Thomas Schippers

Michael Rabin plays Bruch's Violin Concerto and Virtuoso Pieces for Violin and Piano

Max Bruch | Henryk Wieniawski | Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky | Pablo de Sarasate | Camille Saint-Saëns

CD aud 95.607

www.musicweb-international.com Friday July 10th 2009 (Jonathan Woolf - 2009.07.10)

Rabin has been increasingly well served of late, not least by smaller, dedicated labels such as Medici, Doremi and now, as here, Audite. The Doremi issue contained sonatas with, as in this case, Lothar Broddack, recorded by RIAS in Berlin in October 1961 and 1962 whilst the Medici enshrined commercial recordings made in London and Hollywood 1959 and 1960. So the RIAS broadcasts are beginning to open up a very promising outlet for live Rabin, caught during his European tours, especially when something new to the commercial discography emerges.

In this case it's the major addition of the Bruch G minor concerto, in which he was joined by the RIAS-Symphonie-Orchester and Thomas Schippers. By 1969 Rabin had begun to recover from the damaging problems that had begun to assail him from around 1962. As one would expect this is an example of adroit technical address and musicality. Rabin was never a speed merchant - though he could have been had he wanted to be - and despite a reputation for firework repertoire based on his Paganini recordings he was a sensitive and dedicated violinist. No wonder Perlman admired him so much.

Rhythmically malleable and subtly coloured this Bruch performance is a notable addition to Rabin's relatively small discography. Orchestrally things are not as refined or blended as they might be. And despite the breadth of tonal resources in the slow movement and the personalised finger position changes - rather Heifetz orientated - this isn't quite the best of Rabin. The finale is relatively restrained and the ethos a little depersonalised, and lacking the vibrant incision of his better, earlier years.

This is shown in graphic relief if one turns briefly to the Havanaise recorded in the troubled year of 1962. True, this is a febrile performance that some times borders on the brash but the more volatile and even vulnerable nature of the playing carries a hugely personalised charge that compels interest. It's the only example from this period, the remaining items deriving from 1969. There are still plenty of engaging things though in the rather confectionery-light programme. Rabin imparts a saucy B section to fellow violinist William Kroll's echt Americana in Banjo and Fiddle and he serves up a rich cantilena in the Tchaikovsky.

Which leaves the Sarasate sequence. The Carmen Fantasia is the kind of thing assumed, lazily, that Rabin habitually trotted out to the exclusion of deeper repertoire whilst the three Danzas Españolas allow him to revel in contrasts between his rich lower register and an insouciantly whistling upper. Of the three, Zapateado is played with something near panache but one can imagine a wider range of tone colours from his earlier self.

The Bruch concerto though makes this an essential purchase for Rabin collectors.

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Audiophile Audition July 25, 2009
(Peter Joelson - 2009.07.25)

Michael Rabin made some wonderful recordings for EMI/Capitol and Columbia in the...

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Radio Stephansdom CD des Tages, 15.07.2009 (- 2009.07.15)

Der New Yorker Wundergeiger Michael Rabin starb viel zu jung mit 35 Jahren. Bei...

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Diverdi Magazin 184/ septiembre 2009 (Roberto Andrade - 2009.09.01)

Estrella fugaz (2)

Nuevo monográfico dedicado a Michael Rabin en Audite

O la difícil evolución del niño prodigio al artista adulto, que ya fue comentada en este Boletín a propósito de un doble CD que Tahra dedicó al gran violinista norteamericano Michael Rabin (1936-1972). Este CD Audite también está formado por grabaciones de concierto o realizadas para la radio. La pieza que cierra el recital, la Habanera de Saint-Saëns, que data de 1962, suena muy bien en las frases líricas, pero no tanto en aquellas donde el virtuosismo es obligado, como algunos espinosos pasajes en la cuerda grave, con el golpe de arco de saltillo. A Rabin le faltan soltura y entrega sin reservas a esta música sensual, no profunda pero muy bella si se toca con la perfección, la elegancia y la pureza de sonido exigidas (Heifetz, Kogan, Grumiaux).

