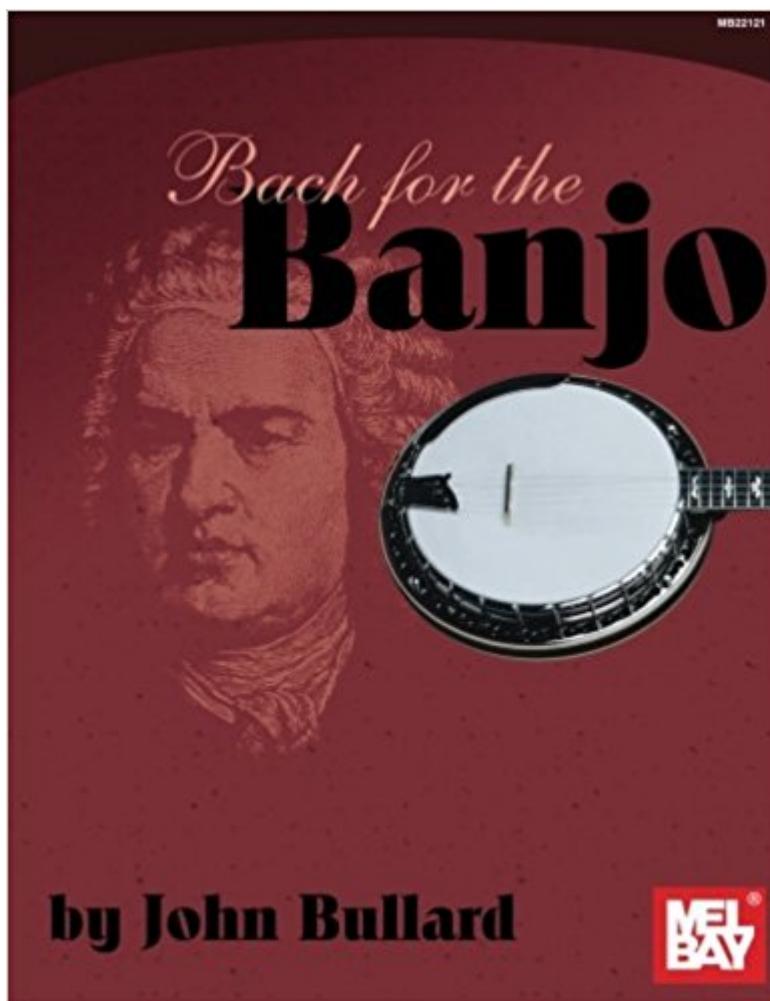


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Mel Bay Presents Bach For The Banjo



Synopsis

Bach for the Banjo is a collection of some of Bach's best-known pieces transcribed for the five-string banjo. Several pieces appear in tablature for banjo with a second part for guitar: Inventions 1, 8, 13, and 14; March; Minuet in G; Polonaise in G minor; Minuet in G minor; and Musette. Others appear in notation and tablature for solo banjo: Prelude from Partita No. III for Solo Violin; Bouree II from Suite IV for Solo Cello; Menuets I & II from Suite II for Solo Cello; Courante from Suite I for Solo Cello; Gavotte en Rondeau from Partita No. III for Solo Violin; and Prelude from Suite I for Solo Cello. Finally, Bauerntanz is offered as a banjo duet in tablature only. These transcriptions are taken from the recordings "The Classical Banjo" and ""Bach on the Banjo"" which take Bach's classic pieces to new heights.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Johann Sebastian Bach was the first great musician to disregard the rules of harmony and rhythm that were strictly followed by other composers. This fact alone helped to make him the forerunner of musical composition as we know it today. Born the son of a violinist in Eisenach, Germany, in 1685, he received his first musical training on the violin. At the age of 10, he went to live in the home of his brother Christoph, who taught Johann to play the harpsichord and the organ. It was also at this time that Bach began school, where his boy-soprano voice was greatly admired and appreciated. When his voice changed, Bach concentrated on the violin; but the organ soon took his interest, and he decided to devote himself to church music. At the age of 18, Bach became the organist at Arnstadt

