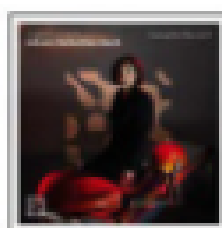


JS Bach

Complete Lute Works

Evangalina Mascardi (lute)

Arcana AS29 110:52 mins (2 discs)



While the lute was very much an instrument of choice in the 16th and 17th centuries, it

maintained some popularity in the 18th. JS Bach knew some of Germany's finest lutenists, among them Silvius Weiss, a colleague of his son Wilhelm Friedemann, and enjoyed 'extra fine' music making with him on at least one occasion. Nevertheless, his extant works for the lute were not originally intended for the instrument and comprise

reworkings of compositions for solo cello, harpsichord and violin.

Undeterred by their somewhat hazy provenance – outlined in some excellent accompanying notes – Evangalina Mascardi produces consistently idiomatic performances on three agreeably resonant copies of lutes by a contemporary of Bach. The 'Suite for the lute by JS Bach' presented first is a creative arrangement of the Fifth solo Cello Suite. Mascardi's qualities as a player are clear from the start: convincingly improvisatory in the introduction and superbly fluent in the subsequent *Allegro* while making light of the additional chords added in the lute version. Her command of the ebb and flow of such pieces as the first movement of the 'Prelude for the Lute' is underpinned by a convincing, understated control of the rhythmic structure and makes for continuously satisfying listening. Where virtuosity is called for, as in the prelude to the Partita BWV 1006a – best known in its version for solo violin – it is unforced and matched by an understated delicacy in the dances. If not quite flawless, these well recorded performances are abundantly rewarding. *Jan Smaczny*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARRIS FOR BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE