



**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH**



Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo

**Bob van der Ent** violin

**2 CD**

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## **CD 1**

### **JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**

#### **Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Minor, BWV 1001**

<b>[1]</b>	I. Adagio	<b>4:07</b>
<b>[2]</b>	II. Fuga	<b>5:44</b>
<b>[3]</b>	III. Siciliana	<b>3:16</b>
<b>[4]</b>	IV. Presto	<b>3:42</b>

#### **Violin Partita No. 1 in B Minor, BWV 1002**

<b>[5]</b>	I. Allemanda	<b>5:37</b>
<b>[6]</b>	II. Double	<b>3:20</b>
<b>[7]</b>	III. Courante	<b>3:39</b>
<b>[8]</b>	IV. Double	<b>4:00</b>
<b>[9]</b>	V. Sarabande	<b>3:53</b>
<b>[10]</b>	VI. Double	<b>2:24</b>
<b>[11]</b>	VII. Tempo di Bourrée	<b>3:25</b>
<b>[12]</b>	VIII. Double	<b>3:11</b>

#### **Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Minor, BWV 1003**

<b>[13]</b>	I. Grave	<b>4:22</b>
<b>[14]</b>	II. Fuga	<b>8:03</b>
<b>[15]</b>	III. Andante	<b>5:38</b>
<b>[16]</b>	IV. Allegro	<b>6:04</b>

Total time 70:33

## CD 2

### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

#### Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005

[1]	I. Adagio	4:31
[2]	II. Fuga	10:56
[3]	III. Largo	3:16
[4]	IV. Allegro assai	5:16

#### Violin Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004

[5]	I. Allemande	4:46
[6]	II. Courante	2:52
[7]	III. Sarabande	4:02
[8]	IV. Gigue	4:33
[9]	V. Chaconne	14:52

#### Violin Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006

[10]	I. Preludio	3:48
[11]	II. Loure	3:58
[12]	III. Gavotte en Rondeau	2:58
[13]	IV. Menuett I & V. Menuett II	3:57
[14]	VI. Bourrée	1:32
[15]	VII. Gigue	1:58

Total time 73:26

## **Bob's musical journey**

As a musician, I always return to Bach, even after thousands of other diversions. Through my entire life, Bach has represented an intersection that all music works up to and stems from. I'd already experienced, from the reaction of audiences, that Bach could provide comfort, hope, poignancy and vitality more than any other composer.

But it was not until I picked up my violin and played a few movements of solo Bach, one winter's evening at home, that the essence of the composer finally permeated my being. I felt an almost mystical unity with the music that I'd never experienced before.

Gradually, the urge became irresistible to immerse myself, at least once in my life, in what I regard as the most unique works for solo violin of all time, the three Sonatas and Partitas. I felt it was the next logical step that I could not avoid: **and so to Bach!**

Laying down a CD with the complete Bach Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin feels like an ultimate pinnacle in a quest that never ends, letting me communicate and share my vision of Bach with everyone whose heart is warmed by Bach in the same way that mine is.

Great art is the opposite of fragile; it survives the ravages of time and only becomes stronger. The ever-growing significance and presence of Bach's music after 300 years or so is resounding proof of this; **If only Bach had known!**

Because there are already so many fabulous recordings of Bach, I asked myself "What can I still add to this?" What surprised me, however, was that the wide diversity of approach was actually a great source of inspiration to me rather than being in any way off-putting. Apparently, the possibilities of Bach's music are inexhaustible. This is what gave me the courage I needed to issue a new recording.

Exploring Bach's era, in order to garner as much historical knowledge as I could, both astonished and humbled me, making me appreciate how impossible it is to experience Bach's music exactly as it would have been experienced in his own day.

To me, the narrative power of Bach's music means that it can sound like new in every era and in every performance. People's opinions of Bach are constantly changing and will continue to do so in the future.

My recording of Bach is an interpretation of my vision of his music up until now, and I have striven for authenticity by remaining true to my personal vision, without making it a predominant feature. I deliberately opted to open the second CD with the third Sonata, BWV 1005, and to place the second Partita, BWV 1004, in the middle. The *adagio* movement of the third Sonata seems to intone the ringing of church bells, inviting the listener, as it were, to enter Bach's musical cathedral. The monumental Chaconne, in the 'serious' key of D minor, stands at the heart of the second CD, contrasting with the following festive opening of the third Partita in the joyous key of E major.

For years now, I have been playing a violin that is very dear to me; an instrument by Jean Baptiste Vuillaume from 1828. It is modelled after Stradivarius and its tonal design is typical of 18<sup>th</sup> century instruments, with a wide palette of colours.

Using gut strings on this instrument, especially for Bach, adds a great deal of clarity to the sound, a richer range of overtones and a warmer sound that more closely approximates the human voice.

Finally, a Baroque bow offers many more options for the expression I'm seeking. It's a bow that feels like a fine paintbrush, helping me to paint the music, as it were, in great detail.

Performing and teaching aspects often intertwine my current life as a musician. It's a natural process to share what one has learned and communicate it to others. And this communication is never a one-way street, but always a process of mutual exchange. It encourages reflection on one's interpretation, perpetually providing new insights in a never-ending cycle. As the great conductor Leonard Bernstein once said, "If I teach, I learn; if I learn, I teach".

I hope that this recording will contribute in some way to Bach's immortality and will continue inspiring people to discover and explore new possibilities.

Bob van der Ent

## **Bach's musical journey**

Bach found himself involved in an intrigue surrounding the family of the Duke of Weimar while working for the Duchy. Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen had married the niece and arch-rival of the Duke. Leopold was a great lover of music and, having once heard Bach performing, he set his heart on engaging him in his employment. He offered the composer a very generous salary and a top quality orchestra. Bach did not hesitate and immediately handed in his notice to the Duke, who was so outraged at this act of impropriety that he promptly imprisoned Bach in order to teach him a lesson. Under pressure from his entire family, he eventually released Bach to let him travel to Köthen, where a delightful bonus awaited the composer in the form of payment of his salary from the Prince, backdated to the date of his appointment. Bach apparently said that his time in the service of Prince Leopold in Köthen was the best time of his life. Bach experienced an inner conflict, however, as he could only compose secular music due to the virtual absence of music in reformed church services. Years before this, he had worked out his *Entsweck*, composing and arranging for the performance of properly regulated church music to the glory of God, as embodied in his later cantatas and passions in Leipzig. He was forced to abandon this ultimate aim, at least temporarily, in Köthen. He succeeded, however, with his renowned resilience and brilliant creativity, in creating a remarkable body of secular music of the highest quality. In his Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, Bach combined the spiritual with the secular in a manner that is unparalleled. He may have had to abandon his ultimate goal temporarily in Köthen, but his work was always devoted to the glory of God, as he wrote on all of his scores: *Soli Deo gloria*.

Bach's solo works for violin are widely regarded as the Olympus or Everest of the violin repertoire, and their performances are also sometimes epic achievements. Bob van der Ent takes a different approach, guiding us by the hand and leading us through that landscape, past the peaks and valleys that those distant views evoke in us. He does more than merely give a performance; he pursues a journey with the listener. At the centre of his fascinating assembly of the series, we have the Chaconne, the journey of all journeys, which appears to be the very heart of this sojourn. In this performance, we hear Bach's heartbeat, the journey from A to B, eventually ending up back at home once again. The virtuosic fireworks do not exhaust us; we take them in our stride as being no more than side issues. The journey is full of attention,







intimacy and warmth. It is a true 'Recreation of the Spirit', as Bach himself described it. We pass through the shimmering, timeless notes feeling purer and stronger.

When you hear Bob van der Ent's performance, it's hard to understand why these violin pieces are not just as well loved as the Cello Suites. He places the pieces for solo violin on an equal footing with the Suites, as devotional music.

Govert Jan Bach

### **Bob van der Ent** violinist

Bob van der Ent is one of the most prominent and versatile violinists in the Netherlands. He has been described by the press as "a highly gifted and virtuosic violinist with a beautifully spacious and rounded tone". Bob van der Ent regularly appears in the Netherlands and elsewhere as both soloist and chamber musician, in concerts, at festivals and on radio and television.

His solo debut was at the age of 10, with the Netherlands Youth String Orchestra, and his debut appearance in the Main Hall of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam took place in 2005.

In that same year, he was a prize winner at the Oskar Back National Violin Competition, having previously been a very young first prize winner at the Lordens Violin Days (the national competition for young violinists) and the Princess Christina Competition. He also won a special prize at the renowned international Wieniawski-Lipinski Competition. He entered the special Young Talent department of the Conservatorium van Amsterdam as one of its youngest students, where he studied firstly with Jan Repko and Davina van Wely and then with Vesko Eschkenazy, while having additional tuition from Herman Krebbers. While still a student, he was chosen for masterclasses with internationally famous violinists including Pierre Amoyal, Shmuel Ashkenasi and Ivry Gitlis.

As a passionate advocate for Dutch composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries who have all but disappeared into the mists of obscurity, the first CD he issued, through Aliud Records, was of Dutch violin

sonatas. His CD of the Paganini caprices also appeared on the same label in 2015, making him the first Dutch violinist of his generation to have recorded all 24 Paganini caprices.

Bob van der Ent is also a teacher and gives lessons to talented young musicians in Amsterdam.

Committee of Recommendation

Govert Jan Bach, Vesko Eschkenazy, Maarten 't Hart, Daan Manneke and Hans Quant

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Recording producer, balance engineer, editing & mastering: Sem de Jongh

Recording engineer: Wijnand de Groot

A&R Challenge Classics: Marcel Landman & Valentine Laout

Liner notes: Bob van der Ent, Govert Jan Bach

Translation: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations

Cover photo: Juan Carlos Villarroel

Project coordinator: Geeske Coebergh

Product coordination & booklet editing Challenge Records: Boudewijn Hagemans

Graphic Design: Natasja Wallenburg & Juan Carlos Villarroel

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