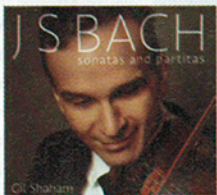


JS Bach

Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas, BWV1001-1006

Gil Shaham *vn*

Canary Classics (M) (2) CC14 (76' • DDD)



All that is unusual and unexpected about this recording is encapsulated in

the second movement of the First Sonata, which – among other quirks – despite starting with a quaver rest, is set at such a sprightly lilt that it feels more like a down-beat. But the fact remains that Shaham's playing is so clean, clear and precise (and contained, within the cavernous shape of his 1699 Stradivari), and the thought behind everything he plays so unassailable, that to listen to it is to feel safe with music that is often manhandled, even if it is challenging to one's perception of it.

Shaham does pull many of the phrases around to a risky degree but it never feels like the egomania of other performances (partly because there is no bending of the tuning) and this is an enormous relief. Some of the movements, particularly in the First Sonata and Partita, have a chamber performance quality – from the closeness of the recording and dryness of the studio acoustics – that create an intimate and moving sense of authenticity. It is only the Chaconne that is in any way problematic: in a movement that is a miraculous study in what Bach was able to do with plain old 3/4 time, and a performance so rich in tone and muscularity, there is a frustratingly inconsistent lack of pulse. This recording may be a challenge for devotees of these pieces but only because it is so uniquely Shaham's voice: it is impossible to listen to it without having a positive artistic experience. **Caroline Gill**

JS Bach

Six Cello Suites, BWV1007-1012

Isang Enders *vc*

Berlin Classics (F) (2) 0300552BC;

(F) (3) (140907IE (143' • DDD)