

## Igor Markevitch



### Edition Friedrich Gulda – The early RIAS recordings

Ludwig van Beethoven | Claude Debussy | Maurice Ravel | Frédéric Chopin | Sergei Prokofiev | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

4CD aud 21.404

#### Radio Stephansdom CD des Tages, 04.09.2009 ( - 2009.09.04)



Aufnahmen, die zwischen 1950 und 1959 entstanden. Glasklar, "gespitzter Ton" und...

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#### Neue Musikzeitung 9/2009 (Andreas Kolb - 2009.09.01)



#### Konzertprogramm im Wandel

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#### Piano News September/Oktober 2009, 5/2009 (Carsten Dürer - 2009.09.01)



#### Friedrich Guldas frühe RIAS-Aufnahmen

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**DeutschlandRadio Kultur - Radiofeuilleton CD der Woche, 14.09.2009 (Wilfried Besthorn, Oliver Schwesig - 2009.09.14)**



In einem Gemeinschaftsprojekt zwischen dem Label "audite" und Deutschlandradio Kultur werden seit Jahren einmalige Aufnahmen aus den RIAS-Archiven auf CD herausgebracht. Inzwischen sind bereits 40 CD's erschienen mit Aufnahmen von Furtwängler und Fricsay, von Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau u. v. a.

Die jüngste Produktion dieser Reihe "The Early RIAS-Recordings" enthält bisher unveröffentlichte Aufnahmen von Friedrich Gulda, die zwischen 1950 und 1959 entstanden. Die Einspielungen von Beethoven, Debussy, Ravel und Chopin zeigen den jungen Pianisten an der Schwelle zu internationalem Ruhm.

Die Meinung unserer Musikkritiker:

Eine repräsentative Auswahl bisher unveröffentlichter Aufnahmen, die aber bereits alle Namen enthält, die für Guldas späteres Repertoire bedeutend werden sollten: Mozart, Beethoven, Debussy, Ravel, Chopin. Herausragend insbesondere seine Interpretationen von Werken Beethovens. In dessen später A-Dur-Sonate op. 101 erleben wir den Jungstar als kühnen Stürmer und Dränger, der seine spätere Rolle als kompromissloser Musik-Rebell zwar noch nicht gefunden hat, dessen heftiges "Renitenz-Potential" hier aber bereits deutlich anklingt.  
(Wilfried Besthorn)

In diesen frühen Tondokumenten aus den 50er Jahren ist Guldas typisches intensives, rhythmisch-geschärftes Spiel bereits voll entwickelt. Vor allem in Chopins Préludes op. 28 und Debussys "Suite Bergamasque" wird deutlich: alles atmet, alles fließt, alles entwickelt sich logisch aus dem Notentext heraus: erstaunlich bei einem kaum 20-jährigen Pianisten, erstaunlich auch, dass diese Aufnahmen nach knapp 60 Jahren nichts von ihrer Frische eingebüßt haben.

**Stereoplay Oktober 2009 (Michael Stegemann - 2009.10.01)**



„Bis ins letzte ausgeschliffen, jedoch etwas zu sehr mit unpersönlicher,...

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**Wochen-Kurier 29. Jahrgang, Nr. 37 (Michael Karrass - 2009.09.16)**



Das Bild, das die musikalische Öffentlichkeit von Friedrich Gulda (1930-2000)...

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## Friedrich Gulda – The early RIAS recordings

In den ersten Jahren nach seinem Tod im Januar 2000 blieb Friedrich Gulda vor allem als Exzentriker im Gedächtnis. Man hatte in frischer Erinnerung, wie er knapp ein Jahr zuvor einen Herzanfall vorgetäuscht hatte, um in den zweifelhaften Genuss zu gelangen, die Nachrufe auf sich selbst zu lesen. Viel war die Rede über Nebensächlichkeiten: Guldas Ausflüge in die Techno-Musik, sein legendärer Nackt-Auftritt mit Blockflöte, seine Jazz-Kompositionen.

Heute hat sich der Nebel um den Provokateur, den Wiener Grantler, das enfant terrible (und wie die Klischees noch heißen mögen) merklich gelichtet. Dadurch wird der Blick endlich wieder frei fürs Wesentliche. Und das ist eine Tatsache, die Gulda im Eifer des Gefechts manchmal vielleicht selbst ein wenig aus den Augen verloren hatte – nämlich dass er als Klassikinterpret einer der größten, für mich persönlich: der größte Pianist seiner Zeit war.

### Unerschöpfliche Energie

In der bei audite erschienenen Box mit vier CDs werden nun erstmalig Aufnahmen veröffentlicht, die der junge Gulda in den Jahren von 1950 bis 1959 für den RIAS machte, den von der amerikanischen Schutzmacht finanzierten Radiosender in West-Berlin. Und wieder einmal kann man staunend erleben, dass Gulda die Bühne als fertiger Künstler betreten hat, mit einem Repertoire, das von Mozart, Beethoven und Chopin über die französischen Impressionisten bis zu Prokofjew reicht. Von Anfang an scheint Gulda keine technischen Grenzen gekannt zu haben, von Anfang an überragte er seine Altersgenossen durch ein schier unerschöpfliches Reservoir an musikalischer Energie, gepaart mit einer ebenfalls überragenden interpretatorischen Intelligenz.

### Kompromisslos objektiv

Diese hellwache musikalische Auffassungsgabe fesselt durch eine unverwechselbare Radikalität, die Gulda sofort kenntlich macht: So spielt kein anderer. Aber – und das unterscheidet ihn fundamental von anderen nonkonformistischen Künstlern seiner Generation wie etwa Glenn Gould, mit dem er immer wieder verglichen wurde – bei Gulda hat diese Radikalität nichts von Willkür, nichts von subjektiven Launen. Stattdessen war er stets kompromisslos den Intentionen des Komponisten auf der Spur. Und so setzt er sich bereits in den frühen 50er Jahren als junger Wilder ganz bewusst ab vom Typus des romantischen Virtuosen, der sich auf Innerlichkeit, Gefühl und Inspiration beruft. Gulda schreibt sich Objektivität auf die Fahnen, vom "Pathos der Sachlichkeit" spricht treffend der informative Booklet-Text.

### Zorniger junger Mann

Insofern präsentiert sich der junge Gulda hier als einer jener "angry young men", die gegen den damals vorherrschenden kulturellen Konservatismus ankämpften. Die Generation der Väter war in den Augen dieser zornigen jungen Männer durch den Krieg und das, was zu ihm geführt hatte, zutiefst diskreditiert. Bei Gulda mag jener Nonkonformismus jedoch noch tiefere Wurzeln haben. Den Impuls, sich vom selbstherrlichen Gehabe der großen romantischen Virtuosen abzusetzen, verdankt er nicht zuletzt seinem Lehrer Bruno Seidlhofer. Der wiederum war ein Schüler von Arnold Schönberg und Alban Berg. Mit der Musik der Zweiten Wiener Schule hat Gulda zwar nichts anfangen können, sein Interpretations-Ideal ist jedoch – vermittelt durch seinen Lehrer – stark von Schönbergs Ideen geprägt. Man könnte auch an andere Protagonisten der Wiener Moderne denken, etwa an Karl Kraus, der gegen Phrase und hohles Pathos in der Sprache kämpfte. Insofern steht Gulda durchaus in einer spezifisch wienerischen Tradition.

### Lust am Ausdruck

Allerdings zeigt sich der junge Gulda noch vergleichsweise konziliant – vor allem, wenn man die jetzt neu veröffentlichten Beethoven-Interpretationen mit der bekannten Gesamteinspielung von 1968 vergleicht. Bei diesen frühen Aufnahmen, und das macht ihren besonderen Reiz aus, spielt Gulda weniger unerbittlich im Tempo. Dieser Beethoven kennt auch spielerische und charmante Seiten; man spürt eine noch ganz unbefangene Lust an der Expression, die das rigorose Streben nach Texttreue glücklich ausbalanciert.

