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## GREG STEPANICH

[« The orchestra: When smaller is better](#) | 
 [Blogs Index](#) | 
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September 16, 2007

### MORE MUSICIANS GO THE DOWNLOAD ROUTE



In the mail last week came a new recording of the six Bach sonatas and partitas for solo violin, this time in a performance by [the Canadian violinist Lara St. John](#). This is an advance copy on her new label, Ancalagon, and the two-disc set won't be out for a couple more weeks.

But it is available on iTunes right now, a maneuver I'm seeing more and more frequently these days. *Newsweek* had [a nice piece by Alexandra Seno the other week](#) about how well the digital age is working out for classical music:

*Classical music has proved to be ideal for the digital-music era. The complex and subtle nature of the recordings makes them tough to pirate; the classical customer is technologically savvy and more likely to buy in bulk, and the viral nature of the Net has allowed the music to be heard by new audiences, fueling overall sales.*

St. John sounds terrific on these pieces, playing with big colors, intense interpretations, and in several cases, dazzling speed. Her tempos throughout are on the fast side, which I like, and she does memorable things with her performance like opening the D major of the big Chaconne from the Second Partita with a hushed, almost defeated sound, before building up again to the end. I've only listened to the two discs once all the way through, but I'll audit them a couple more times in the next few days for a print review.

She'll be in town [next month playing Piazzolla with the Miami Symphony](#) at the Knight Center. In the meantime, here's a funny essay from her Website that offers advice [about trying to pass yourself off as a Canadian](#).

When a well-known violinist like St. John decides to go the independent route, offering the music in download first, and then issuing discs on her own label, it's even more clear that this truly is the way today classical musicians are trying to communicate.

Posted by Greg Stepanich at September 16, 2007 7:48 PM

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