De las grabaciones fechadas en 1969 destaca la del Primer Concierto de Max Bruch, en el que Rabin disfruta de la colaboración de la Orquesta Sinfónica de la RÍAS bajo la inspirada batuta de Thomas Schippers. Muy bella versión en la que se expande el sonido cálido y pleno de Michael Rabin, de calidad fuera de serie, muy similar a la lucida en sus registros de los años 50, que aquí se une a un gusto impecable y a un pleno dominio estilístico. A las piezas de Sarasate, en cambio, les falta la gracia y el encanto que caracterizan las versiones de Milstein, Ruggiero Ricci o Aaron Rosand, por no hablar de Heifetz. La Meditación de Chaikovski, rápida y prosaica, está fuera de estilo y el pianista no ayuda en absoluto. Al mejor Rabin volvemos a escucharlo en Banjo and Fiddle, de William Kroll y en un deslumbrante Capricho en la menor de Wieniawski, arreglado por Kreisler. Un recital cuya variedad permite apreciar la clase excepcional de un astro del violín de fugaz carrera.

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Gramophone October 2009 (Rob Cowan - 2009.10.01)

GRAMOPHONE
THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Violin brilliance from a player taken from us far too early

Michael Rabin's was a talent that even among a plethora of great violinists was something rather special, and we're lucky to have so many fine records that recall it, whether studio or live. Rabin died in 1972, apparently from a head injury sustained in a fall at his New York apartment. He was 35 and victim of a neurological condition that necessitated debilitating medication. Rumours of psychological problems and drug mismanagement were rife, and yet in spite of these and other problems Rabin managed an impressive comeback, as this svelte but musically responsive account of Bruch's First Concerto (the only complete Rabin version that I know of) amply proves. The line is mostly seamless, the tone warm and seductive, the bowing impeccably drawn. Thomas Schippers conducts a thoughtful if occasionally overweight accompaniment, somewhat muddily recorded although the violin sound is excellent. Just two points: the slow movement is occasionally troubled by an unobtrusive knocking and the leisurely movement timing of 9'45" includes well over a minute's worth of shuffling and tuning, so you needn't fear undue solemnity.

The shorter works include a brilliant account of Sarasate's Carmen Fantasy and a tenderly phrased Tchaikovsky Méditation. I also love the cheeky close to Kroll's Banjo and Fiddle. The other items relate the same happy impression, a technical wizard and an artist in total command of his instrument, someone who would surely have developed an extra musical dimension had he been granted another 30 or so years to do so. Sadly he wasn't but this well mastered programme of radio broadcasts is a valuable addition to Rabin's precious legacy.

Stuttgarter Zeitung Nr 147/2009 (Götz Thieme - 2009.06.30)

STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG

Keine Schwächen, niemals

Geigengenie. Mit 35 Jahren starb Michael Rabin, Konzertmitschnitte aus Berlin erinnern an den großen Geiger.

Keine Schwächen, niemals

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Klassieke zaken oktober 2009 (Chris Zuiderhout - 2009.10.01)

KLASSIEKEZAKEN

Michael Rabin (1936-1972) gold in de jaren vijftig en zestig als dé ster uit de...

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CD Compact diciembre 2009 (Benjamín Fontvella - 2009.12.01)

Markevitch fue uno de los directores más personales de la segunda mitad del...

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Scherzo diciembre 2009 (Enrique Pérez Adrián - 2008.12.01)

Gulda y otras joyas

Gulda y otras joyas

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Fono Forum Juli 2010 (Norbert Hornig - 2010.06.16)

Lichtstrahl im Archiv

Viele Veröffentlichungen historischer Aufnahmen stammen mittlerweile aus Rundfunkarchiven. Meist handelt es sich dabei um Live-Mitschnitte, auch die Geiger sind gut vertreten. Und immer wieder gibt es dabei Entdeckungen zu machen...