### Entrümpelungs-Furor

Besonders interessant wird die Box durch eine Gesamteinspielung von Chopins Preludes op. 28. Hier zeigt sich eindrucksvoll der Entrümpelungs-Furor des jungen Gulda – und der führt überraschenderweise ganz nah an Chopin heran. Die Preludes sind ja allesamt hochoriginelle Miniaturen, jedes perfekt organisiert und manchmal geradezu verstörend in ihrer Kompromisslosigkeit. Der junge Gulda nimmt jede einzelne Nummer bedingungslos ernst. Mit Nachdruck befreit er Chopin vom Geruch des Salonkomponisten, von allen weichlichen und verzuckerten Klischees. Stattdessen entdeckt er ihn als Wahlverwandten: nämlich als radikalen Nonkonformisten, der in der konsequenten Verfolgung der jeweiligen Formidee selbst vor dem Bizarren nicht zurückscheut.

### Emotionale Kraft

Ähnlich frisch und unverstellt von Konventionen ist Guldas Zugang zu den französischen Impressionisten. Mit berücksichtigendem Klangsinne, aber schlank, transparent und, wenn nötig, mit jazzigem Drive spielt der junge Gulda Debussy. Frappierend etwa seine entschlackte, wunderbar schwebende Interpretation des berühmten "Clair de lune" – nichts von dem parfümierten Schmachten, mit dem diesem arg strapazierten Stück so oft Unrecht getan wird. Als einziges Solokonzert, im Zusammenspiel mit dem RIAS-Symphonie-Orchester unter dem beherzt zupackenden Dirigenten Igor Markevitch, ist Mozarts c-Moll-Konzert in der Box vertreten: ein Lehrstück über die emotionale Kraft, die im konsequenten Vermeiden jeglicher Sentimentalität stecken kann. Alles in allem eine Fundgrube für Gulda-Fans und ein Muss für Klavier-Enthusiasten.

**NDR Kultur Feuilleton | Neue CDs | 21.09.2009 15:30 Uhr (Elisabeth Richter - 2009.09.21)**



### Frühe RIAS-Aufnahmen von Friedrich Gulda

*Aufnahmen von 1950, 1953 und 1959*

Friedrich Gulda ist ein Künstler gewesen, der sich in kein Schema pressen lassen wollte, ein phänomenal begabter klassischer Pianist, ein Jazzmusiker mit glühender Passion, der sich dann der sogenannten Freien Musik und zuletzt Disco, Pop und Techno zuwandte. Das Label Audite bringt jetzt bislang unveröffentlichte Aufnahmen Guldas für den RIAS Berlin aus den Jahren 1950 bis 1959 heraus. Sie zeigen den Pianisten als einen stilistisch sehr vielseitigen Musiker. Er ist mit Werken Mozarts, Beethovens, Chopins, Debussys, Ravels und Prokofjews zu hören, auf höchstem pianistischen Niveau.

### Charme und Zauber

"Ich bin der wichtigste kreative Musiker der zweiten Hälfte unseres Jahrhunderts", sagte Gulda einmal in einem Interview. Von mangelndem Selbstbewusstsein zeugt so ein Satz gewiss nicht. Man sagte Gulda Unbescheidenheit und Überheblichkeit nach. Man konnte aber ganz deutlich unter dieser Oberfläche eine sehr zarte und verletzte Seele spüren. Anders ließe sich Guldas überirdisches Mozart-Spiel etwa kaum erklären. Man kann es in der CD-Box bei Mozarts c-Moll-Klavierkonzert hören. Aber interessanter noch sind die Chopin-Aufnahmen.

Charme und Zauber konnte Gulda vermitteln, und dass man ihn gern als sachlichen Pianisten klassifiziert, das trifft nur auf manche der 24 Chopin-Preludes zu. Es ist angenehm, dass Kitsch und romantisches Pathos nicht seine Sache waren. Wird es virtuos bei Chopin, greift Gulda durchaus beherzt in die Tasten - da gab und gibt es Pianisten, die sauberer und genauer in der Virtuosität sind. Das war vielleicht ein Grund, warum Gulda später kaum Chopin spielte, und gerade deshalb ist diese CD-Box so wertvoll, die eine Chopin-CD enthält.

### Eine glücklich machende CD-Box

Beethoven und Mozart fallen einem bei Gulda zuerst als seine bevorzugten Komponisten ein, weniger ist bekannt, mit welchem Feinsinn Gulda die Impressionisten Ravel und Debussy spielte. So differenziert, so

genau artikuliert, dabei analytisch und schillernd zugleich, raffiniert alle Möglichkeiten des Klavierklangs ausnützend - so subtil spielen Debussy nur wenige Pianisten. Ein weiterer Glücksfall dieser Box sind also die Debussy und Ravel-Aufnahmen.

Guldas "Paradepferd" Beethoven ist natürlich auch gebührend vertreten, mit den nicht allzu oft gebotenen Eroica-Variationen, den späten Sonaten A-Dur und E-Dur, und der frühen G-Dur- Sonate op. 14. Gulda präsentiert Beethoven in diesen Aufnahmen aus den 50er-Jahren weit radikaler, trockener, kompromissloser als später.

Es ist ein rundum zu empfehlende, weil sehr glücklich machende CD-Box.

**Die Presse Schaufenster | 25.09.2009 (Wilhelm Sinkovicz - 2009.09.25)**



2010 wäre Friedrich Gulda 80 geworden. Rechtzeitig erschien bei Audite eine Box...

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**Rondo Nr. 594 / 26.09. - 02.10.2009 (Guido Fischer - 2009.09.25)**



Von Friedrich Gulda ist die Forderung überliefert, dass ein klassischer Pianist...

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**WDR 3 WDR 3 TonArt; Mittwoch, 09.09.09 um 15:05 Uhr (Christoph Vratz - 2009.09.09)**



Er hat die Musikwelt gespalten wie kaum ein Anderer – und er hat sich an ihr...

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**Pizzicato N° 196 - 10/2009 (Alain Steffen - 2009.10.01)**



**Gulda, der Erneuerer**

Nach dem 2. Weltkrieg hat besonders die jüngere Generation von Musikern einen Wechsel herbeigesehnt und auch herbeigeführt. Bei den Komponisten kam es zu den Darmstädter Begegnungen und hat Leute wie Boulez und Stockhausen hervorgebracht. Bei den Pianisten waren es Geza Anda, Alfred Brendel, Friedrich Gulda und noch andere, die in ihrem Spiel neue Perspektiven zeigen wollten. Was heute normal ist, war damals die Ausnahme. Denn immer noch herrschten die alten Tradition vor, noch immer gaben Pianisten wie Backhaus, Fischer oder Gieseking den Ton an. Und von diesem Standpunkt aus betrachtet, wirken Guldas Aufnahmen geradezu explosiv, auch wenn sie heute natürlich etwas an Modernität eingebüsst haben. Damals, also in den Fünfzigerjahren waren es Pioniertaten, und man muss sich schon Guldas Beethoven-Einspielungen der Sonaten Nr. 10 und 30, die Eroica-Variationen oder die 32 Variationen anhören, um den Stellenwert dieser Tondokumente wirklich zu schätzen. Aber auch das Klavierkonzert Nr.

24 von Mozart mit Markewitsch zeigt einen neuen, frischen Mozart-Stil, ähnlich dem von And. Debussys 'Suite Bergamasque' und Ravels 'Gaspard de la Nuit' sind ebenso aufschlussreiche Dokumente eines analytisch-modernen Stils, wie die ganz und gar nicht salonmusikähnlichen Preludes von Frederic Chopin. Ob man Guldas Konzepte nun mag oder nicht, sei einmal dahingestellt, seine Position als kreativer Erneuerer wird hier aber auf unantastbare Weise dargelegt.

**Stereoplay November 2009 (Attila Csampai - 2009.11.01)**



**Früh vollendeter Exzentriker**

*Alle Jahre wieder zur Hauptverkaufszeit ruft sich Gulda der „Unsterbliche“ mit Privataufnahmen und Archivfunden in Erinnerung. Jetzt mit der CD-Premiere seiner frühen RIAS-Aufnahmen.*

Früh vollendeter Exzentriker

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**Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk MDR Figaro - Take 5, 26.10.2009 ( - 2009.10.26)**



In seinem Nonkonformismus wurde er mit Glenn Gould verglichen, Peter Cossé...

