



Edition Ferenc Fricssay (VIII) – W.A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail

aud 23.413

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Fanfare (Mortimer H. Frank - 2009.11.01)

This release offers radio performances recorded in 1949 and should not be confused with the fine account led by Fricssay four years later for Deutsche Grammophon. Granted there are many similarities between the two. Rita Streich and Josef Greindl sang the same roles in both recordings. Then, too, Fricssay's conducting did not vary significantly from this account to the later one. But a major asset of the DG version is the superb singing of Maria Stader as Konstanza, a projection as musical, powerful, and technically commanding as any ever recorded. Indeed, her "Märtern aller Arten" is a paradigm of what this extraordinary "quadruple concerto," as Sir Donald Tovey tagged it, comprises. Conversely, in this earlier account, both Barabas and Streich sound a bit thin—Barabas, even somewhat shrill. Part of this may result from a recording that, in its sonic harshness and metallic string tone, typifies many pre-stereo radio tapes. In addition, as was the custom in studio recordings of that era, the aria for Belmonte that Mozart intended as an act III opener (No. 17 in the Peters score) is omitted. (In a splendid stereo account, Sir Colin Davis includes it.) Fricssay also varies the sequence of events in act II, reversing the order of Nos. 15 and 16. In 1998, DG reissued his later effort on CD. In short, although this Audite set provides a fine example of Fricssay's affinity for this opera, it is no match, sonically or vocally, for that later DG production, which remains available from arkivmusic.com. Audite includes no libretto, but provides ample tracking information and extensive trilingual notes. German dialogue is delivered by professional actors. In general the prevailing aura is that of the studio, not the theater.