Posthum zu spätem Ruhm – auf diese einfache Formel könnte man die Wiederentdeckung des Geigers Gerhard Taschner bringen. Die systematische Veröffentlichung seiner Rundfunkaufnahmen auf mehreren Labels erwies sich als ein diskographischer Glücksfall; sie war auch ein besonders deutlicher Hinweis darauf, welche Schätze in den Archiven noch schlummern. Taschners maskulines, elektrisierendes Geigenspiel wirkt aufregend und anziehend in seiner unverwechselbaren Individualität. Wie konnte ein Geiger dieses Kalibers nur so lange vergessen bleiben, fragt man sich. In den fünfziger Jahren avancierte er zum führenden deutschen Geiger, der jedoch nie längerfristig bei einem großen Plattenlabel unter Vertrag war. Sein Nachruhm basiert fast völlig auf Rundfunkaufnahmen. Tragischerweise wurden viele Bänder gelöscht. Bahnbrechend für die Renaissance des Geigers war 1997 die EMI-Veröffentlichung „Gerhard Taschner - Porträt eines legendären Geigers“, eine Doppel-CD unter anderem mit Aufnahmen der Violinkonzerte von Fortner, Pfitzner und Mendelssohn sowie einer rassigen Einspielung von Sarasates „Carmen-Fantasie“ mit den Bamberger Symphonikern. Nach wenigen Jahren war die Edition vergriffen. Taschner-Fans können die meisten dieser Aufnahmen jetzt auf dem Label Andromeda (Gebhardt) wiederfinden. Auf den fünf CDs der Edition „Gerhard Taschner Rarities“ finden sich weitere legendäre Aufnahmen des Geigers, etwa das Chatschaturjan-Konzert mit Artur Rother von 1947 (live) oder Klaviertrios von Brahms und Schubert mit Walter Gieseking und Ludwig Hoelscher, die auch bei Bayer Records erschienen sind.

Ende der achtziger Jahre erinnerte EMI mit einer umfangreichen Edition an den Geiger Michael Rabin, der 1972 unter tragischen Umständen starb. Viele dieser Einspielungen sind nicht mehr erhältlich. Umso mehr werden sich Violinenthusiasten für die Veröffentlichung sämtlicher Aufnahmen begeistern, die Rabin zwischen 1962 und 1969 für den RIAS Berlin machte und die jetzt bei Audite (Edel) erstmals offiziell lizenziert auf CD erschienen sind. Basis für das Remastering waren die Originalbänder, die klanglich allen „Raubkopien“ überlegen sind. Zu den Attraktionen dieser CD, auf der Rabin unter anderem mit Virtuosenstücken von Kroll, Wienawski und Sarasate brilliert, gehört die Live-Aufnahme des Bruch-Violinkonzertes (Nr. I) mit dem RIAS-Symphonie-Orchester unter der Leitung von Thomas Shippers.

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Rabin spielte das Werk nie im Studio ein. Nach einer längeren Krise präsentierte sich der Geiger Ende der sechziger Jahre wieder in Bestform und bietet manisch-sinnliches Geigenspiel auf höchstem Niveau. Rabin-Verehrer, die das Besondere suchen, werden auch beim kanadischen Label Doremi (MW) fündig. Die zweite Folge einer „Michael Rabin Collection“ versammelt auf drei CDs rare Live-Aufnahmen des Geigers vorwiegend mit amerikanischen Orchestern aus einer Zeitspanne von fast zwanzig Jahren. Wer sich einen Überblick über Rabins Kunst verschaffen möchte, wird an dieser Edition nicht vorbeikommen, auch wenn die Tonqualität nicht immer befriedigt. So klingt die auch in dieser Edition enthaltene Berliner Aufnahme des Bruch-Violinkonzertes wesentlich schlechter als die Originalversion bei Audite.