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**Fono Forum Dezember 2009 (Norbert Hornig - 2009.11.11)**



**Historische Aufnahme des Jahres**

Sämtliche RIAS-Aufnahmen mit Wilhelm Furtwängler (live) und die frühen RIAS-Aufnahmen mit Friedrich Gulda. Kostbarkeiten aus dem Rundfunkarchiv, vorbildlich ediert (Audite/Edel).

**Gramophone November 2009 ( - 2009.11.01)**



**Gulda and Richter**

*A Beethoven performance that convinces in its 'rightness'*

There are some recorded performances that spell "rightness" with such unflinching certainty that for the duration you're hoodwinked into believing that the music couldn't possibly be performed any other way. Such is the 1950 Berlin RIAS recording of Beethoven's A major Sonata, Op 101, played by Friedrich Gulda, which aside from the first movement's perfect pacing and the measured drama of the Vivace alla marcia includes a finale where the sense of inexorable momentum is intoxicating. Audite's four-CD set of early Gulda recordings for RIAS excavates many wonderful performances and, because most of the repertoire was also commercially recorded by Gulda, allows for some instructive comparisons. Not that I have so far been able to trace a commercial Gulda recording of Chopin's Preludes, Op 28, an extraordinary rendition

where Beethovenian gravitas and nimble fingerwork alternate with sustained intensity in slow music, ie the F sharp major Prelude, which reminded me of Michelangeli at his best. The Nocturne, Op 48 No 1, is played with an imposing depth of tone, the stormy middle section disruptive but never rushed, whereas the Barcarolle is positively hedonistic in its forthright projection and lavish colours.

By contrast Gulda's bright and crisply articulated account of Mozart's great C minor Concerto, K491 (with Hummel's cadenzas) looks forward to a later age, much abetted by Igor Markevitch's clear-headed conducting. Gulda also offers a dark and at times relentless account of Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata while an all-French programme includes performances of Debussy's Pour le piano and Suite bergamasque, together with shorter pieces, that combine murmuring passagework with vital delivery of the more rhythmic numbers, qualities that also enhance the effect of Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit. And there are the other Beethoven works, the sonatas Opp 14 No 2 (especially engaging) and 109, and the Variations, Op 35 (Eroica) and in C minor. I read from the comprehensive notes that Austrian Radio holds a complete Beethoven sonata cycle from 1953, which would I'm sure be gratefully received by piano aficionados. No need to ask for Sviatoslav Richter recordings: the market is positively flooded with them. And yet one new release from West Hill Radio Archives offers a "fabled" concert (their claim) given at the Budapest Academy of Music in February 1958.

Pictures at an Exhibition is fairly similar to the uncompromisingly direct account put out by Philips (same period) but the real find is Schubert's late C minor Sonata, D958, which is both impetuous and at times delicate. The finale has something of the Erlking's ferocity about it and there are shorter pieces by Rachmaninov and Debussy. The sound is dry but clear.

[www.hifistatement.net](http://www.hifistatement.net) 3. Dezember 2009 (Attila Csampai - 2009.12.03)



## Der junge Gulda in Westberlin

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Diverdi Magazin 187/ diciembre 2009 (Ignacio González Pintos - 2009.12.01)



## El dios de las pequeñas cosas

*Audite reúne en un estuche de cuatro CDs, con una primorosa reconstrucción sonora, las primeras grabaciones del gran pianista austríaco Friedrich Gulda*

“En el caso de Gulda, el afán de objetividad no es tanto un fin en sí mismo como el marco desde el que desarrollar una nueva subjetividad. Intérprete personal, no fue ajeno al capricho y la provocación, profesando incluso cierto culto por la originalidad.”

Nuestra época es esencialmente trágica, y precisamente por eso nos negamos a tomarla trágicamente. El cataclismo ya ha ocurrido, nos encontramos entre ruinas, empezamos a construir nuevos y pequeños lugares en que vivir, comenzamos a tener nuevas y pequeñas esperanzas. No es un trabajo fácil. No tenemos ante nosotros un camino llano que conduzca al futuro. Pero rodeamos o superamos los obstáculos. Tenemos que vivir, por muchos que sean los cielos que hayan caído sobre nosotros.  
D. H. Lawrence, El amante de Lady Chatterley

El proceso de reconstrucción que testimonia la segunda posguerra europea no podía limitar sus esfuerzos a la urgente rehabilitación material, también debía ocuparse de conjurar los demonios del mundo espiritual,

crear vínculos y referencias diferentes, arropar con nuevos valores el pasado susceptible de ser recuperado y abrir perspectivas desde las que atreverse a saludar el futuro. Comienza así en el ámbito de la interpretación musical la depuración de una herencia grandilocuente y sospechosa, la deconstrucción de una tradición con resonancias funestas.

Ganador del concurso de Ginebra en 1946 y artista con contrato en Decca desde 1948, el pianista Friedrich Gulda se presentaba en New York en 1950 tras haber realizado sendas giras por Europa y Sudamérica los años precedentes. Hasta setenta conciertos ofreció ese mismo año un Gulda que había demostrado poseer el talento y la inteligencia para convertirse en símbolo de la nueva y renovadora escuela pianística vienesa.

Una renovación que exigía el regreso desintoxicado a las fuentes o, cuando menos, una intoxicación alternativa de las mismas. Porque, en el caso de Gulda, el afán de objetividad no es tanto un fin en sí mismo como el marco desde el que desarrollar una nueva subjetividad. Intérprete personal, no fue ajeno al capricho y la provocación, profesando incluso cierto culto por la originalidad. Pero Gulda representó a la perfección el emergente modelo de intérprete, el del intelectual que desde una perspectiva estudiada y crítica mantiene en su aproximación una cierta distancia academicista. Nace una estética sin vocación trascendental, ajena a cualquier tipo de compromiso con el público; una sensibilidad que no invoca grandes ideales ni procura encender el ánimo colectivo, un individualismo de apariencia hermética que desde el rigor conceptual evita lugares comunes y se esfuerza en compartir su fascinación por las pequeñas cosas.

Este estuche Audite ofrece un episodio hasta ahora inédito de ese ejercicio de depuración, cuatro discos que reúnen grabaciones en estudio realizadas durante la década de los cincuenta por un Gulda en su apogeo mediático e interpretativo, donde el sonido conserva todo el brillo y la audacia juveniles y el concepto es todavía fresco, oportuno y pertinente.

Ludwig van Beethoven había de convertirse, necesariamente, en el epicentro de la pretendida reforma estilística. Fue además el auténtico caballo de batalla de Gulda, que registró tres ciclos completos de sus sonatas. La pulcritud en la articulación, el énfasis rítmico y el timbre brillante presiden una sonoridad en la que el pedal es un recurso aislado que no llega a integrarse en un discurso ágil, de líneas clarísimas y estructura visible. Lo que subyace es la intención de derribar la imagen idealizada del genio que sólo atiende a la llamada de su destino creador para presentarnos a un Beethoven sonriente que dialoga con su público, que desea ser entendido y escuchado en los hogares de su tiempo. No encontrará el lector rastro alguno de olimpismo en el fraseo de Gulda, tampoco ecos de carácter heroico en los marcados ritmos, ni patética desolación en sus tiempos lentos. Sí, en cambio, una amplia y conseguida gama de emociones domésticas, expresadas con delicada sensibilidad en una apuesta por el Beethoven más comercial y humorístico – Sonata 10, op. 14/2 – , el de escritura dulce y graciosa – Sonata 30, op. 109 – , el un Beethoven que no pierde simpatía ni cuando se obstina – Sonata 28. op. 101 – . Unas variaciones atléticas y de fino impulso completan un particular, luminoso y refrescante cuadro beethoveniano.

