audite

R. Strauss: Don Juan, W. A. Mozart: Symphony No. 28 & I. Stravinsky: The Firebird

aud 95.591

EAN: 4022143955913

4 0 2 2 1 4 3 9 5 5 9 1 3

Fanfare (Steven E. Ritter - 2008.01.25)

The interesting thing on this CD is the Stravinsky, a composer we do not readily associate with Böhm, and one that actually, at least in my mind, represents a pole of antipathy to the type of music he excelled at. This is a fairly early recording (1963), and is the only one I have come across that has this particular composer-conductor combination. (Any intrepid Fanfare reader that knows of another, please write. There may be some broadcast performances lurking out there.) I don't know the ins and outs of Böhm's interest in Stravinsky (and when will we get a good biography of the conductor?) but I would like to hear some of the history, as this Firebird is simply delightful. We do know that he supported Stravinsky; he conducted Le chant du rossignol in Munich in 1923, and gave the German premiere of Jeux de cartes. But there were never any studio recordings. Böhm jumps in with both feet first and never looks back. I would have liked to hear the 1947 version instead, but will take what I can get. The recording does show its age—these are not stellar sonics, stereo though they are, but any concern regarding sound is dissipated rapidly because of the uniqueness of this recording to Böhm's discography.

Mozart and Strauss form a different tale, Böhm-fodder if ever there was any. His Mozart has long been considered a staple of his repertoire, and his way of doing Mozart has been taken in years past as the way of doing it. Böhm approached Mozart not unlike the way he approached Strauss, with a sense of form and lyricism in his mind foremost, and tried to bring out the inherent drama in the music, especially with considered attention given to the melodic line. Bruno Walter gave Böhm the philosophical basis for his Mozart-methodology, and first brought the composer alive for him. But Böhm must also have been well aware of the relationship between the music of Mozart and Strauss, and of the highest regard Strauss held for the Salzburg composer. This Symphony No. 28, recorded only by Böhm in the context of his complete set of the symphonies in 1969, is here selected from a radio broadcast in 1973, and is a wonder, the medium-sized orchestra still valiantly trumpeting style and substance over the emerging period dogma by Harnoncourt and others at the time.

Strauss is, of course, bread and butter to this conductor. The two hit it off famously, and Böhm was in essence a collaborator with his mentor in Dresden for the details and structure of the later operas. Though 30 years his senior, Strauss relied heavily on the advice of the younger man, and in return helped him to firmly establish his artistic legacy at Dresden, by then the definitive place to hear the composer's music. This 1976 Don Juan , sounding really fine in this transfer, is I believe the fourth recording the conductor made of this music, though I can't really term a radio broadcast a recording as such. But it is certainly competitive with any of the others, and the interest peaks even higher because of this orchestra. Audite has given us a fine, and in many ways important addition to the Böhm discography. Warmly

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

recommended.

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