

SUSPENSION:

A SERIES OF MUSICAL REFLECTIONS

No:6

I hope you are all keeping well and are able, in whatever way, to enjoy the beautiful weather we've been experiencing.

Now, I've been trying to keep these as varied as possible, but I hope you'll forgive me for indulging in a little bit more Bach today. One of the highlights of last year, for me, was the service of music and readings held this time last year on Maundy Thursday, after our Parish meal. Throughout that service I was struck by just how useful music, even non-liturgical music *per se*, can be in creating space for our thoughts, prayers and reflections to be heard by ourselves, each other, and God. During that service last year, I played the *Sarabande* from J S Bach's 1st Suite for Solo 'Cello.

This year I would have liked to follow up with the second, from the Suite in D minor, BWV 1008. This Sarabande, like all the other movements from all the other suites, takes its inspiration from the baroque dance type of the same name. Each Suite has several movements, all of which are based on the same key, but have distinctive styles and moods, dependant on the dance on which they are based.

These pieces, though short and understated, have been performed for centuries now, in all sorts of contexts, and for all sorts of occasions. I feel that there is something so poignant and powerful in the simple imagery of the lonely 'cellist performing these sublime movements on today of all days, when we remember the point in Jesus' life when he found himself alone and in the darkest of times, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Something to listen out for in this piece: I have deliberately chosen this recording, as it is an example of what we call 'Historically Informed Performance'. You'll notice that the 'cellist is performing with a 'baroque bow' and you'll hear that, throughout the movements, he adds 'ornaments' which decorate the melody, as 'cellists back in the baroque period would have done. Finally, the Sarabande itself starts at 10:45 in the video, but I'd recommend setting aside 20 minutes, if you have it, to take in the whole Suite.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvZRo-3wvU>

Enjoy.
Sarah

