44
Gigue	2:26

There is an Icelandic saying, “mergur málsins”, which directly translates to “the marrow of the matter,” and these Suites, to me, speak directly to the essence of being human. As for many cellists, these Suites have been my steady companion throughout my life with the cello, first as a vehicle to learn counterpoint, style, and harmony, then as material with which to explore personal expression and interpretation, and today they are a mirror, reflecting the deeper truth of the human experience, revealing more layers of meaning each time I come back to them.

As far as we know, these Suites were not written for the church, and by 1720, they were not written for people to actually dance to, but rather as forms with familiar rhythms and style. In contrast to the Violin Sonatas and Partitas which were written around the same time, the Cello Suites each have the same movement structure, which includes a Prelude and two pairs of dances (Allemande and Courante, Sarabande and Gigue) with an added “wildcard” of pairs of Menuets, Gavottes, or Bourées. Rather than hindering expression, this structure seems to enable more creativity to flow, as Bach pushes the boundaries of the expressive and technical possibilities of the instrument with each succeeding Suite.

During the heart of the pandemic of 2020, I found comfort and refuge in these Suites. As I began to play them not just individually but as a set, an arch started to emerge, a true hero's journey: starting with the innocent 1st Suite in G major, the first taste of bitter disappointment in the d minor 2nd Suite, a renewed optimism in the 3rd Suite in C major, the bold and brash 4th Suite in Eb Major, the dark tragedy of the 5th Suite in C minor, and finally the glorious redemption of the 6th Suite in D Major. My hope in presenting these Suites without repeats is to more clearly illuminate this arch of their presented order so that we may more closely follow this universal storyline.

- SÆUNN THORSTEINSDÓTTIR



SÆUNN THORSTEINSDÓTTIR

Icelandic cellist Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir enjoys a varied career as a performer, collaborator and teaching artist. She has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Iceland Symphony, among others, and her recital and chamber music performances have taken her across the US, Europe and Asia. Sæunn has performed in many of the world's greatest halls including Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall, Elbphilharmonie, Barbican Center and Disney Hall and the *Los Angeles Times* praised her performances for their “emotional intensity”.

Recent releases on the Sono Luminus label include a solo album of Icelandic music for cello, *Vernacular*, and the award-winning cello concerto, *Quake*, written for her by Páll Ragnar Pálsson, with the Iceland Symphony and Daníel Bjarnason, which was nominated for a 2021 Grammy.

An avid chamber musician, she has collaborated in performance with Itzhak Perlman, Mitsuko Uchida, Richard Goode and members of the Emerson, Guarneri and Cavani Quartets and has participated in numerous chamber music festivals, including Prussia Cove and Marlboro, with whom she has toured.

Formerly Artist-in-Residence at Green Music Center's Weill Hall in Sonoma as well as cellist of the Manhattan Piano Trio, she is cellist and founding member of Decoda, the Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall.

Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Sæunn has garnered numerous prizes in international competitions, including the Naumburg Competition in New York and the Antonio Janigro Competition in Zagreb, Croatia. She currently lives in Cincinnati, Ohio where she serves on the cello faculty of the Cincinnati College-Conservatory. For more information, please visit www.saeunn.com

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MARROW: THE 6 SUITES FOR SOLO CELLO BY J.S. BACH SÆUNN THORSTEINSDÓTTIR

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legacyaudio.com



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