



Sounds of Light

On his new album, Benedict Kloeckner creates an intercultural dialogue between the six cello suites of Johann Sebastian Bach and contemporary miniatures by composers from six different continents



CD I

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

[1-6] SUITE NO. 1 IN G BWV 1007

José L. Elizondo (*1972)

[7] „UNTER DEM STERNENHIMMEL DES RHEINS“ (“UNDER THE STARLIT SKY OF THE RHINE”)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

[8-13] Johann Sebastian Bach: SUITE No. 2 IN D BWV 1008

Benedict Kloeckner Cello

Brilliant Classics // 96403 // 3 CDs // Release: October 2021

Elena Kats-Chernin (*1957)

[14] „I AM CELLO“

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

[15-20] Johann Sebastian Bach: SUITE No. 3 IN C BWV 1009

Bongani Ndodana-Breen (*1975)

[21] „SOWETO CELLO RIFFS“

CD II

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

[1-6] Johann Sebastian Bach: SUITE No. 4 IN E FLAT BWV 1010

Eric Tanguy (*1968)

[7] „IN BETWEEN“

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

[8-13] Johann Sebastian Bach: SUITE No. 5 IN C BWV 1011

Geoffrey Gordon (*1968)

[14] „NE QU'ON PORROIT“

CD III

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

[1-6] Johann Sebastian Bach: SUITE No. 6 IN D BWV 1012

Dai Fujikura (*1977)

[7] „SWEET SUITES“

In October 2021, the new solo album by Benedict Kloeckner was released on Brilliant Classics. On three CDs, the cellist presents Johann Sebastian Bach's **Six Suites for Cello Solo BWV 1007-1012** along with **cello miniatures** that he commissioned during the first coronavirus lockdown from six composers hailing from six different continents, as a global echo of the pandemic.

Benedict Kloeckner's desire to record Bach's cello suites was one that ripened in him for a long time. It turned into reality in autumn 2020, during the pandemic, in the SWR Studio Kaiserslautern. The idea of combining them with the contemporary miniatures arose as the cellist wondered how the effects of the pandemic were perceived by artists in other parts of the world. Under the motto “Sounds of Light”, he commissioned six internationally respected composers to write miniatures that can be seen as a response to the challenges of the present day in interaction with the Bach suites. In this way, an intercultural dialogue is created that spans three centuries and six continents. *“The dynamic interaction between Bach and this contemporary echo is very interesting. It adds something to both. The six Bach suites are the core of the repertoire for any cellist, and then working with these great composers as well did something to rescue this last difficult year at least as far as my mood was concerned,”* he said in April 2021 in an interview with the magazine concerti.

The miniatures were given their world premiere in July 2020 in Narny Castle and Eberbach Abbey as part of the Koblenz International Music Festival – of which Benedict Kloeckner is the initiator and director – where they were also linked with the Bach suites under the title “Sounds of Light”.

For the echo **“Unter dem Sternenhimmel des Rheins” (“Under the Starlit Sky of the Rhine”)**, which follows Bach's well-known Cello Suite No. 1, the Mexican composer **José L. Elizondo** has taken his inspiration both from Bach's sixth cello suite and from the enchanting landscape in the region where Benedict Kloeckner was born, the

Upper Middle Rhine Valley in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate. **“I am Cello”**, inspired by the Cello Suite No. 2, is by the Australian composer **Elena Kats-Chernin**, whom the cellist met during a road trip through Poland. Her miniature opens up slowly, like a blossom, and, according to the composer, is “almost a song”.

The particularly colourful Cello Suite No. 3 with its virtuosically leaping passages towards the end precedes the also very rhythmical **“Soweto Cello Riffs”** by the South African composer **Bongani Ndodana-Breen**. For his cello echo, he has combined elements from Afropop and South African jazz.

The second CD opens with Bach's Cello Suite No. 4, followed by **“In Between”** by the French composer **Éric Tanguy**, with whom Benedict Kloeckner has been working together successfully for more than ten years. This short piece addresses the way emotions during the pandemic have vacillated constantly between uncertainty and hope. After this comes the Suite No. 5 and the miniature **“Ne qu'on porroit”** by US composer **Geoffrey Gordon**, who looks not only at the present-day situation in the world, but also at past pandemics. His collage about pain, strength, loss and perseverance is based on a text by Guillaume de Machaut and contains quotes from the works of other composers who have also experienced dramatic global situations.

On the third CD, the Bach Suite No. 6 receives its echo in the form of **“Sweet Suites”** by the Japanese composer **Dai Fujikura**, which refers motivically to several of the Bach suites, skilfully shifting between the old and the new musical world, before finally wafting away in airy heights.

Benedict Kloeckner can be heard with the Bach suites and the echoes from our time on **4 November 2021** at a “release concert” in the **Piano Salon Christophori in Berlin**. Further concerts featuring this repertoire are planned for **4 December 2021** in the Mozart Hall of the **Alte Oper in Frankfurt** and on **31 May 2022** in the Chamber Music Hall at the **Philharmonie Berlin**. The programme is also to travel to Carnegie Hall in New York this season.

Instead of allowing himself to be discouraged by the coronavirus crisis, Benedict Kloeckner has invested a great deal of energy to be able to continue making music and giving concerts, whether at his own festival in Koblenz and surrounds, which took place in summer 2021 with strict hygiene provisions despite the pandemic, at the Molyvos International Music Festival with Danae and Kiveli Dörken in Greece, where he is a regular guest, or in various streaming formats. Benedict Kloeckner has been quick to take the chance of turning the time of the pandemic to productive account: *“Because as we know, all great crises have really produced unbelievable art.”* (Interview in concert, April 2021)

Planned concerts by Benedict Kloeckner with the CD repertoire:

4 November 2021, 8 p.m., Piano Salon Christophori, Berlin (release concert)

4 December 2021, 7 p.m., Mozart Hall at the Alte Oper, Frankfurt

31 May 2022, 8 p.m., Chamber Music Hall of the Philharmonie Berlin

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