

J.S. Bach – Violin Sonatas & Partita (Perlman)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 21 October 2009 12:10 - Last Updated Sunday, 11 March 2012 15:45

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CD1 1. Sonata I in G Minor: (1) Adagio (04:24) 2. Sonata I in G Minor: (2) Fuga. Allegro (05:47) 3. Sonata I in G Minor: (3) Siciliano (03:30) 4. Sonata I in G Minor: (4) Presto (02:49) 5. Partita I in B Minor: (1) Allemande (04:58) 6. Partita I in B Minor: (2) Double (02:13) 7. Partita I in B Minor: (3) Courante (02:20) 8. Partita I in B Minor: (4) Double. Presto (02:58) 9. Partita I in B Minor: (5) Sarabande (02:35) 10. Partita I in B Minor: (6) Double (01:31) 11. Partita I in B Minor: (7) Tempo di Bouree (02:28) 12. Partita I in B Minor: (8) Double (02:15) 13. Sonata II in A Minor: (1) Grave (04:23) 14. Sonata II in A Minor: (2) Fuga (08:12) 15. Sonata II in A Minor: (3) Andante (05:15) 16. Sonata II in A Minor: (4) Allegro (04:26) CD2 1. Partita no. 2 in D minor (BWV 1004) - Allemanda (03:17) 2. Partita no. 2 (BWV 1004) - Corrente (02:22) 3. Partita no. 2 (BWV 1004) - Sarabanda (04:20) 4. Partita no. 2 (BWV 1004) - Gigue (03:31) 5. Partita no. 2 (BWV 1004) - Chaconne (14:33) 6. Sonata no. 3 in C major (BWV 1005) - Adagio (04:45) 7. Sonata no. 3 (BWV 1005) - Fugue: Allabreve (11:29) 8. Sonata no. 3 (BWV 1005) - Largo (04:01) 9. Sonata no. 3 (BWV 1005) - Allegro assai (04:10) 10. Partita no. 3 in E major (BWV 1006) - Prelude (04:05) 11. Partita no. 3 (BWV 1006) - Loure (03:28) 12. Partita no. 3 (BWV 1006) - Gavotte & Rondo (03:11) 13. Partita no. 3 (BWV 1006) - Menuet I & II (02:34) 14. Partita no. 3 (BWV 1006) - Bouree (01:13) 15. Partita no. 3 (BWV 1006) - Gigue (01:30) Itzhak Perlman - violin

Perlman's unbelievable fame tends to obscure the superior accomplishments of others. That's a real pity because interested newcomers to this repertoire will be steered away from the two recordings that tower like giants over all others: those of Henryk Szeryng and Nathan Milstein. Perlman is not in their class. He has, of course, the technical, musical and tonal resources to play these pieces beautifully. But his renditions just don't have the overwhelming grandeur of Szeryng's and Milstein's (as different as those two are from each other). Perlman plays well (extremely well, better than most mortals can even dream of), but he breaks no new ground, shows us no new dimensions in these pieces. You get what you would expect: gorgeous tone, fluid lines, tasteful phrasing, solid intonation. But he remains so conventional, so caught up in the reigning aesthetic ideal. All the truly great Bach players have managed to transcend mere beauty. To mention just a few: With Casals, we seem to witness the creation of the world,

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foundational events of immeasurable vastness. With Gould, we experience Bach's logico-mathematical genius. With Szeryng, Bach's music becomes a cathedral, a giant structure pointing beyond itself. Milstein's Bach is a life elixir, a joyous celebration of unlimited creativity and playfulness. Perlman's Bach? It's beautiful, but no more than that. My recommendation: Don't follow Perlman's fame. Get the Szeryng and Milstein sets and witness true greatness. ---
Hans U. Widmaier "Uli" (Elmhurst, IL USA)

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