



Press Info:

FRIEDRICH GULDA

THE EARLY RECORDINGS **RIAS**

Berlin, 1950 - 1959

PREMIERE RELEASES



audite 21.404 (4 CD-Box)

The pathos of objectivity. The pianist Friedrich Gulda during the 1950s.

The public image of Friedrich Gulda (1930-2000) is divided: for some, he is one of the most important Beethoven interpreters of the 20th century, whereas others perceive him as an enfant terrible whose battle against the cultural establishment and the constraints of the music business, which limited his multifaceted artistic interests and talents, became legendary. As ever, such generalisations are both true and false.

This compilation of hitherto unreleased recordings made by Gulda for the RIAS Berlin between 1950 and 1959 enables us to experience the pianist and musician Gulda in a more differentiated and unprejudiced manner. For even here, the “complete musician” – as Gulda saw himself throughout his career – comes into view. The spectrum of recordings which, given the almost frightening concert and recording activities Gulda tackled during this decade, only represents the tip of the iceberg, speaks for itself: it stretches from Mozart to Prokofiev and shows Gulda to be a universal artist who, from the beginning, sought to combine the highest possible degree of objectivity and authenticity with the greatest intensity of music-making. Gulda’s musical and pianistic foundations had been laid in Vienna by his teacher Bruno Seidlhofer, who had formed nearly all the important pianists of the “Viennese School”; the quality of Gulda’s training was confirmed by his being awarded the first prize at the Geneva Piano Competition in 1946 which Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli had won before him. Gulda looked for role models who displayed a spontaneous and at the same time controlled intensity in their playing, and he found them in American Jazz, whose inexorable rise in post-war Europe was to fascinate him throughout his career. Thus, an inimitable synthesis of a “pathos of objectivity” came into being, which can be heard in these recordings.

This is true not only of the early Mozart and Beethoven recordings, made in 1950, which demonstrate Gulda’s phenomenal analytical understanding of compositional structures and his unerring sense of rhythm and touch. His Chopin and Ravel recordings are sensational: on the highest pianistic level, Chopin’s Prélude op. 28 and Ravel’s Gaspard de la Nuit are presented in a rare, incisive manner on both a musical and dramatic level. With his interpretation of two important early works by Debussy, the Suite pour le Piano and the Suite bergamasque, as well as a selection of the Préludes, Gulda also proves to be one of the few non-French pianists who found a decidedly modern and yet authentic access to these masterworks. The programme closes with single pieces by Chopin (Nocturne in C minor, op. 48 No. 1 and Berceuse op. 60), demonstrating Gulda’s intensive exploration of romantic works, as well as a spec-



tacular recording of Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 7 op. 83, made in 1950. Prokofiev's music, whose wildness in the end proved incompatible with Gulda, did not remain in his repertoire for long; he did, however, pass on important impulses to his most famous pupil, Martha Argerich.

There is a "Producer's Comment" from producer Ludger Böckenhoff about this production available at www.audite.de/sc.php?cd=21404.



The production is part of our series „Legendary Recordings“ and bears the quality feature „1st Master Release“. This term stands for the excellent quality of archival productions at audite. For all historical publications at audite are based, without exception, on the original tapes from broadcasting archives. In general these are the original analogue tapes, which attain an astonishingly high quality, even measured by today's standards, with their tape speed of up to 76 cm/sec. The remastering – professionally competent

and sensitively applied – also uncovers previously hidden details of the interpretations. Thus, a sound of superior quality results. CD publications based on private recordings from broadcasts or old shellac records cannot be compared with these.

marketing / promotion:

- **exclusive 4 CD hardcover box with Gulda's signature in gold foil imprint**
- **extensive additional material as free download at www.audite.de/sc.php?cd=21404**
- **press kit for pre-presentation**
- **extensive press and radio promotion**

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