# F. Chopin: Piano Concerto No. 2 & F. Schubert: Symphony 'The Great' in C major, D. 944

**aud 95.640**

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Another new release of great historical importance comes from Audite. This is dedicated to the German conductor Leo Blech (1871-1958) and the Hungarian-born pianist Julian von Károlyi (1914-1993). Blech, whose name is almost forgotten today, was one of the most prominent German conductors of the 1930s. He was General Music Director at the Deutsche Oper but left the country in 1937 to escape the Nazis (he was of Jewish origin). Furtwängler once said about Blech: "I am a true admirer of his great art which is unmatched in its combination of assurance and clarity with elegance and suppleness". Franz Schreker described him as the "epitome of magnificent precision". After the war Blech returned to Berlin as conductor of the Staatskapelle. In 1950 he conducted the RIAS Symphony Orchestra in performances of Schubert's Symphony No. 9 and Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2. These live recordings from the Titania-Palast are good examples of the art of Blech, who saw himself as a Kapellmeister in the best sense and a servant of the music. Von Károlyi is a splendid soloist in the concerto: his technique and his feeling for Chopin's music are impressive. It seems strange that his name (and his recordings for DG and EMI in the 1960s) are nearly forgotten today (CD 95.640).



»audite« Ludger Böckenhoff • Tel.: +49 (0)5231-870320 • Fax: +49 (0)5231-870321 • info@audite.de • www.audite.de