and began his work in musical composition. After a short period of time, he moved to Muhlhausen where he married his cousin, Maria Bach. At Muhlhausen he began to experiment with changes in the music used in the church services of the German Protestant Church. It was also during this time that he began to become somewhat well known. It was this that gained for him the position as court organist and violinist to the duke at Weimar, where he remained for about nine years. During this nine-year period, he wrote many cantatas for the Church, suites for the clavichord and harpsichord, and fugues (musical compositions in which the first melody is continually repeated and imitated throughout the entire piece). In fact, because he wrote so many fugues for the organ and piano, he is often called "the Great Master of the Fugue." His next position at KÃ¶then was during the period in which he produced much of his orchestral music and music for the clavichord and harpsichord. In 1720 his wife died; and a year later he married Anna Wulken, who was also a musician. She evidently helped him considerably in his work. In 1723 Bach went to Leipzig as music director of the Thomas-schule. During his stay at Leipzig, he wrote many of his church cantatas and oratorios. Among these is his famous Christmas Oratorio. In 1749 Bach became totally blind; and in the following year, 1750, he died. Historians tell us that Bach did not seem to associate very much with other musicians and was far more interested in his family of 20 children and in composing and directing his church choirs than in becoming famous. In addition to his almost unequaled skill as a composer, he also was an excellent organ builder, as well as an expert music copyist. Since most of his life was spent within a few miles of his birthplace, we also now know that Bach's music was not widely known throughout the world during his lifetime. In fact, many of Bach's most beautiful works were unpublished and unperformed for almost 100 years, until two later composers (Mendelssohn and Schumann) discovered the beauties of his music and began to perform them and make them known to the world. John Bullard has attracted international attention for his work in developing and transcribing classical repertoire for the five-string banjo. His critically acclaimed CD releases include John Bullard - The Classical Banjo on the Dargason label and Bach on the Banjo on Albany Records. Mel Bay Productions published a book of this classical interview in the May 1993 issue of The Banjo Newsletter. John, along with such luminaries as Pete Seeger and Bela Fleck, has been on the faculty of the world-renowned Tennessee Banjo Institute. He has performed throughout the United States and has been featured on numerous radio and television programs. John's classical banjo playing was highlighted in the June 2005 issue of Vintage Guitar Magazine. In 2005 he became the first classical banjoist to graduate from Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Music with a Bachelor of Music degree in Perf

This is a good book with the tab I was looking for. One star docked because of the way it was tabbed. The music in standard notation has the tab right below it, but the tab has no flags on it, so you have to reference the note on the clef above to see if it's an eighth or quarter note... This is true for the second half of the book. The first half has the flags, but for some reason they are not connected to the tab numbers and also not connected to the notes on the clef above, and they're not angled, which is standard practice (and makes it easier to read). It's unusual and a distraction and either a little lazy or a little weird. The second half of the book has the music clef done right. Were there two people working on this? The songs are complete (a big deal for me), and if you're going to play with a classical instrument the music above will be useful. There are no right hand hints, but if you're going to play from this book you shouldn't need them. I suggest this book for advanced or advanced intermediate players.

As an intermediate banjo player with a classical music background, I was intrigued by this book. It has a selection of tunes at a variety of levels; some of which are extremely challenging. A couple of things you should be aware of if you decide to purchase:
a) Be careful to note that in some works, the strings are retuned. This is indicated by the tab, but not by a note at the top like you might see in a lot of typical bluegrass books. For example, in the Prelude #1 from the cello suites, the low D is lowered to a C. I didn't notice this initially and thought that there were a tons of typos in the piece. It wasn't until I got to page 3 and saw a low C# that I realized what was going on!
b) Few fingerings are given, which sometimes makes finding the optimal fingering a puzzle.
c) Many of these works are highly challenging, and you may need large hands. For example, the transcription of the cello suite #1 in G has a 5-10 stretch in the second measure that I find really tough. Learning these works will be a labor of love, but worth it in the long run.

This is a great book for the beginning Classical Banjo picker. Mind you, you probably should be on, or near the level of an intermediate banjo picker. It is not for the beginning banjo picker unless you have a lot of patience with yourself. I wanted something different than the typical bluegrass style, and this book has helped me break into that.

My wife loves classical & hates Bluegrass. I love both so I went ahead and bought this to play along with her piano. But, I'd rather just play bluegrass. Being married has its good points and its bad. Playing Bach on my banjo is one of the bad. If you need, have to play classical on your banjo though, buy this book. It is easy to read the notes and play Bach - not Scruggs but not bad.

Can't complain about Bach, but the lack of effort beyond just writing the tabs bothers me. You'd be just as well served to find tabs online. Useful only for advanced players and I consider myself advanced. There is no discussion of the pieces, yet they range vastly in difficulty. There are no suggestions for left hand fingering and right hand fingerlings are sparse and not consistent. You're on your own with this one. Also note that about 50% of the pieces are duets with guitar (tab also, so no other options for an accompanying instrument). If you were planning on playing solo you have your work cut out for you because they are the more challenging pieces.

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