Ein Muss ist die Box aber allein deshalb, weil sie Werke enthält, die Rabin nicht für EMI im Studio einspielte, etwa die Konzerte von Brahms und Prokofjew (Nr. 2) sowie die Konzerte von Richard Mohaupt und Paul Creston (Nr. 2). Zu den kleinen Pretiosen dieser Rabin-Hommage gehört der Rundfunkmitschnitt des ersten Satzes aus dem Doppelkonzert von Bach, hier spielt der 16-Jährige an der Seite von Altmeister Zino Francescatti den Ersten Violinpart.

Francescatti, einer der tonlich aufregendsten Geiger des 20. Jahrhunderts, ist live auch in einem Mitschnitt von den Salzburger Festspielen 1958 zu erleben, der bei Orfeo erschienen ist. Zu den Höhepunkten dieses Recitals mit dem Pianisten Eugenio Bagnoli gehören die Interpretationen von Saint-Saens’ „Introduktion & Rondo capriccioso“ und Ravels „Tzigane“, das ist geigerische Faszination pur!

Doremi hat sich zu einem regelrechten Entdeckerlabel entwickelt. Hier findet der Sammler Raritäten, die jahrzehntelang in Rundfunk- und Privatarchiven verstaubten, oft handelt es sich dabei um Konzertmitschnitte. Wie etwa das spektakuläre Debüt von Leonid Kogan in Amerika mit dem Brahms-Konzert in Boston unter Pierre Monteux (1958), eine der rasantesten Aufnahmen des Werkes. Kogan spielt hochvirtuos um sein Leben, wohl wissend, dass er sich der Konkurrenz eines Heifetz, Stern, Menuhin oder Francescatti stellen musste, die damals die amerikanischen Podien beherrschten.

Eine bemerkenswerte Novität im Doremi-Katalog ist das CD-Remake sämtlicher Violinsonaten von Bach und Beethoven mit dem Geiger Paul Makanowitzky (1920-1998) und dem Pianisten Noel Lee, die in den fünfziger Jahren auf dem französischen Label Lumen herauskamen. Makanowitzky war der erste Schüler von Ivan Galamian, vielversprechend debü-tierte er 1937 in New York. Eine internationale Karriere gelang ihm zwar nicht, jedoch gehörte er seit den sechziger Jahren zu den namhaftesten Violinpädagogen Amerikas mit Lehrverpflichtungen unter anderem an der New Yorker Juilliard School und am Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Von faszinierender Lebendigkeit sind die Live-Aufnahmen, mit denen Doremi den Geiger Christian Ferras porträtiert. In Konzerten von Mozart (Nr. 5), Mendelssohn, Tschaikowsky und Martinon (Nr. 2), die in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahren mit dem Orchestre National de FORTF entstanden, entdeckt man die leidenschaftlich-exzessive Seite dieses phänomenalen Geigers. Die Kammermusikaufnahmen, die Ferras mit seinem Klavierpartner Pierre Barbizet für DG einspielte, klingen kontrollierter und klanglich kultivierter (jetzt in Lizenz bei Brilliant). Und schließlich lenkt Doremi den Blick auf Silvia Marcovici, der wohl bedeutendsten rumänischen Geigerin nach George Enescu. Marcovici, die mit vielen international renommierten Orchestern und Dirigenten zusammenarbeitete, profiliert sich hier auf zwei CDs mit Rundfunkaufnahmen und einer DVD als Live-Künstlerin in Standardwerken des Konzertrepertoires, leidenschaftlich, feurig und mit romantischem Ton.

