

# A Performer's Exploration of Bach's Six Masterpieces for Solo Violin

## with violinist Sheila Reinhold



UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Three Tuesday evening Zoom sessions from 6:30-8:30pm: October 5, 12, 19, 2021

Course homepage: <https://sheilareinhold.com/solo-bach-at-du> • Sheila Reinhold's email: [sheila.reinhold@gmail.com](mailto:sheila.reinhold@gmail.com)

For centuries, Johann Sebastian Bach's Six Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin have amazed and transfixed audiences and performers alike, as well as some of the world's greatest composers. Johannes Brahms called the Chaconne from Partita #2 "... one of the most wonderful, incomprehensible pieces of music. On a single staff, for a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and the most powerful feelings." The 20th century's most renowned virtuoso violinist, Jascha Heifetz, frequently declared to students in his master class that these awe-inspiring pieces were "our Bible." Join violinist Sheila Reinhold, who studied with Heifetz for five years, for a three-session course designed to deepen our experience of listening to these six masterpieces. The sessions delve into topics such as the structure of the pieces, the violinistic techniques they demand, and the evolution of how they have been interpreted and performed, always with the goal of illuminating how all these aspects, and many more, affect how audiences and performers experience those "deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings."

Each session will include live demonstrations and conclude with a performance.

- October 5: We will begin our exploration with a look at Bach's life, the state of violin playing at the time, and the factors that influenced the reception of these works in the first two centuries after their composition. *Demonstrations* will include examples of the advanced violin techniques Bach utilized, and a brief guided tour through Partita #3 in E Major. *Performance*: G. Pisendel, Sonata (1717); Bach, Partita #3 in E Major (1720)
- October 12: We will continue with delving into the how mid-19th and 20th century players perceived and solved the "problems" presented by the pieces, and how the works entered the repertoire to become "the violinist's Bible", as well as inspiring later compositions designed to utilize new compositional and violinistic techniques. *Demonstrations* will include a comparison of the Baroque bow and the modern bow, and a brief guided tour through Sonata #1 in G Minor. *Performance*: Bach, Sonata #1 in G minor (1720); E. Ysayë, Sonata #3, "Ballade" (1923)
- October 19: We will conclude our exploration with a look at the evolution of "Historically Informed Practice" and its effect on today's interpreters of the Sonatas and Partitas, and end with some examples of the enduring influence of these Bach works into the present day. *Demonstrations* will include comparisons of different styles of interpretations, and a brief guided tour through the Chaconne from Partita #2 in D Minor. *Performance*: Bach, Partita #2 in D Minor (1720); J. Montgomery, Rhapsody #1 (2015)

**Sheila Reinhold** first performed as soloist with orchestra at age 9. At 15, she joined Jascha Heifetz's master class, where her five years of study included these Bach works, and she has been studying and performing them over the decades since. Her varied career has included chamber music with Heifetz and cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, solos with major orchestras, freelance work from Broadway to movie scores, and a lifelong dedication to teaching. She is the founder and music director of *Intimate Voices*, a chamber music series in New York City.