



Jorge Bolet: The Berlin Radio Recordings, Vol. III

aud 21.459

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This 3-CD set is the third and final volume in the sequence of Berlin radio recordings made by Jorge Bolet. Recorded between 1961 and 1974 all the pieces are new to disc with the single exception of Leopold Godowsky's Fledermaus 'symphonic metamorphosis' and were made available to Audite by Donald Manildi of the International Piano Archives, University of Maryland. What's especially valuable is the amount of material new to Bolet's discography – Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto in a Paris concert recording, Debussy's Masques and Images (Book II), Norman Dello Joio's Second Sonata, Schumann's Third Sonata, Chopin's Polonaises 3, 4 and 6 and the complete Chopin Op.25 Etudes.

The Etudes were recorded in 1968 in splendid sound with Bolet on powerfully communicative form, bringing a rich coloristic palette to the Aeolian Harp, drollery to No.4, plangency to No.7 and true con fuoco to No.10. If No.9 tends to float less like a butterfly and sting rather more like a bee, the Winter Wind has an irradiating ferocity to it. His 1974 Beethoven Concerto performance in Paris with the Berlin Radio Symphony and Moshe Atzman – a decided asset throughout – offers robust and commanding power in similarly fine stereo sound. Some of the wind harmonies sound rather jarring, but the horns are on impressive form and Bolet proves expressive and technically accomplished. It's a reading that marries majesty with sensitivity.

Both Schumann's Third Sonata and Grieg's Ballade in G minor are heard in mono. The former receives a particularly attractive reading, notably in the third movement variations, whilst the Grieg is at its very best when Bolet explores the music's flightier variations, notably an ingeniously witty Allegro capriccioso and the burlesque frivolity of No.10. Was it for reasons of radio timing that Bolet cut the music – for example he excises the whole of No.12? Altogether around three minutes (or so) of music is lost. Franck's Prélude, Aria et Final is another example of his way with a work that is also available on a Marston release.

The final disc is quite wide ranging, and includes a bullish Chopin Andante spianato and Polonaise, those three characterful Polonaises, heard in excellent 1966 stereo, and a richly contoured Images Book II. Of particular interest in the light of Bolet's promotion of new music is Dello Joio's Second Sonata of 1943 (January 1966, stereo). Full of rhythmic vivacity and astringent sonorities its harmonically drifting slow movement is equally well surveyed by Bolet. Just what would his Bartók have sounded like? His Godowsky offers a suitably ebullient and virtuoso envoi.



The remastering does as much justice to Bolet's tonal qualities as it can – which is a significant amount – and Wolfgang Rathert's bi-lingual notes are succinct and helpful.

Jorge Bolet (piano) - Volume 3: Berlin 1961-74

Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra/Moshe Atzmon
rec. 1961-74, Haus des Rundfunks, Saal 3, Berlin and
ORTF, Paris (Beethoven)

AUDITE 21.459 [3 CDs: 224:28]

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