



## Janos Starker Bach Suites for Unaccompanied Cello Speakers Corner/Mercury SR3-9016

by Richard S. Foster

Although Speakers Corner has already won a Product of the Year award for their Mercury Living Presence project, I felt, and after some persuading so did RG, that the release of Janos Starker's highly regarded set deserved its own recognition. Timed to honour Starker's eightieth birthday last year, this is an extremely special reissue. The insane prices that the original US LPs have commanded make this a particularly welcome release by SCR. Even the Golden Imports set has cost more than this!

This is one of those records that seems to hold a magic mirror to sound – in this case the sound of a man playing a violoncello in space, in time, captured forever. This is a near physical manifestation of a performance out of thin air. Every nuance, every gesture of the performances captured by Mercury engineer, Robert Eberenz from six sessions between 1962 and '65 have been revealed by SCR's mastering. The sense of ambient space is extraordinary. I have always been a fan of the original records, but this is one of those rare instances, especially of such a highly regarded and sought after set, where the re-issue offers far greater pleasure and insight than the original release. I find myself groping in my bag of superlatives for one I haven't tried yet.

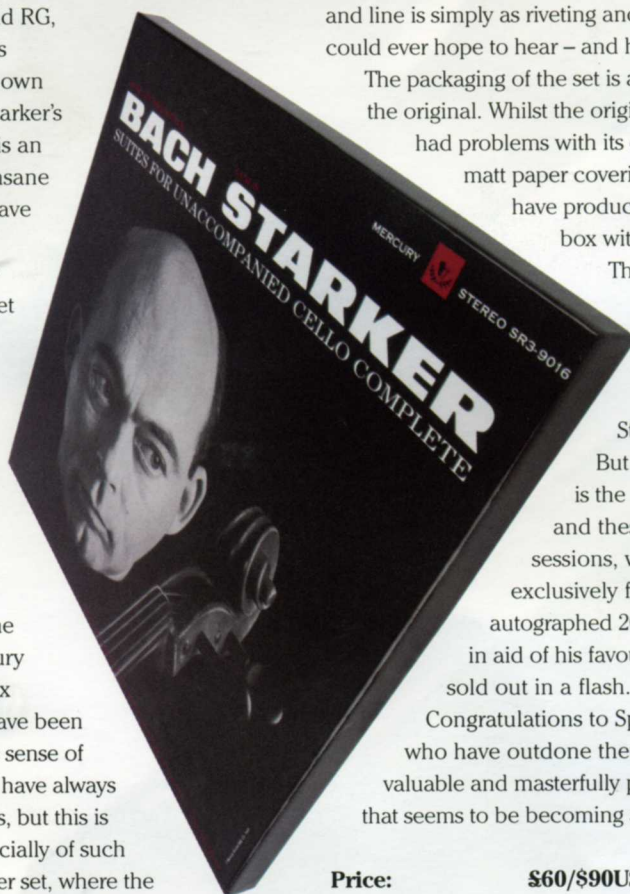
The merits of the performances were covered in depth in Issue 33. Starker's technique, his touch, his grasp of instrument and line is simply as riveting and utterly convincing as one could ever hope to hear – and hear it you do.

The packaging of the set is also a distinct improvement on the original. Whilst the original box has its charms, it also had problems with its construction and that its thin matt paper covering was hopelessly fragile. SCR have produced an attractive, substantial box with a quality high gloss finish.

The original insert has been enhanced and enlarged by the inclusion the original Mercury press release and a brief commentary about Starker by Hagen Zimmermann.

But for me, the icing on the cake is the memoir concerning Mercury and these particular recording sessions, written by Starker himself, exclusively for this release. He even autographed 200 copies, a limited edition in aid of his favoured musical charity and sold out in a flash. An exclusive indeed!

Congratulations to Speakers Corner Records who have outdone themselves with this most valuable and masterfully produced set, a sentiment that seems to be becoming a habit.



**Price:** £60/\$90US

**Manufacturer:** Speakers Corner Records  
Net. [www.speakerscorner.de](http://www.speakerscorner.de)

