



**The RIAS Amadeus Quartet Schubert Recordings**

aud 21.428



**Audiophile Audition February 15, 2014**  
(Gary Lemco - 2014.02.15)



The Amadeus inject into the slinky 6/8 meter a sudden urgency or impetuosity that jars us into complete attention. If Beethoven had provided the model in his E Minor Quartet, Schubert has taken his own path, a tumultuous and often blistering course, as the Amadeus realization insists most forcefully.

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**auditorium January 2014 ( - 2014.01.01)**

**The RIAS Amadeus Quartet Recordings Vol.2**

koreanische Rezension siehe PDF!

**[Classical Recordings Quarterly](#) Spring 2014 (Norbert Hornig - 2014.03.01)**



Last June Audite celebrated its fortieth birthday. Based in Detmold, Germany, this label has built up a remarkable catalogue of carefully remastered historical recordings, especially from German broadcast archives, using radio tapes. The anniversary was an appropriate time for Audite to introduce a new series of historical recordings – The Lucerne Festival Historic Performances, in cooperation with the famous Swiss festival, which was founded in 1938. The series started with three outstanding concert recordings of artists including Clara Haskil, Otto Klemperer, Robert Casadesu, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Isaac Stern, Ernest Ansermet, Lorin Maazel and George Szell. The latest release is dedicated “in memoriam” to Claudio Abbado, who died on 20 January at the age of 80. Abbado was closely connected with the Lucerne Festival for nearly five decades, and he was responsible for the revival of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, which immediately became one of the best symphony orchestras of the world under his baton. Some live performances on DVD are impressive in showing Abbado’s highly sensitive music making with this orchestra. A new CD from Audite couples Schubert’s Symphony No. 8 “Unfinished”, played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 2 and Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, recorded at the Lucerne Festival of 1978 and 1988. These are impressive live performances that should not be missed by all who admire this great conductor (Φ 95.627).

String Quartet enthusiasts will be interested in Audite's Volume 2 of RIAS' recordings of the Amadeus Quartet. The new two-disc set is dedicated to Schubert, the Quartets No. 9, 10 and 13-15, all recorded at the Siemensvilla in Berlin between 1950 and 1964. Schubert was always at the centre of the Amadeus's repertoire, and its performances of this composer set a standard for others in those days (two discs; Φ 21.428). Piano enthusiasts will seek a two-disc set profiling the American pianist Julius Katchen. Katchen, who died in 1969 at the early age of 42, was especially known as an interpreter of Brahms and Liszt. These recordings were taped in two sessions in Berlin in 1962 and 1964. They are of special interest because some of the works played are new to the pianist's discography – Beethoven's 32 Variations in C minor, WoO80, Chopin's Ballade, Op. 47, the Nocturnes Op. 9 No. 1 and Op. 27 No. 2 and Berceuse, Op. 57 as well as the Liszt Sonata in B minor, works in which Katchen demonstrates his qualities as a sensitive poet and virtuoso par excellence (two discs; Φ 21.419). [...]

**Diapason N° 626 Juillet - Août 2014 (Nicolas Deryn - 2014.07.01)**



En 1951, le Quatuor Amadeus, fondé quatre ans plus tôt, grave son premier disque. Au programme: l'ultime Sol majeur de Schubert. On en découvre ici un témoignage plus ancien: capté le 9 juin 1950, c'est le doyen du coffret et son fleuron. Ce qui fait la particularité de ces bandes de la RIAS berlinoise? Une dose d'adrénaline supplémentaire liée aux circonstances de jeu, une certaine forme de fragilité touchante, une sauvagerie juvénile, et des contrastes plus marqués. Mais une conception d'ensemble qui annonce globalement les enregistrements estampillés DG. Seule exception, le D 87 en mi bémol majeur creuse ici davantage le fossé expressif entre les mouvements, en proposant notamment un Adagio plus retenu.

Le premier volume de la série Audite remportait un Diapason d'or haut la main (Beethoven, cf. n° 618). Pourquoi en priver celui-ci, où l'archet de Norbert Brainin nous tient par la magnificence de son chant (écoutez «Rosamunde»)? A cause de quelques passages pas suffisamment dégrossis, et parce que, malgré ses beautés, cette «Jeune Fille et la mort» de 1954, présentée dans la notice comme le sommet de cette édition, ne supplante ni n'égale les deux versions ultérieures – celle de 1959 nous ébranle tout autrement. Pas besoin cependant de cotiser au fan-club des Amadeus pour noter l'importance de ces documents: l'émotion est la plupart du temps au rendez-vous. Les schubertiens débutants commenceront donc par consulter le catalogue du label à l'étiquette jaune. Les autres «approfondiront» avec cet excellent addendum à une discographie inestimable.