Pasiones también domésticas dominan el clima de los Preludios de Chopin, toda vez que la interpretación prescinde del aliento romántico en busca de la modernidad de las piezas. Muy en la línea de la recientemente reeditada en CD versión de Anda del mismo año en cuanto a claridad expositiva, delicadeza (imbrica y carácter casi impresionista, el acercamiento de Gulda posee un puntillismo en ocasiones algo afectado que permanece ausente de la más distinguida lectura del húngaro. Nocturno y Barcarola son ejecutados, por contra, con un más canónico estilo, sin merma de la transparencia y la atención al detalle. El Debussy sorprende por el firme ímpetu y la exactitud métrica que Gulda impone a una selección de piezas que por su definido sonido y por su muy sugerente juego tímbrico se convierten en una de las grandes bazas de esta edición. Algo parecido cabría decir de un Gaspard de la nuit de Ravel que, sin embargo, pierde poder de fascinación a lo largo de un discurso en ocasiones algo confuso. Una Séptima sonata de Prokofiev algo desfigurada se convierte en la nota exótica de este capítulo guldiano.

Cerramos el repaso con el Concierto para piano n° 24 de Mozart, una de las joyas de este cofre. Igor Markevitch dirige a la orquesta de la RIAS con pulso incisivo, precisión en el refinado diálogo orquestal y estilizado dramatismo, abriendo un espacio ideal para que Gulda exponga su pulsación brillante, su fraseo



sutil y calculado. Si Beethoven supone un caballo de batalla, Mozart, al que Gulda volvía una y otra vez, luce como un idílico refugio en el que reina el orden, quizá porque la exquisita sencillez del lenguaje mozartiano es el auténtico lenguaje del dios de las pequeñas cosas.

Un último comentario acerca de la estupenda restauración sonora, a partir de las cintas originales procedentes de los archivos de la RIAS, que han realizado los ingenieros de Audite. Apenas hay diferencias entre las distintas tomas, limpias y espaciosas, en las que se aprecia todo el brillo del piano de Gulda. El ligerísimo soplido de fondo es imperceptible y sólo cierto endurecimiento del sonido a partir del/orte puede limitar muy puntualmente el placer de la escucha. El sello alemán pone a disposición del internauta diverso material adicional – fotografías, recortes de prensa, actas de las sesiones de grabación, una reseña radiofónica de esta edición y dos archivos audio del propio Gulda hablando de Bach y Cortot – que pueden consultarse y descargarse desde la página <http://www.audite.de/>.

**Die Zeit 10. Dezember 2009 Nr. 51 (Wolfram Goertz - 2009.12.10)**



**Die auf ein neues Talent aufmerksam machen**

*Friedrich Gulda: The Early Rias-recordings*

Die auf ein neues Talent aufmerksam machen

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**Mannheimer Morgen Dienstag, 29.Dezember 2009 (Alfred Huber - 2009.12.29)**



**Kühl kontrollierte Leidenschaft**

*Der Pianist Friedrich Gulda begeistert mit frühen, bislang unveröffentlichten Aufnahmen aus dem RIAS-Archiv*

Kühl kontrollierte Leidenschaft

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**CD Compact noviembre 2009 (Benjamín Fontvella - 2009.11.01)**

He aquí un modélico álbum de homenaje a uno de los pianistas más importantes...

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**Scherzo diciembre 2009 (Enrique Pérez Adrián - 2009.12.01)**

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**Gulda y otras joyas**

Gulda y otras joyas

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**Die Presse 28. Januar 2010 (Wilhelm Sinkovicz - 2010.01.28)**

**Die Presse**

Der junge Gulda. Seine ersten Aufnahmen verraten, welcher Heißsporn dieser...

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**BBC Music Magazine February 2010, Vol 18 Number 6 (Andrew Mc Gregor - 2010.02.01)**

**BBC** **MUSIC**  
MAGAZINE

**Historic Friedrich Gulda**

*Andrew McGregor, presenter of CD Review, reviews two sets which commemorate the eccentric pianist*

These two sets illuminate the outer ends of Friedrich Gulda's career; the Berlin radio recordings he made throughout his 20s, then, following his jazz years in the 1970s, his return to Mozart.

The Early RIAS Recordings (Audite 21.404: 4 CDs) begin in 1959 with Beethoven Sonatas Op. 14 No. 2, and Op. 109 in whose finale Gulda lacks the singing intensity that he finds in his 1967 cycle. The Eroica Variations, though, are gripping, even blisteringly paced. Debussy's Pour le piano has a bold and brilliant opening. The gibbet in Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit lacks mesmerising menace, but 'Scarbo' has vital electricity. Chopin's Preludes swing from introverted intensity to explosive violence. Gulda was 19 when he recorded Prokofiev's Sonata No. 7, yet seems ill-at-ease with its modernism. But his Mozart C minor Concerto K491, with Igor Markevitch conducting in 1953, has a disciplined precision that's bracing, especially with Hummel's brilliant cadenzas.

Gulda returned to the classical concert platform in 1981 with three complete cycles of Mozart sonatas in Munich, Paris and Milan. Private recordings were made the following year in a lakeside hotel near Salzburg; only cassette copies survive as the masters disappeared. The Complete Gulda Mozart Tapes (DG 477 8466; 6 CDs) combines the two previously released volumes, with the distortion that marred two of the sonatas electronically tamed so that the cycle is now complete (Gulda's son Paul plays the missing 30 seconds from the recording of K457). The sound is clean and dry, intimate in the slow movements but unforgivingly brilliant elsewhere. The bass lines have a joyful drive, there's a keen sense of forward momentum but little sign of the improvisatory freedom Gulda sought in jazz – until you reach the concert performances on the bonus disc. From 1978 there's a Musikverein performance of the K397 Fantasia which emerges from Gulda's own Mozartian fantasy, and from 1997 a Mozart Adagio with synthesized strings; a dated sound, but lovingly achieved. Gulda said that when he was dead, he hoped to play piano duets with Mozart; perhaps in his mind they'd have sounded like this. He died three years later, on Mozart's birthday.

**Diapason février 2010 (Etienne Moreau - 2010.02.01)**

Friedrich Gulda enregistra pour Decca dès 1950, mais hormis son intégrale Beethoven, le label britannique ne nous a jamais vraiment rendu ses premiers disques. Les archives de la RIAS magnifiquement restaurées par Audite couvrent cette période de jeunesse et nous rappellent l'artiste intellectuel qu'il fut à ses débuts, avant de se métamorphoser grâce au jazz et à la composition.

Un sentiment d'austérité ressort de ces Beethoven un peu doctes (Opus 109), parfois raides (Variations « Eroica »), ou de ces Chopin pressés (Préludes). On préfère le disque de musique française, où il se lâche un peu plus, comme dans la Suite bergamasque de Debussy, et un Gaspard de la nuit raffiné mais manquant de puissance (Scarbo). Le plus incontestable ici reste Mozart, représenté par un Concerto KV491 exemplaire que dirige un Markevitch inspiré. Et le plus inattendu est cette Sonate n° 7 de Prokofiev menée bon train mais d'une étonnante sobriété dans la réalisation. Si l'aspect pianistique est intéressant, tout cela est quand même un peu sévère, et ne porte pas encore la marque de la liberté flamboyante qui sera plus tard la signature de Gulda.

**Musica febbraio 2010 (Riccardo Risaliti - 2010.02.01)**

L'articolista di questo album, Wolfgang Rathert, parte da un'acuta analisi del...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Wochen-Kurier Mittwoch, 10. Februar 2010 Nr. 6 (Michael Karrass - 2010.02.10)****WOCHENKURIER**

Die audite Produktion 21404 "Edition Friedrich Gulda – The early RIAS...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**klassik.com 17. Dezember 2009 (Dr. Daniel Krause - 2009.12.17)  
source: <http://magazin.klassik.com/reviews/revie...>****Vermächtnis mit neunzehn**

Vermächtnis mit neunzehn

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**www.critic-service.de 30. März 2010 (Christian Ekowski - 2010.03.30)**

Diese Box mit 4 CDs des Pianisten Friedrich Gulda ist ein überaus wertvolles...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**www.codaclassic.com February 2010 ( - 2010.02.01)**

**Edition Friedrich Gulda - The early RIAS recordings**

Edition Friedrich Gulda - The early RIAS recordings

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**International Record Review October 2009 ( - 2009.10.01)**



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 (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).

