

**CLASSICAL GUITAR**  
**JANUARY 2005**

**SUITES PARA VIOLONCELLO**

**VOL.1**

J.S. BACH: *Suite No.1 BWV 1007; Suite No.2 BWV 1008; Suite No.3 BWV 1009.*

**Marcos Díaz**

Opera Tres 1041 CD

Bach isn't a composer likely to go out of fashion, the fact that his works are arguably more compatible with the guitar than those of any other star name having kept him on the agenda since the earliest transcriptions by Tárrega *et al.* In recent years, settings of the *Cello Suites* have enjoyed particular favour, perhaps taking some of the territory traditionally occupied by what were once termed the *Lute Suites*. The validity of this assertion obviously depends on which concerts you happen to have attended, but I suspect I represent the majority in having to think hard when I last heard a live performance of BWV 996 in its entirety. No such head-scratching is required for the *Cello Suites*, with all except possibly the fourth rarely off the road.

This inevitably raises the question of whether or not we need another recording or, to put it more bluntly, whether or not Brazilian guitarist Marcos Díaz can justify having made one. In hard, cold terms, the answer to the first part of the question can only be in the negative but, having heard what Díaz has to offer, I would hesitate to dismiss the second. There's nothing particularly radical here, the only significant departure from the norm being Díaz's decision to cast BWV 1009 in G major (with D/G scordatura), rather than the customary guitar choice of A major. This preserves the original relationship of keys between the suites, which is an important consideration to many. It also becomes clear from the opening bars of BWV 1007 that Díaz has added more basses than was once the norm, although not on a level likely to precipitate scholarly censure.

But what matters most is that Díaz turns in what can only be described as a superb performance. There are no clever gimmicks, just strong and assured interpretations that let each movement speak for itself. Doubtless there are other guitarists with the capacity to produce something similar, but at this moment I can't think of any version I'd rather hear.

Not an essential purchase, but one that's worthy of serious consideration.

*Paul Fowles*