Clara Haskil plays Mozart: Piano Concerto K. 466 - Robert Casadesus plays Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5

aud 95.623

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Now 40 years old, the Audite label, based in Detmold in Germany, has built up a remarkable catalogue of classical recordings. Audiophile connoisseurs can find many new recordings of the highest standards on Audite SACDs, as well as a steadily growing number of carefully remastered historical recordings, especially from German broadcasting archives – the former RIAS for example. It is important to stress that Audite has access to original tapes, and so the sound quality on its editions is better than on unlicensed versions of the same performances from second-generation sources available elsewhere.

On 23 June the label celebrated its birthday in Berlin. This was a convenient opportunity to introduce a new series of historical recordings from the Luzern Festival, which was founded in 1938. In cooperation with Audite the Swiss Festival authorities are now releasing outstanding concert recordings of great artists who have shaped its history and tradition. Most of the recordings are previously unreleased, and come from the archive of Swiss Radio and Television (SRF), which has regularly broadcast events from the Luzern Festival. The first three CDs are newly available, and they are real highlights. Clara Haskil is the soloist in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20, KV 466, with Otto Klemperer conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra (1959). This wise, reflective reading is coupled with Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, with Robert Casadesus and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra und Dimitri Mitropoulos, from 1957 (CD 95.623).

The second CD is dedicated to Isaac Stern. Live recordings with Stern are true rarities. At Luzern Festivals in 1956 and 1958 he played the Second Violin Concerto of Béla Bartók (1956) and the Tchaikovsky Concerto (1958). These are fiery and full-blooded interpretations. The Swiss Festival Orchestra is conducted respectively by Ernest Ansemet and Lorin Maazel, whose Festival debut this was (CD 95.624).

The third release is released in homage to George Szell, who conducts the Swiss Festival Orchestra in Brahms's First Symphony (1962) and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Dvorák's Symphony No. 8, taped in 1969. There was always a special kind of chemistry between Czech performers and Dvorák. Every accent is in the right place, and the music comes directly from the heart. Nothing will go wrong here and when a conductor like Szell takes the baton something outstanding is likely to happen (CD 95.625).

A set of seven CDs from Audite is of special interest to chamber music enthusiasts and admirers of the Amadeus Quartet. From the beginning of its career this ensemble regularly came to the RIAS studios at Berlin, and over 20 years recorded a cross-section of its repertoire. Audite is releasing these documents in six volumes. The first is dedicated to Beethoven (CD 21.424). Between 1950 and 1967 the

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Amadeus Quartet recorded the whole cycle in Berlin, except Op. 74. The set is supplemented by the String Quintet, Op. 29, with viola player Cecil Aronowitz. Listeners have the opportunity here to follow the development and changes in the Amadeus style over a span of two decades. It is important to stress that all the movements were recorded in single unedited takes. It is interesting to have these Beethoven recordings as companions to the studio recordings made for DG by the Quartet between 1959 and 1963. […]

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