

## WEN-SINN YANG

### THE STRAD

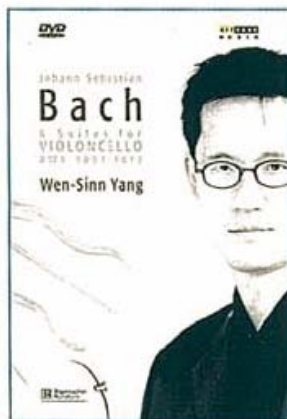
September 2006

J.S. BACH 6 SUITES FOR VIOLONCELLO SOLO

**BACH** Six Suites for Solo Cello BWV1007–12

Wen-Sinn Yang (cello)

Arthaus Music 101 419 (2 DVDs + 2 CDs)



Looking for somewhere both acoustically and visually suitable for a recording of Bach's cello suites, the Swiss cellist Wen-Sinn Yang discovered a tiny ancient church in the Bavarian Alps. With its Gothic altars, frescoes and statues, it also provides a spiritual match for Bach's music. For a film, however, the question of where you point the camera is crucial: if you just aim at the artist you might as well have stayed

at home, but if you start panning around the building it becomes distracting. This film gets it about right, concentrating mainly on Wen-Sinn Yang from various angles, so you can see different aspects of the church in the background.

The performances are masterly. Yang plays with dignity and understated authority, and yet the music is full of energy, perfectly paced, the character of each suite and each movement established immediately. This is supple playing, alive to the contours of a phrase and the shape of a movement.

Yang introduces each suite. He discourses on why Bach wrote the suites, their coherence as a set, and the violoncello piccolo, for which the sixth was originally written. This he does in German, and subtitles are provided in English, French and Spanish (although the ten-minute 'making of' feature is left untranslated). It is beautiful to hear and to see, but if you just want to listen, it comes with two CDs as well.

TIM HOMFRAY