**Die Presse 12.12.2013 (Wilhelm Sinkovicz - 2013.12.12)**



**Schubert: Amadeus-Quartett**

*Für Rias Berlin machten die vier Musiker ab 1950 Radioaufnahmen, die nun nach und nach in den Handel kommen*

Das Quartett trug von London aus die wienerische Spielkultur in die Welt und wurde zum wohl bedeutendsten Quartett seiner Zeit. Für Rias Berlin machten die vier ab 1950 Radioaufnahmen, die nun nach und nach in den Handel kommen. Auf Beethoven folgt Schubert – in Vollendung musiziert.

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**Amadeus-Quartett in Berlin**

Für Radio-Aufnahmen stand bedeutend weniger Zeit zur Verfügung als in den Schallplattenstudios. Größere Spannung, nervöseres Spielen, ein dem Konzerterlebnis viel näheres Musizieren waren die Folgen. Wenn man sich auch oft auf dem «hohen Seil» bewegt, mit geringen Ausrutschern oder Intonationstrübungen, so werden diese Nachteile vielfach aufgehoben durch eine Intensität, die den Hörer fast vom Stuhl reißt. Vergleiche mit den Studioaufnahmen sind faszinierend, und ich möchte nicht zwischen den zwei Versionen wählen müssen!

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**Fono Forum April 2014 (Marcus Stäbler - 2014.04.01)****Aufwühlend**

Nach der sieben CDs umfassenden Beethoven-Box vom vergangenen Sommer hat das Label Audite nun die zweite Folge seiner Edition mit dem Amadeus Quartet veröffentlicht. Sie enthält einige Schubert-Aufnahmen des legendären Ensembles, die zwischen 1950 und 1964 für den Berliner RIAS entstanden sind.

Die früheste Einspielung ist - wie schon bei Beethoven - zugleich auch die wildeste. In der Interpretation des großen G-Dur-Quartetts aus dem Jahr 1950 lassen die damals noch sehr jungen Streicher die Kontraste schroff aufeinanderprallen. Sie bohren die steilen Crescendi im ersten Satz wie Schmerzensstachel ins Fleisch der Musik; im rasanten Finale stürmen sie mitunter beinahe atemlos voran.

Gegen diese aufwühlende Darbietung wirken die anderen Aufnahmen etwas blasser. Im Quartett "Der Tod und das Mädchen" - im Booklet-Text als Höhepunkt der Edition gelobt - bleiben etwa die Steigerungen im Kopfsatz vergleichsweise brav, ebenso wie manche Passagen im Andante. Das Scherzo bewegt sich einen Tick zu schwerfällig, bevor erst im Schlusssatz wieder jenes jugendliche Feuer lodert, das den besonderen Reiz der frühen Amadeus-Interpretationen ausmacht.

Neben dem Temperament und der überschäumenden Virtuosität beeindruckt das Ensemble durch seinen warmen Klang und eine dichte Legato-Kultur. Wie schön der Primarius Nobert Brainin auf seinem Instrument singen konnte, zeigt er etwa zu Beginn des "Rosamunde"-Quartetts. Dass er den Klang mitunter recht deutlich dominiert und nicht alle Kollegen so stringent phrasieren wie er, gehört zu den Schwachpunkten der Rundfunkproduktionen, die unser Bild vom Amadeus Quartet gleichwohl sehr schön ergänzen.

**Gramophone January 2014 (Philip Clark - 2014.01.01)**

**GRAMOPHONE**  
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**Amadeus's early prime**

At various stages in their long career the Amadeus Quartet have remained remarkably consistent interpretation-wise, but this doesn't mean that hearing them play single works more than once constitutes musical repetition. Interestingly, Audite's second instalment of their RIAS recordings marks some clear contrasts with commercial sessions recorded for DG at around the same time. On this Schubert set, the main items are Death and the Maiden (1954; generally more genial than the Abbey Road recording for DG made the previous year), the Rosamunde Quartet (a warmly yielding performance – a prime sampling of the Amadeus at this period) and, most impressive of all, the late G major (D887), recorded in 1950 and more strikingly dramatic than its famous DG successor of the following year. Perhaps the most marked difference is with the little E flat Quartet (D87), specifically the Adagio, which between 1951 (Audite) and 1955 (DG) speeds up by a full minute. I much prefer the earlier version. Also included in Audite's set is the G minor, D173, its Andantino second movement taking a fairly blatant look back to Mozart's Eine kleine Nachtmusik. The finale is particularly crisp in execution, though the track indicator starts a millisecond after the music. Good sound, and useful notes, too.

**kirchmusik.de 12.03.2014 (Rainer Goede - 2014.03.12)**

[www.kirchmusik.de](http://www.kirchmusik.de)  
die kirchen!

Das Wiederhören des Amadeus-Quartetts weckt Erinnerungen an eine ganz große Zeit der Quartettkultur, die bis heute nichts von ihrem Faszinosum verloren hat.

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**Musica numero 251 - novembre 2013 ( - 2013.11.01)**

**MUSICA**  
La rivista di musica classica fondata nel 1977

Dopo Beethoven, AUDITE presenta ora un doppio CD con le incisioni dedicate a...