### **La Musica November 2009 ( - 2009.11.01)**

Rezension siehe PDF...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Although a product of the Vienna Music Academy, which he entered at the age of 12 to study under Bruno Seidlhofer and Joseph Marx, Gulda was eventually to develop a disdain for authority. His unorthodox life eventually led him on a path of discovery and an attraction to jazz in the 1950s. Stories of him faking his own death in the late 1990s and his various nicknames (“terrorist pianist”, “Freddy the Ghoul”) point to a true eclectic. In addition to appearances at concerts around the world, he appeared with such jazz greats as Chick Corea and Dizzy Gillespie for improvisation sessions. He expressed a wish to die on the birthday of his adored Mozart, and did so on January 27, 2000 at the age of 69.

These recordings of the pianist in his 20s give us an opportunity to review his early accomplishments in the classical repertory. After being without these for many years, it was refreshing to hear them once again and respond to some grand and astonishing music-making. The sound is generally fine—clear and warm, if close and monaural.

The Beethoven sonatas (10, 28, 30), Eroica Variations, and 32 Variations in C minor are sometimes brusque, with sharp accents and wide contrasts. They are not, however, out of keeping with what we know of Beethoven’s personality. The beauty of the composer’s slow sections is not slighted in the least, as Gulda’s marvelous concentration and phrasing come fully to the fore. Also present, as in the final movement of Sonata 10, is Beethoven’s sense of humor—this Scherzo rides the wind with gale speed.

Debussy’s *Pour le Piano*, *Suite Bergamasque*, and the few excerpts from the *Preludes*, *Estampes*, and *Images* are not patted down with layers of Impressionist gauze. They are very direct—forceful and impetuous. They are also, as in the final ‘Toccata’ from *Pour le Piano* virtuosic to the extreme. Gulda plays all of this music full out. The famous ‘Clair de Lune’, while refined, grows heavy with nostalgia as it unfolds its beauty; but these along with Ravel’s *Gaspard de la Nuit* show the artist considerably short of the imagination needed to be fully convincing.

The 24 Chopin *Preludes* do not find the pianist at his most persuasive. While there are certain niceties, *Prelude 3* uses the pedal too much, causing a smear in the rippling left hand. *Prelude 10*, on the other hand, is most spirited, with the right hand always sparkling. *Prelude 11* has perhaps more expressive rubato than it needs, while the ensuing *Presto* of *Prelude 12* is driven and choppy, as it should be. The *Allegro* of *Prelude 14* is thrilling, especially with its spare use of pedal and clear-sounding organized chaos. *Prelude 15* (*Raindrop*) begins daintily but soon finds Gulda, drenched with emotion, squeezing everything he can get out of the piece. The violence of *Prelude 18* is well conveyed as it seizes one by the throat until its energy has been spent. The gentle but speedy 19th *Prelude* is just about perfect—one of the best I have heard—but the very last of the set puts you through the emotional wringer once again. In all, a mixed bag.

Chopin’s *Nocturne in C minor*, Op. 48:1, is not a laid-back performance. It moves in a positive way, and the contrasting stormy middle section is most effectively realized. The *Barcarolle*, on the other hand, is uneven, with rhythms that may be pulled about too much for some tastes. On the positive side, it’s certainly a big-boned approach to one of the composer’s finest compositions.

Prokofiev’s wartime *Sonata 7* is appropriately demonic, with the final ‘*Precipitato*’ hammering away towards its violent conclusion. There is a respite in the slow movement’s lyricism, though the dark clouds are never far away.

Recorded in 1950, the sound can be a bit murky when razor-sharp vividness is what’s really called for.

The only work with orchestra in this set is Mozart’s dramatic *Concerto 24 in C minor*. Markevitch conducts with all the drama one could wish for, but the overall sound is astringent, with a sour sound in the oboes. All this is of small matter in view of the stirring musicmaking of Gulda. Wolfgang Rathert’s essays contribute substantially to the value of this album.

Pforzheimer Zeitung 30.12.2011 (Thomas Weiss - 2011.12.30)



### Guldas frühe Rundfunkaufnahmen

Guldas frühe Rundfunkaufnahmen

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

DeutschlandRadio Kultur - Radiofeuilleton 30.12.2010 ( - 2010.12.30)



### Friedrich Gulda

*Historische Aufnahmen aus dem RIAS-Archiv*

"Für mich ist der Gulda immer noch die Nummer 1. Der beste Pianist der Welt. Und das war er eben auch! Er hat nie falsche Töne gespielt – bei den Produktionen im Studio hat er nie viel wiederholt; einmal gespielt, noch mal gespielt, das war's, der konnte das. ...

... Das habe ich nie bei einem anderen Pianisten erlebt.", erinnert sich Dorothee Ehrensberger, die ab den 1950er Jahren Musikredakteurin im RIAS war und zahlreiche Konzerte und Studioproduktionen mit Friedrich Gulda betreut hat.

Aus diesem umfangreichen Archivschatz senden wir heute einen kleinen Teil, ausschließlich Aufnahmen, die bislang unveröffentlicht sind, aus den Jahren 1965 bis 1971. Darunter auch eine Version der Sonate B-Dur op. 106, der sogenannten Hammerklaviersonate von Ludwig van Beethoven, für die Friedrich Gulda im Herbst 1967 von seiner üblichen Aufnahmestrategie abwich: eine Hammerklaviersonate hatte er angekündigt, die selbst er so im Konzert nicht spielen könnte. Und so erarbeiteten Pianist und Tonmeister vor der Aufnahme einen Schnittplan – 5 Tage und knapp 200 Schnitte später war die Einspielung perfekt.

Klaus Bischke war damals Tonmeister, er und Dorothee Ehrensberger erinnern sich an diese und andere Produktionen. Auch Gulda selbst kommt zu Wort: was seine Art, Mozart zu spielen, dem Jazz zu verdanken hat, ist da unter anderem zu erfahren, in einem Interview zum Thema "Auszierungen – Verzierungen", das er im April 1967 nach seiner Aufnahme der Sonate C-Dur KV 545 gegeben hat.

Grandios dokumentiert im RIAS-Archiv: ein geradezu unglaublicher Zugabenmarathon zum Abschluss eines Konzerts in der Berliner Philharmonie am 10. November 1971 mit Johann Sebastian Bachs Wohltemperiertem Klavier. Das war seine letzte Aufnahme für den RIAS.

Ein Porträt Friedrich Guldas, zusammengestellt aus Studioaufnahmen und Konzertmitschnitten: Klassik, Jazz - und jede Menge Gulda.

**BROADCAST Die neue Platte: Zurück in die Vergangenheit***Historische Aufnahmen*

[...] Haben große Schallplattenfirmen wie EMI, Sony oder Deutsche Grammophon bereits einen großen Teil ihrer diskografischen Schätze gehoben und auf CD zugänglich gemacht, schlummern in den Archiven der Deutschen Rundfunkanstalten weiterhin historische Aufnahmen in ungeahntem Umfang. Vor allem kleinere Labels wie Orfeo, Hänssler Classic oder Audite haben es sich zur Aufgabe gemacht, künstlerisch besonders wertvolle Einspielungen in Kooperation mit den Rundfunkanstalten wieder zugänglich zu machen.

