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Edition Sergiu Celibidache | The complete RIAS recordings

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Continental Report

The Romanian Sergiu Celibidache, who died in 1996, was one of the most eccentric conductors of the twentieth century. His refusal to make commercial recordings is legendary, but his artistic and philosophical arguments for this strict position were not really plausible to many of his fans. They wanted their idol to be immortalised on CD. So they were happy to learn that the maestro had transferred the rights of his numerous broadcast recordings to his son Serge. Under the auspices of the Sergiu Celibidache Foundation, established by the conductor's heirs, his musical legacy was released by EMI and later DG. Comprehensive editions of recordings made by Celibidache in Munich, Stockholm and Stuttgart came out, and in 2008 Orfeo added the Cologne broadcasts. In 2011 Audite opened another chapter of the Celibidache legacy by releasing the complete RIAS recordings on three CDs. This is an important document of the younger Celibidache, containing his complete RIAS recordings with the Berlin RIAS Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin and mainly with the Berlin Philharmonic, all of them remastered from original sources in the best sound quality possible (C 21.406; three discs). Now Audite again celebrate the great maestro with a second edition tided "The Berlin Recordings", made between 1945 and 1957 (CD 21.423; 13 discs).It is also an impressive portrait of the fiery young Celibidache at the beginning of his career, his music making here being significantly different from the elegiac style we know from the late recordings. The edition is not only an extraordinary historical document but also a compilation of rare repertoire that Celibidache conducted mainly in his early years such as Cui's In modo populari, Op. 43, Gliere's Concerto for coloratura soprano and orchestra (with Erna Berger), Rudi Stephan's Music for orchestra and works by David Diamond, Edward MacDowell and Heinz Tiessen. There are few labels that can compete with Audite in booklet documentation and technical re-mastering standards (the company celebrates its 40th anniversary this year).

There is also interesting news from Hänssler Classic and its "Historic" series. In cooperation with the SWR (Südwestrundfunk) in Stuttgart the label has released Volume 4 of the Géza Anda Edition. Anda plays and conducts Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Camerata Academica Salzburg, recorded in 1960. The Concerto No. 5 with the Südwestfunk Orchestra conducted by Hans Rosbaud, taped in 1956, is of special interest because it is Anda's only recording of the work. And there are more examples of the sophisticated and timeless style of the Hungarian pianist (CD 94.223). The latest release from the "Historic" series is dedicated to Lorin Maazel. In January 1956 Maazel conducted in Germany for the first time (the Südwestfunk Symphony Orchestra in Baden-Baden) and his debut with the Berlin

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Radio Symphony Orchestra followed in March of the same year. At that time Maazel already was famous for his precision, clarity and intellectual approach, characteristics that he had admired very much in Victor de Sabata, his main model. In December 1958 the 28-year-old Maazel conducted some core repertoire pieces with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra – Beethoven's Coriolan Overture, Symphony No. 2 and Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra. The readings are good examples of the conductor's decisive style in which he always strives for total control and perfection. Maazel has never conducted this orchestra again, which makes these live performances even more interesting (CD 94.224). On 22 February 2013 Wolfgang Sawallisch died, aged 89. He was one of the last famous German Kapellmeister, and he had an international career. He recorded for different labels, but few will know the live recordings he made in Prague with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra for Czech Radio. In memory of Sawallisch Supraphon have released these for the first time in a five CD set, which contains not only standard repertoire – Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 1 and 6 and Mozart's Symphonies Nos. 40 and 41, but also Janáček's Glagolitic Mass and Martinu's Symphony No. 4. Sawallisch often conducted the Czech Philharmonic, and he had a close relationship with Czech music (five discs; CD SU 4140-2).

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