Erica Morini plays Tchaikovsky, Tartini, Vivaldi, Kreisler, Brahms and Wieniawski

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Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto (plus works by Tartini, Kreisler, Brahms, Vivaldi and Wieniawski)

Erica Morini (violin), RIAS-Symphonie-Orchester, Ferenc Fricsay (recorded 1952) (Audite)

Described by one commentator as “probably the greatest woman violinist who ever lived”, Erica Morini (1905-1995) responded curtly by saying, “A violinist is a violinist and I am to be judged as one – not as a female musician.” From an Austrian Jewish family, she emigrated in 1938 and eventually became a US citizen. She was close to Bruno Walter, Pablo Casals and George Szell but made few recordings, and this marvellously restored CD gives us performances taken from German radio archives. The main draw is a slightly cut version of the Tchaikovsky concerto, accompanied by the brilliant Hungarian conductor Ferenc Fricsay. It’s a thrilling account, and in remarkably clear, well-balanced mono sound.

The violin and piano couplings are fun; Respighi’s anachronistic arrangement of a Vivaldi sonata swoons and smoulders inauthentically, and miniatures by Brahms, Kreisler and Wieniawski sparkle. As mentioned, the excellent recorded sound needs no apologies and the notes are fascinating.

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