Audite hat seinen Katalog mit historischen Aufnahmen aus Rundfunkarchiven auch in diesem Jahr mit vielen Highlights bereichert und etwa die Editionen mit den Dirigenten Karl Böhm, Ferenc Ficsay und Igor Markewitsch weiter ausgebaut. Für besonderes Aufsehen sorgten aber die Veröffentlichungen sämtlicher RIAS-Aufnahmen mit den Berliner Philharmonikern unter der Leitung von Wilhelm Furtwängler und die Aufnahmen, die der junge Friedrich Gulda zwischen 1950 und 1959 für den RIAS Berlin machte. In einem vielgestaltigen Programm begeistert Gulda dabei nicht nur mit Werken von Beethoven, Debussy, Ravel und Prokofieff, sondern auch als raffinierter Chopin-Interpret:

"05. MUSIK: Frédéric Chopin  
Prélude Nr. 3 G-Dur (Vivace)  
Friedrich Gulda (Klavier)  
LC 04480 Audite 21.404"

Während es sich bei den frühen RIAS-Aufnahmen Friedrich Guldas um Erstveröffentlichungen handelt, sind Wilhelm Furtwänglers RIAS-Aufnahmen mit den Berliner Philharmonikern, die zwischen 1947 und 1954 entstanden, in Sammlerkreisen weitgehend bekannt, u.a. von nicht autorisierten Raubpressungen. Wie bei allen historischen Veröffentlichungen von Audite wurden für die Digitalisierung nur die Originalbänder verwendet, wobei auch problematische Tonhöhenschwankungen korrigiert wurden. Auf 12 CDs ist hier Furtwänglers Spätstil dokumentiert, wobei die Symphonik von Beethoven, Brahms und Bruckner im Zentrum steht. Aber auch als Dirigent neuerer Werke ist Furtwängler zu erleben, mit einem Repertoire, das man mit seinem Namen nicht unmittelbar in Verbindung bringt, etwa die "Concertante Musik für Orchester" von Boris Blacher:

"06. MUSIK: Boris Blacher  
Concertante Musik für Orchester op. 10 (Ausschnitt)  
Berliner Philharmoniker  
Leitung: Wilhelm Furtwängler  
LC 04480 Audite 21.403 "



[France Musique](#) mardi 14 décembre 2010 (Frédérique Jourdaa - 2010.12.14)



**BROADCAST** Le point du jour

Sendebeleg siehe PDF!

[France Musique](#) mercredi 15 décembre 2010 (Frédérique Jourdaa - 2010.12.15)



**BROADCAST** Le point du jour

Sendebeleg siehe PDF!

**Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 16.01.2017 (Gerhard R. Koch - 2017.01.16)**



**Der Grenzüntergänger**

*Im Niemandsland zwischen Liszt und Last: Ein Rückblick auf den Wiener Pianisten Friedrich Gulda, der am liebsten zwischen allen Stühlen saß*

Der junge Gulda hat zwischen 1950 und 1959 für Rias Berlin Mozart, Beethoven, Frederic Chopin, Debussy, Maurice Ravel, ja Prokofjews siebte Sonate eingespielt: makellos perfekt, virtuos ohne Allüre, bestechend stilsicher, in jeder Hinsicht kontrolliert, dabei mit energischem Drive – ein Musterschüler mit Überschuss (vier CDs bei audite).

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**International Piano May/June 2020 ( - 2020.05.01)**



**Naked iconoclast**

*Austrian pianist Friedrich Gulda spent his career straining against the stuffier aspects of the classical music scene in a life that embraced unorthodoxy to the full. Benjamin Ivry profiles this wild child of the piano*

A new series from SWR Music containing unissued radio recordings of Friedrich Gulda's solo recitals and concertos (see Selected Listening below) remind us that the achievement of keyboard dropouts mostly depends on where they land. Gulda (1930-2000) has been compared to Canada's Glenn Gould, who also eventually renounced giving standard piano recitals. The Ukrainian virtuoso Sasha Grynyuk even released an album juxtaposing compositions by Gulda and Gould (Piano Classics PCL0043).

Yet differences are more striking than similarities. The puritanical Gould shunned crowded auditoriums for the pristine atmosphere of recording studios. The chain-smoking hedonist Gulda, loathing Isolation, wanted to press the flesh even more than he could at keyboard recitals. Gulda claimed to resent that the rigours of playing classical piano required limiting his alcohol consumption. According to the August 1996 issue of the jazz periodical Down Beat, Gulda once sauntered into a Vienna bar and shouted, 'Dry Martini!', whereupon a waiter who thought he was speaking German brought him three martinis (drei-Martinis). Down Beat gives no hint that Gulda sent back the excess booze.

Even in their intimate lives, Gould and Gulda were essentially dissimilar. Ever-secretive, Gould recorded emotive, valid renditions of lieder by Hindemith with a paramour, the Canadian vocalist Roxolana Roslak. By contrast, Gulda recorded execrable performances of Schumann lieder with a companion, Ursula Anders, and in an un-Gouldian way, traipsed onstage naked with Anders to perform them live. Alternatively, the nude Gulda would play the crumhorn, a Renaissance woodwind instrument. He also experimented on baritone sax, but spared audiences the sight of him tooting it ungarbed.

As a classical piano dropout, Gulda was closer to the Hungarian-American Ervin Nyiregyházi (1903-1987), who also jettisoned a concert career to experience earthier pleasures in the red-light districts of San Francisco and elsewhere. Yet Nyiregyházi languished in poverty for most of his life, unlike Gulda, whose trendy concert antics earned him enough to pay for frequent holidays in Ibiza.

This career began when Gulda's pianist mother urged him to take lessons as a boy, leading to quick, and seemingly effortless, success. During the war years, Gulda and his family braved Nazi strictures to listen to Allied Army broadcasts, including jazz. Gulda always identified jazz with liberation, especially since his lifelong friend Joe Zawinul, with whom he played impromptu clandestine concerts during the war, grew up to be a jazz fusion keyboardist with Cannonball Adderley and Miles Davis. Zawinul assimilated into a milieu where Gulda remained an investigative outsider, seriously interested in the idiom, but lacking the authenticity required of jazz.

Yet Gulda considered jazz the only new music, scorning contemporary piano works by Boulez and Stockhausen, while considering Bartók and Schoenberg to be insufficiently separated from the past. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in 1950 at age 20, following three days of detention at Ellis Island after admitting that 10 years previously, he had been obliged to join a Nazi youth organisation, whose meetings he never attended. As soon as his well-received Manhattan debut was over, he hurried to Birdland, a celebrated jazz club, to hear Duke Ellington's orchestra.

Despite early acclaim, reviewers reminded punters that Gulda had ample competition at a time when legendary keyboard talents still thrived. In November 1951, the Musical Times compared two renditions of Beethoven's Sonata Op 111 in C minor, by Edwin Fischer and Gulda, from that year's Salzburg Festival, concluding that 21-year-old Gulda's showed 'insufficient maturity and depth'. Similarly, the MT of May 1956 evaluated recordings of the first book of Debussy's Préludes, complaining that despite Gulda's interpretive qualities, he was 'no match for [the elder Walter Gieseking's] almost miraculously perfect performance'.

Small wonder that around the age of 30, Gulda rebelled against the elderly – performers and audiences alike. In interviews akin to rollercoaster rides of jokes, rage, and profanity, he described punters at piano recitals as 'centenarian paralytics' and 'stinking reactionary art lemurs' who expect to hear the same five sonatas performed ad infinitum.

On a personal level, Gulda had trouble coping with early success, which translated to chess games played against himself in lonely hotel rooms. He longed for the camaraderie of jazz clubs, in stark opposition to the chilly solitude and competitiveness of virtuoso piano careers.

As Flower Power evolved in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Gulda jumped on the bandwagon, transcribing versions of hits by the Doors and Stevie Wonder. Yet as his son Paul Gulda informed *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper in May 2010, the elder Gulda could be an old-fashioned choleric paterfamilias, citing an episode when Paul was around 15 and his father invited him to improvise on the recorder in the family garden. When Paul interpolated part of a Mozart symphony into his playing, his father reacted 'very contemptuously', concluding, 'My son does not appreciate freedom, my son does not feel my vibes, he defaces Mozart.'

Gulda could be a nightmare father-figure to grownups too, despite the laidback attitudes he professed to espouse. In September 1971, Helmut Müller-Brühl, director of Germany's Brühl Palace Concerts, told the *New York Times* that Gulda would never be invited again: '[Gulda] always get angry. He's difficult about money, about what he wants to eat. He's difficult about his music, too.' This tyrannical side of Gulda makes it fitting that his most famous pupil, Martha Argerich, was allowed access to him only after blurting out (aged

12) to an admirer – the Argentinian dictator Juan Perón – that her most cherished dream would be to work with Gulda. Perón made Argerich's studies with Gulda possible.