Ist von David Oistrach die Rede, herrscht seltene Einigkeit unter Geigern, ja unter Musikern im Allgemeinen. Da gibt es keinen Neid, vor Oistrach verneigen sich alle, noch heute. Zeitzeugen berichten von seiner Warmherzigkeit und Freundlichkeit, die entwaffnend war. Wenn er die Geige ans Kinn legte, mit ihr förmlich verschmolz, schienen sich diese Tugenden in Klang zu verwandeln, in Echtheit und Tiefe des Ausdrucks. Oistrachs wunderbar gerundeter Ton füllte den Raum bis in den letzten Winkel – er war sein unverkennbares Markenzeichen, auch seine vielen Schallplattenaufnahmen leben davon. Am 30. September 2008 wäre David Oistrach, in dem viele den „Vater aller Geiger“ sehen, 100 Jahre alt geworden. Dieser runde Geburtstag war ein willkommener Anlass für eine ganze Reihe von CD-Veröffentlichungen. EMI zum Beispiel würdigte Oistrach mit einer Großedition aller Aufnahmen, die er für das Label einspielte, Brilliant Classics brachte in spartanisch ausgestatteten Boxen eine Vielzahl seiner russischen Live-Aufnahmen heraus, kiloweise Oistrach für Sammler, die auch nach den abgelegensten Aufnahmen suchen. Wirkliche CD-Neuveröffentlichungen gab es jedoch relativ wenige. Dazu gehört ein Live-Mitschnitt

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aus dem Wiener Musikverein von 1956, der bei Orfeo herauskam. Oistrach ist hier als Solist in Mozarts A-Dur-Konzert und im ersten Schostakowitsch-Violinkonzert zu erleben, Jewgeni Mrawinski leitet die Leningrader Philharmoniker. Nicht weniger bedeutend ist der Mitschnitt der Europapremiere vom zweiten Schostakowitsch-Konzert aus der Royal Festival Hall von 1967 mit dem London Symphony Orchestra unter Eugene Ormandy, das in Koppelung mit dem Tschaikowsky-Konzert (1972) bei BBC Legends (MW) erschienen ist. Oistrach war es, der die beiden ihm gewidmeten Schostakowitsch-Konzerte um die Welt trug und in den Konzertsälen heimisch machte. Schließlich stellt der erstmals bei Testament (Note I) veröffentlichte Mitschnitt eines Recitals mit David Oistrach und Vladimir Yampolsky aus Bukarest (1958) ein absolutes Highlight dar. Nicht zuletzt auch wegen der ungewöhnlichen Programmfolge, die für Oistrach nicht unbedingt typisch war: Schumanns Fantasie op. 131, Francks A-Dur-Sonate, Szymanowskis „Mythen“ op. 30 sowie Ravels „Tzigane“. Ein muss für Oistrach-Verehrer!

International Record Review October 2009 (- 2009.10.01)

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

Igor Markevitch was at the height of his powers in the early 1950s and two discs of broadcast recording' with the RIAS SO, Berlin, have appeared on the Audite label. The sound on both is surprisingly good, taken from the original German Radio tapes. The first includes Schubert's Third Symphony in an affectionate and tidy performance, followed by three dances from The Three-cornered Hat by Falla – full of colour and vitality. So too is the Second Suite from Bacchus et Ariane by Roussel, though in the Bacchanale Markevitch doesn't quite match the kind of incendiary power unleashed by Charles Munch on a live recording with the Orchestre National (Disques Montaigne, later Avie). Markevitch's own orchestrations of six Mussorgsky songs (the soloist is Mascia Predit) will be of interest to serious Markevitch collectors (Audite 95.631, 1 hour 16 minutes).

The second disc is more interesting. It opens with the Suite No. 2 from Daphnis et Chloé by Ravel. This is very fine indeed, with Markevitch at his most engaged and expressive, and it's good to have the chorus parts included too. Stravinsky's Le Sacre du printemps was always one of this conductor's great specialities (he made two EMI studio recordings of the work in the 1950s alone) and here we have a live 1952 version that is staggeringly exciting and very well played. Few other conductors could deliver such thrilling versions of the Rite in the 1950s, but Ferenc Fricsay was assuredly one of them, and this was, after all, his orchestra (their own stunning DG recording was made two years after this concert). After this volcanic eruption of a Rite, the final item on the disc breathes cooler air: the Symphony No. 5 (Di tre re) by Honegger. Warmly recommended, especially for the Stravinsky (Audite 95.605, 1 hour 13 minutes).

