



The Cello Suites: J. S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece

Eric Soblin

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One evening, after ending a stint as a pop music critic, Eric Soblin attended a performance of Bach's Cello Suites. There, something unlikely happened: he fell deeply in love with the music. So began a quest that would unravel three centuries of intrigue, politics, and passion. Part biography, part music history, and part mystery, *The Cello Suites* weaves together three dramatic narratives: Bach's composition of the suites and the manuscript's disappearance in the eighteenth century, Pablo Casals's re-discovery of the music in Spain in the late nineteenth century, and Soblin's infatuation with the suites at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Soblin's search leads him to Barcelona, where Casals, as a teenager, roamed back streets in search of sheet music and found Bach's lost composition tucked in a dark corner. Casals would play the suites for twelve years before performing them—and making them his own. Soblin pursues the mysteries that haunt this music more than 250 years after its composer's death: why did Bach compose the suites for the cello, then considered a lowly instrument? What happened to the original manuscript of the suites? *The Cello Suites* is a journey of discovery, fueled by the transcendent power of a musical masterpiece.

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