As past of his imperious tendencies, Gulda refused in later years to divulge recital programmes until the public was assembled, preferring to rely on spontaneity. Scorning most maestros, he insisted upon conducting from the keyboard, despite his lack of talent in leading orchestras. Yet the SWR reissues reestablish why Gulda enjoyed an early career breakthrough. A spry, impish rendition of part of Bach's English Suite No 2 in A minor, a psychologically fragile Impromptu in A-flat major and poignant Sonata No 16 in A minor, the last two by Schubert, are impressive. Yet Gulda repeatedly stated that he was too close to the Viennese-style mindset of 'smiles and suicide' epitomised by the oft-despairing, doomed Schubert to frequent this repertoire, no matter how acutely he mastered it.

One wonders, on the other hand, if French compositions were really his cup of tea, from a limp performance of Couperin's *L'épineuse*, followed by a sketchily envisioned Second Book of Debussy's *Préludes*, lacking stylistic assurance. Meanwhile, his own compositions, of which *Prélude* and *Fugue* and the Doors transcription *Light My Fire* proved widely popular, were repetitious to a fault, although more rollicking than the usual drily sober-sided minimalism. Today, his transcriptions of pop and rock music do not seem to transcend the indigence of the original melodies.

Gulda was at his most attractive communicating domestic warmth and affection in Mozart, especially in the Sonata No 13 in B-flat major, with a final movement, marked *Allegretto grazioso*, like a richly imagined *mise-en-scène* from an 18th-century stage comedy. Instinctively imagining the spirit of the rococo, Gulda also perceived its sadly fleeting aspects, like an Austrian version of the painter Watteau. He could also be a philosopher in Beethoven's works, being drawn to the pensive Fourth Concerto and Sonata No 28 in A major. In the first movement of the latter, marked 'somewhat lively, but with intense feeling,' Gulda appears to be asking some essential questions about mankind's motivation for existence.

Unlike these highly personalised conceptions, Gulda's version of Handel's Suite in E minor HWV 429 sounds rather formal and anonymous. The more outlandish sides of Gulda are evident in his use of an amplified clavichord for Bach, its weird echoing twang like a puny electric guitar more suited to the Hawaiian shirts he sported onstage in later recitals, in addition to other exotic wear, than Baroque music.

On the SWR recital reissue, 30 minutes of portentous, dated sonic explorations with his jazz ensemble are included: Gulda's *Perspective No 1* lacks only the presence of Yoko Ono to become the definitive hippie-era waste of time. In concertos, Gulda is at his best in a January 1962 performance of Mozart's Concerto No 14 in E-flat major conducted by Hans Rosbaud, in which the pianist manages to be fizzy and celebratory in turn. Mozart's Concerto No 23 in A major from April 1959, also with Rosbaud, is equally fine, particularly an unadorned, moving second movement *Adagio* followed by a spiffy finale, marked *Allegro assai*.

Piano lovers may mourn that Gulda renounced artistic collaboration with the likes of Rosbaud, favouring instead onstage happenings with nubile disco dancers and Giuseppe Nuzzo, an Italian disc jockey known as DJ Pippi, who headlined at Pacha, Ibiza's stellar nightclub. Yet we can only conclude that Gulda knew his own psychological fragilities and emotional imperatives, and followed his heart. His legacy, one of wilful talent and wildly uneven results, remains substantial.

www.amazon.de 3. Februar 2010 ( - 1999.11.30)  
source: <https://www.amazon.de/gp/customer-review...>

### Eine Offenbarung

Die 4 CDs, aufgenommen 1950, 1953 und 1959, enthalten Werke ganz unterschiedlicher Kompositionen und Stilrichtungen, von Mozart über Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy und Ravel bis zu Prokofiev. Weitaus mehr bestechen alle hier dargebotenen Interpretationen des jungen Friedrich Gulda als durch ein "Pathos des Sachlichen", wie es im differenzierten Booklet (oder ähnlich in anderen Kommentierungen) heißt: Natürlich ist Gulda vor allem ein analytischer Pianist, ein Schöpfer unbedingter Clarté, doch stets auch von mitreißender Dynamik sowie Delikatesse und des Geheimnisses. Alle Einspielungen sind von singulärer Qualität und bezeugen die stupenden Möglichkeiten, die der junge Gulda in sich trug. Es ist eine Lust, eine Offenbarung, die Kompositionen in den hier festgehaltenen Darbietungen erleben zu können.





## Igor Markevitch conducts Ravel, Stravinsky and Honegger

Maurice Ravel | Igor Stravinsky | Arthur Honegger

CD aud 95.605

Rondo Nr. 589 / 22. - 28.08.2009 (Guido Fischer - 2009.08.26)

**RONDO**  
Ein Klassik- & Jazz-Magazin

Der gebürtige Russe Igor Markevitch zählt bis heute zu den unbestritten...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 25. August 2009 (Jan Brachmann - 2009.08.25)

Frankfurter Allgemeine  
ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND

### Alles ging ihm leicht von der Hand

*Die Dirigentenkarriere von Igor Markewitsch begann erst nach Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs, als sein Spezialgebiet galt die Musik seines Landsmanns Strawinsky. Das „Sacre“ ist ein Glanzstück in dieser Serie von Wiederveröffentlichungen aus dem Berliner RIAS-Archiv*

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Die Welt 9. September 2009, 04:00 Uhr (Manuel Brug - 2009.09.09)

DIE WELT

[...] Weich fließende Farben werden hier gleichsam aus den Tasten massiert,...

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**Stereoplay Oktober 2009 (Michael Stegemann - 2009.10.01)**

stereoplay

„Bis ins letzte ausgeschliffen, jedoch etwas zu sehr mit unpersönlicher,...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**www.classicstodayfrance.com Septembre 2009 (Christophe Huss - 2009.09.01)**

Je ne vais pas épiloguer très longtemps: ce disque met le doigt sur un...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Diapason N° 574 Novembre 2009 (François Laurent - 2009.11.01)**

S'affirmant après 1945 comme un chef d'orchestre d'envergure internationale, Igor Markevitch n'oublie pas qu'il a été lancé dans le monde par Diaghilev et s'attache à pérenniser le souvenir des Ballets russes. A ses deux gravures commerciales du Sacre du printemps, l'une (1951) et l'autre (1959) avec le Philharmonia, s'ajoutent plusieurs live. Le nouveau venu, capté à Berlin le 6 mars 1952, précède de peu le témoignage viennois (26 avril) publié par Andante (cf. n° 509). On y retrouve – comme dans un Tricorne en phase avec les décors et les costumes «frappants» conçus par Picasso – la même fougue cubiste, le même tranchant. La partition, qui représentait encore un véritable défi pour tout orchestre, affiche une urgence sans comparaison avec les documents londonien (1962, BBC Legends) et helvétique (1982, Cascavelle), plus tardifs.

Reste que les musiciens de Fricsay semblent parfois pris au dépourvu par la rythmique exacerbée du chef, moins chez Stravinsky et Roussel (qui ne montre pas le konzertmeister à son avantage) que Ravel. Markevitch empoigne la seconde Suite de Daphnis et Chloé avec une violence rare – on est fixé dès le Lever du jour, où les phrasés tendus, l'influx nerveux procédant par à coups, jettent le trouble, au propre et au figuré. La conception ne variera guère dix ans plus tard au pupitre de l'Orchestre de la NDR (Emi, cf. n°523), où se retrouvent les mêmes crescendos de percussions soulignés jusqu'à la véhémence. Loin de participer à l'éclat d'une volupté dionysiaque, le chœur se fait chez Ravel rumeur inquiète, puis glaçante jusqu'à l'effroi dans la danse conclusive.

On comprendra que le Schubert de la Symphonie n° 3, vif, lumineux et «objectif», divisera la critique en 1953. Cela n'empêchera pas le chef de le fixer dans la cire avec les Berliner Philharmoniker. S'il rechigna à enregistrer ses propres œuvres après avoir renoncé à composer, Markevitch inscrivait volontiers à ses programmes son orchestration de six mélodies de Moussorgski. Le concert berlinois de 1952 en offre le plus ancien témoignage, par celle qui en donna la première audition, Mascia Prédit. Les live moscovite (Philips) et londonien (BBC Legends) consacreront le trait plus acéré de Galina Vischnievskaïa.