Michael Rabin's too-short career is largely documented through a spectacular series of studio recordings made for EMI, but these never included the Bruch G minor Concerto. Audite has issued a fine 1969 live performance accompanied by the RIAS SO, conducted by Thomas Schippers, transferred from original tapes in the archives of German Radio. Rabin's virtuosity was something to marvel at but so, too, was his musicianship. His Bruch is thoughtful, broad , rich-toned and intensely satisfying. The rest of the disc is taken up with shorter pieces for violin and piano. The stunning playing of William Kroll's Banjo and Fiddle is a particular delight, while other pieces include Sarasate's Carmen Fantasy and Saint-Saëns's Havanaise. Fun as these are, it's the Bruch that makes this so worthwhile (Audite 95.607, 1 hour 10 minutes).

There have been at least three recordings of the Brahms Violin Concerto with Gioconda De Vito (1941 under Paul van Kempen, 1952 under Furtwängler and a 1953 studio version under Rudolf Schwarz), but now Audite has unearthed one with the RIAS Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Fricsay. Recorded in the Jesus-Christus-Kirche on October 8th, 1951, this is a radiant performance. De Vito's rich sound is well caught by the RIAS engineers and the reading as a whole is a wonderful mixture of expressive flexibility within phrases and a strong sense of the work's larger architecture. In this very fine account she is much helped by her conductor: Fricsay is purposeful but fluid, as well as propulsive in both the concerto and the coupling: Brahms's Second Symphony, recorded a couple of years later on October 13th, 1953. This is just as impressive: an imaginatively characterized reading that is affectionately shaped in gentler moments

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(most beautifully so at the end of the third movement) and fiercely dramatic in the finale. The mono sound, from the original RIAS tapes, is very good for its age. A precious disc celebrating two great artists (Audite 95.585, 1 hour 20 minutes).

Friedrich Gulda's playing from the 1950s is documented through a series of Decca commercial recordings and some fine radio recordings, including a series made in Vienna on an Andante set (AN2110, deleted but still available from major online sellers). I welcomed this very warmly in a round-up when it appeared in 2005, and now Audite has released an equally interesting anthology of Gulda's Berlin Radio recordings. Yet again, here is ample evidence of the very great pianist Gulda was at his best. There is only occasional duplication of repertoire, such as the 1953 Berlin Gaspard de la nuit by Ravel, and Debussy's Pour le piano and Suite bergamasque, immensely refined and yet strongly driven in these Audite Berlin recordings, though 'Ondine' shimmers even more ravishingly in the 1957 Vienna performance (but that's one of the greatest Gaspards I've ever encountered). The opening Toccata from Pour le piano has real urgency and tremendous élan in both versions. The Chopin (from 1959) includes what I believe is the only recording of the Barcarolle from this period in Gulda's career (two versions exist from the end of his career) – it grows with tremendous nobility and Gulda's sound is marvellous, as is his rhythmic control – it's never overly strict but the music's architecture is always apparent. This follows the 24 Préludes. Gulda's 1953 studio recording has been reissued by Pristine, and this 1959 broadcast version offers an absorbing alternative: a deeply serious performance that captures the individual character of each piece with imagination and sensitivity.

The Seventh Sonata of Prokofiev was taped in January 1950, just over a year after Gulda had made his studio recording of the same work for Decca (reissued on 'Friedrich Gulda: The First Recordings', German Decca 476 3045). The Berlin Radio discs include some substantial Beethoven: a 1950 recording of the Sonata, Op. 101 and 1959 versions of Op. 14 No. 2, Op. 109, the Eroica Variations. Op. 39 and the 32 Variations in C minor, WoO80. Gulda's Beethoven has the same qualities of rhythmic control (and the superb ear for colour and line) that we find in his playing of French music or Chopin, and the result is to give the illusion of the music almost speaking for itself. The last movement of Op. 109 is unforgettable here: superbly song-like, with each chord weighted to perfection. Finally, this set includes Mozart's C minor Piano Concerto, K491, with the RIAS SO and Markevitch from 1953 – impeccably stylish. This outstanding set is very well documented and attractively presented (Audite 21.404, four discs, 4 hours 5 minutes).