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**Musica** numero 253 - Febbraio 2014 (Piero Rattalino - 2014.02.01)



Nel booklet si trova un bellissimo saggio di Rüdiger Albrecht, in tedesco e in inglese, che parla sì dei Quartetti ma anche – evviva! – della loro interpretazione da parte del Quartetto Amadeus, fornendo all'ascoltatore una guida preziosa.

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**Record Geijutsu April 2014 ( - 2014.04.01)**



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**Scherzo enero 2014 (Jesús Trujillo Sevilla - 2014.01.01)**



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**The Strad February 2014 (Robin Stowell - 2014.02.01)**



Audite's series of the Amadeus Quartet's radio archive recordings for...

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**www.musicweb-international.com 08.04.2014 (Jonathan Woolf - 2014.04.08)**



The second tranche of RIAS recordings of the Amadeus Quartet concentrates on another composer most dear to the group's collective heart, Schubert. It is therefore much less extensive than the Beethoven box which was almost complete in its reach (see review); this set, by comparison, has only two CDs. The Amadeus performed regularly for RIAS during the quartet's Berlin visits, of which there were many. The earliest Schubert to be set down for the expert engineers was the Op. posth. G major, D.887, recorded in June 1950. The most recent is the G minor, D.173, taped in December 1964. There are five quartets, and they include Death and the Maiden and Rosamunde.

As in that Beethoven set we are confronted by an infusion of a parallel discography, an appendix of broadcast material to the main body of the quartet's studio, commercial discography. And it has to be said that there are very few striking deviations from expected expressive norms in these five quartets. Tempi are often very similar, and the music's development is largely a mirror of the studio performances, so that when there is a deviation it seems like a vast anomaly. I can really only cite the slow movement of D.87 which the Amadeus play for RIAS in a much slower and more prayerful way than in their later studio inscription. The RIAS way has just a hint of hymnal piety about it. Otherwise the quartet performance has sufficient charm in the outer movements and burst of vigour in the Scherzo. The 1956 Rosamunde is very similar indeed to the 1951 studio recording and maybe it's only in the bringing out of the inner voicings that you can tell that the adrenalin of a live performance generates slightly more heat – that ability to balance the quartet so well is also a RIAS technical matter, of course. Throughout, the balance and sound is extremely fine.

The only salient difference between the RIAS and studio Death of the Maiden concerns the finale, which is taken slower in Berlin than in the commercial LP. It makes little real difference as the performance itself convinces however they take it; there is a rich, ripe tone from top to bottom and the interpretation is searching and wholly convincing on its own terms. The broadest performance is that of D.887 but, again, speeds never drag and there is a wholly communicative interplay at work and a very special sound world that the foursome captures. It elevates these performances, and their studio confreres, to the status of being amongst the finest Schubert quartet performances of the 1950s.

If you have the group's studio inscriptions you will not find that there is any real interpretative divergence from these RIAS broadcasts. They are too close in time, and the group's tonal qualities remain consonant. Broadcast material from a decade later would have shown lengthening shadows, but here the quartet is near its peak. As I said, the recording quality and subsequent re-mastering is first-class, as are the booklet notes.

[www.pizzicato.lu](http://www.pizzicato.lu) 11/02/2014 (Guy Engels - 2014.02.11)

**pizzicato**  
Remy Franck's Blog about Classical Music

### Von menschlicher Seele

Hinter jedem Lachen steckt auch eine Träne – diese Dualität ist besonders charakteristisch für die Musik von Franz Schubert. Auf eine heitere Volksmelodie folgt meist ein Blick in seelische Abgründe. Franz Schubert hat es, wie kaum ein anderer, verstanden, die beiden Facetten einer Medaille derart plastisch in Noten zu fassen. Diese Noten auch dementsprechend zum Klingen zu bringen, das ist die hohe Kunst, die das Amadeus-Quartett ohne jeden Zweifel beherrscht.

Man bleibt nicht unberührt, nicht gleichgültig bei diesen packenden, fesselnden Interpretationen mit ihrer Vielschichtigkeit in der Dramaturgie und in den Klangfarben. Jeder noch so kleine Notenwert, jedes Rubato, jede Pause sind deutlich hörbar Teil meisterlicher musikalischer Inszenierungen. Erschütternde Dramatik, aufwühlende Emotionalität einerseits, unbeschwerte Lebensfreude und erfrischende Lyrik andererseits: Die Amadeus-Musiker führen beide Extreme fast unmerklich immer wieder zu einer Einheit zusammen, denn die Licht- und die Schattenseiten, sie sind letztendlich der Mensch.

Certainly, no listener will remain unaffected by these fascinating performances. The Amadeus Quartet combines quivering drama, high emotionality, joy of life and refreshing lyricism in order to show the bright and the dark sides of Schubert's music.

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