



Wolfgang Schneiderhan plays Mozart, Henze & Martin

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GRAMOPHONE

Finding Luzzato's stylistic polar opposite isn't easy but Wolfgang Schneiderhan comes pretty close. Best known for his dignified interpretations of Beethoven, Schneiderhan prioritised purity and clarity of argument above the purely sensual or virtuoso aspects of violin playing. A recent Audité CD gathers together three radio recordings from the Lucerne Festival, opening with a rather febrile and heavily etched 1952 account of Mozart's Fifth Concerto under Paul Hindemith, Schneiderhan's sound unpalatably shrill, with an unvaried though insistent vibrato and very little in the way of tonal colouring. Schneiderhan's conceptually similar DG stereo version from 1968 (with the Berlin Philharmonic—recently reissued in DG's 'The Violin: 111 Legendary Recordings') is marginally subtler than this older broadcast effort. Hans Werner Henze's First Violin Concerto of 1947, a concise and eventful work that the violinist subsequently recorded commercially under the composer's direction (again for DG), receives a far more lively and responsive performance, both in terms of the actual violin playing and Ferdinand Leitner's vivid conducting. Best of all is the 1968 world premiere of Frank Martin's 11-minute Magnificat where Schneiderhan partners his wife the soprano Irmgard Seefried under the sensitive direction of Bernard Haitink, a beautiful piece that was dedicated to the couple and was later integrated into Martin's Maria-Tryptichon. Variable mono sound more than passes muster throughout.