Pforzheimer Zeitung 30. November 2009 (Thomas Weiss - 2009.11.30)

Rückkehr eines Virtuosen

Rückkehr eines Virtuosen

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Fanfare Issue 33:1 (Sept/Oct 2009) (Anthony Feinstein - 2009.09.01)

Anthony Feinstein on Michael Rabin's Life and Later Recordings

[...] Audite's compilation of Berlin recordings made by Michael Rabin, both live (Bruch, 6/16–17, 1969) and in the studio (Weiniawski, Tchaikovsky, and Sarasate, 6/12/1969, and Saint-Saëns, 10/30/1962) claims to be complete (although DOREMI's pieces by Milhaud and Szymanowski, attributed to Berlin, don't appear here). It represents, then, another set of recordings to stand beside EMI's "Michael Rabin, 1936–1972," EMI 64123, 15:5, and occasional collections like "Mosaics" on EMI 67020, 22:5, Sony's "Michael Rabin: The Early Years"—with "Ossy Renardy Plays Sarasate and Paganini," Sony Masterworks Heritage 60894, 23:2, and DOREMI's collection of live performances (DOREMI 7715, 24:1 and the one under consideration in this

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review). Audite's note relates that the company's historical recordings come from original analog master tapes. The Bruch Concerto, also included in DOREMI's set, certainly sounds pristine, and Audite's effort presents it in cleaner, more vibrant recorded sound. Rabin had recorded Kroll's sparkling miniature (also a Heifetz favorite), Banjo and Fiddle, with Artur Balsam for Columbia in 1952. Sony re-released that recording in the collection mentioned above. Rabin must have liked Wieniawski's Caprice, op. 18/4, because he recorded it with Balsam at the same time as the Kroll encore in 1952 and later with Leon Pommers. The soaring reading of Tchaikovsky's Méditation, however, represents a new addition to Rabin's discography, available perhaps for the first time in the United States. Rabin's sound here has a somewhat sharp edge (as it does in all these later Berlin recordings), though its sumptuousness should still be identifiable.

Rabin had recorded the finale of Sarasate's Carmen Fantasy in 1952 for Columbia in the above-mentioned sessions, and that recording once again has been re-released in Sony's collection cited above. In Berlin, however, Rabin recorded the entire Fantasy, and it's a bracing reading, combining technical and tonal panache, recorded closely enough to reveal all the nuances of Rabin's tone and performance, by turns sultry, soaring, and startlingly brilliant. He'd recorded Sarasate's Habanera and Zapateado in 1959 with Leon Pommers, so the Berlin readings of the two works come just 10 years later (and include the Malagueña, which, once again, seems to be new to his discography). Malagueña sounds suave in its opening section, although perhaps a bit unstable rhythmically during the pizzicato section, though it is seductively smoldering overall. Sarasate himself recorded his own Habanera in 1904, but that quicksilver recording hasn't served as a model for the more aggressive ones that have followed. In 1969, Rabin's overall approach seemed almost identical with that from 1959, and his running dash to the conclusion makes, if anything, an even more brilliant conclusion, perhaps because he's been miked more closely. Rabin makes a few unpleasant noises in Zapateado, but otherwise it's a spirited reading (one that, once again, recalls in its brilliance and expressive nuance, the earlier and more polished performance from 1959), with another mad dash in the final measures.

Rabin recorded Havanaise with the Philharmonia Orchestra on 6/12/1956, but the reading from 1962, with Broddack at the piano, reveals the piece in another guise, since the orchestral part seems so important texturally to the work's effect. Here, Rabin's sound dominates the discrete piano part as it almost did the orchestral accompaniment by Alceo Galliera and the Philharmonia Orchestra in 1958. Rabin had an insinuating way with Saint-Saëns's Spanish pieces, which he seemed to project with a grandeza that others missed.

Because the collection presents Rabin in repertoire in which many collectors may not have heard him, and because of Audite's pristine recorded sound, every admirer must acquire this collection, not least in search of the answer to the by now burning question: was Rabin making a comeback? Urgently recommended.

Finally, Rabin's followers will have to obtain Anthony Feinstein's biography of Rabin. As that great violinist slips into the past, his family members pass away, and the memories fade for those who once vividly remembered hearing the young virtuoso on the radio, it seems less and less likely that anyone will be able to write about Rabin more authoritatively than has Dr. Feinstein, a Guggenheim Fellow and a professor of psychiatry at the University of Toronto. A character study that might appeal to a broad cross section of readers, the book also provides a great deal of detail not only about Rabin's interaction with his demanding mother, but also about his relationships with Ivan Galamian and with the great violinists of his era, including an especially touching one with Zino Francescatti. And since collectors will find such a great deal of information about the provenance of the recordings they have treasured—and will treasure—the book could serve as an extended set of program notes for DOREMI's new release of live performances, as well as for the sets that Sony, EMI, and Audite have re-released on CD. In fact, the emergence of live performances from his later years makes the book particularly relevant anew, for it will provide listeners with evidentiary performances that will suggest answers to the eternal question about Rabin—did he really have a chance at reinvigorating his career? No longer need his fans, still grieving after 37 years, try to read between the lines of comments like Henry Roth's or Arnold Steinhardt's. And if these recordings don't answer the question with perfect certainty, reading the book along with them provides a richer context for decision making.

Violinists who write about themselves often neglect (or decline) to tell much about their playing and their

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recordings. Perhaps they've been discouraged from doing so by publishers. And perhaps they're just weary of shop-talk, even if it's about themselves. That's also a common shortcoming in books written by non-violinists: too much biography ("Then Harry said to Moe, 'Let's give this guy a contract.'") and too little information on violin-playing and recordings, which, even if they could elicit it, these writers often couldn't begin to understand. It's obvious that Feinstein appreciated Rabin's significance and that his appreciation led him through the book. It's also obvious that he consulted violinists and other musicians as conscientiously as he consulted family members, and analyzed their comments just as insightfully. If this isn't the best book about a violinist among the ones I've read, I don't know what is. Urgently recommended.

Fanfare (Robert Maxham - 2008.11.30)

fanfare

Want List for Robert Maxham

This year's wants bear connections to the greatest of the great violinists. Dynamic's eight-CD set offers a synoptic view of Paganini's works for violin and orchestra. Even without the support of Paganini's demonic presence, the pieces, heard one after another, still pack quite a wallop. If Paganini wasn't the greatest violinist of all time, that mantle should fall on Heifetz. Both pioneers transformed violin playing—and we can actually hear how Heifetz did it in this overwhelming and affordable collection. Perhaps arguably, Michael Rabin showed such promise as well; and DOREMI's set allows us to answer some of the persistent questions about what his later violin playing might have been like had his comeback not been cut short, while Audite offers material equally intriguing. So what's teenager Caroline Goulding doing here? Well, she simply plays as though she belongs here—and that's enough.

andante July 2009 (- 2009.07.01)

Rezension siehe PDF

La Musica June 2009 (- 2009.06.01)

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BBC Radio 3 11.07.2009, 09.05 Uhr (David Vickers - 2009.07.11)

BROADCAST Building a Library

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France Musique mardi 17 mai 2011 (Marc Dumont - 2011.05.17)

BROADCAST Grands compositeurs

Le son de Saint-Saens - 2

Sendebeleg siehe PDF!

The Absolute Sound Jan 18th, 2021 (- 2021.01.18)
source: https://www.theabsolutesound.com/article...

Michael Rabin And His Magic Bow

In 2009 Audite gave us Bruch's First Concerto with Thomas Schippers and the Berlin Radio Symphony, which is sonically superior to one on Doremi 2 from the same week in June, 1969. The pacing, the fire, the grandeur, the swells, and the details from all the instruments are breathtaking.

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