Le chef anime la Symphonie «Di tre re», d'un Honegger hanté par la vision d'une humanité au bord de l'autodestruction, comme s'il y trouvait un écho à ses propres interrogations - il la gravera en 1957 pour DG. Aussi bien dans la noirceur agressive des mouvements extrêmes, où rugit la menace guerrière, que dans les faux espoirs distillés par le volet central, il nous livre une interprétation poignante, où la souffrance partout affleure, cinglant comme des coups de fouet, étouffant toute leur d'espoir sous son halètement torturé.

[Der Kurier](#) 25. September 2009 (Alexander Werner - 2009.09.25)

KURIER

Selbst in Kennerkreisen wird Igor Markevitch heute in seiner ganzen Bedeutung...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Diverdi Magazin 186/noviembre 2009 (Arturo Reverter - 2009.11.01)**

DIVERDI.COM

### Tensión e impulso rítmico

*Don nuevas recuperaciones del arte directorial de Igor Markevitch en Audite*

Igor Markevitch dejó un gran recuerdo en España tras su años como titular de la Orquesta de la RTVE, que nació, en 1965, bajo su autoritaria batuta. Al "Viejo", como lo conocían los músicos de la formación dependiente en aquel momento del Ministerio de Información y Turismo, se le había visto en nuestro país muchos años atrás, a poco de salir de aquel París neoclásico que sucedió a la etapa de Satie, Cocteau y los Seis, un medio en el que había crecido el artista, interesante compositor de obras tan meritorias como El vuelo de Icaro o el oratorio El Paraíso perdido, que contenían la transparencia algo aristada, las rectilíneas texturas de ciertas obras de Roussel y el impacto rítmico y agresivo – algo más dulcificado – de Stravinski.

En su primera aparición en Madrid, allá por septiembre de 1950, frente a la Orquesta Nacional, cuando tenía 38 años, había esgrimido sus credenciales, las características que lo definían como director y que había ido fomentando desde el foso junto a los ballets de Diaghilev y más tarde al lado de Scherchen: técnica espartana y económica, gesto amplio y circular con un original movimiento alternativo de batuta y mano izquierda, curiosamente engarriada; dibujo penetrante de la música buscando siempre los puntos esenciales de cada estructura. Huía de los detalles, de establecer matices delicados, y tiraba por la calle de en medio con una certera visión del meollo, de la esencia de la partitura, que en sus manos sonaba firme, sólida, con acentos primarios y contundentes, alternados por sorprendentes fognazos líricos.

De siempre, dadas sus condiciones, fue un magnífico organizador de los virulentos estratos de los ballets de Stravinski o de las cristalinas y ágiles composiciones de Roussel. Se lo asoció tradicionalmente con La consagración de la primavera del primero, una obra que bordaba y que en su mano sonaba agreste, dura, percusiva, invadida de una urgencia colosal; una visión auténticamente telúrica del gran sacrificio, que ofreció con la ONE en 1953 y que llevaría luego más de una vez a los atriles del conjunto radiotelevisivo, al que el director llegó, esa es la verdad, un tanto mermado de facultades, cuando solamente contaba 53 inviernos. Pero su sordera era ostensible e inevitable, lo que le hacía reforzar el nivel auditivo de los inclementes parches, que en una obra como la citada podía tener su razón de ser; no así en otras: una Primera de Brahms, por ejemplo.

La interpretación que de la partitura stravinskiana había realizado Markevitch en el Titania Palast el 6 de marzo de 1952 ante la audiencia berlinesa respondía a estos parámetros: fustigante, cortante como un cuchillo, de una extraordinaria concentración, de una soterrada energía, que terminaba por estallar violentamente en los constantes y bien controlados cambios de compás. Causó, cuenta el crítico y musicólogo Stuckenschmidt, una impresión formidable en el público, subyugado también por la orgiástica versión de la 2a Suite de Daphnis y Chloé de Ravel (registro en de 18 de septiembre), en este caso con el coro final, y que a nuestro juicio no alcanzó a recrear toda la imaginación sonora del impresionismo más pleno. Es demasiado importante en el concepto y en la ejecución el aspecto rítmico. Una impecable interpretación de la Sinfonía n° 5, "Di Tre Re", de Honegger, cuadrada y aguerrida, tensa y concisa, culmina el compacto.

El segundo combina el vivo con el estudio en grabaciones de 1952 y 1953. La Sinfonía n° 3 de Schubert es de este último año. Una aproximación precisa y vivificante, en el escenario del Titania, bien bailada, pero exenta de espíritu, de sabor vienes. El trazo nos parece en exceso grueso. El mismo año, pero en el estudio levantado en la Iglesia de Jesucristo de la capital alemana, Markevitch grababa una fogosa versión del Tricornio de Falla, vista un poco en blanco y negro, pero dotada de un impulso contagioso, y una soberana recreación de la Suite n° 2 de Bacchus et Ariane de Roussel, una partitura en nueve partes que la batuta desentraña de forma extraordinaria con un vigor, una elocuencia y un sabor danzable fuera de serie. Una interpretación auténticamente demoledora. El disco se cierra con seis canciones de Musorgski, en el arreglo orquestal del propio director, incluidas en el concierto de Le Sacre de marzo de 1952, recogido en el CD anterior. La soprano letona Mascia Predit, de la misma edad que el director, convence por su rico metal spinto, su anchura y su impronta dramática. Creemos recordar estas canciones en Madrid con Markevitch, la RTVE y la soprano polaca Halina Lukomska.

**Classica – le meilleur de la musique classique & de la hi-fi n° 118 déc. 2009-janv. 2010 (Stéphane Friédérich - 2009.12.01)**

 CLASSICA

**Igor Markevitch**

Igor Markevitch

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**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)**

 scherzo

**Gulda y otras joyas**

Gulda y otras joyas

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*



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 specialties (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 (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).

**Fanfare Issue 33:6 (July/Aug 2010) (Jerry Dubins - 2010.07.01)**

fanfare

Igor Markevitch (1912–83) was born in Kiev into a family of Ukrainian, French, and Italian lineage. At 14, living with his family in Switzerland, the teenaged Markevitch was discovered by Alfred Cortot, who took the boy with him to Paris and enrolled him in the Ecole Normale. It was there that he trained under Cortot and Nadia Boulanger for a career as a pianist and composer. His first break in the latter capacity came in 1929, when the 17-year-old was commissioned by Serge Diaghilev to write a piano concerto and to collaborate on a ballet. The ballet project came to naught when Diaghilev died later that year, but the young Markevitch completed the concerto, which was subsequently published by Schott.

For the next dozen years, between 1929 and 1941, Markevitch dedicated himself to composing, averaging two works per year in a variety of musical genres and forms. But after the onset of a serious illness late in 1941, he decided to abandon his career as a composer and turned his attention to conducting. He was not, however, a neophyte to the order, as this sudden occupational change might suggest. He had made his conducting debut at the age of 18 leading the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; in subsequent appearances with various ensembles, he had already distinguished himself as a recognized exponent of French, Russian, and 20th-century repertoire. As a point of passing interest, it might be mentioned that the conductor Oleg Caetani—currently director of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra—is Markevitch's son by his second wife, Donna Topazia Caetani, herself a distant descendant of the Roman family of 14th-century Pope Boniface VII.

Markevitch's discography is by no means negligible, but unlike those of other more widely celebrated media darlings (the roughly contemporaneous Karajan comes to mind), his recordings have yet to be cataloged and collected together systematically in a way that makes it easy to grasp the full measure of his contribution. Record labels devoted to restoring historical material, such as Archipel, Tahra, Testament, and Urania, have made a few random stabs at it, but the fact remains that Markevitch's recordings are scattered far and wide, and some, still available only on LPs selling for eye-popping prices, are difficult to come by, assuming you can afford them. I found, for example, a vinyl copy of what claimed to be a 1955 Rite of Spring with the Philharmonia on an RCA Red Seal LP posted on eBay for an asking price of \$145.99. Curiously, this is the only reference I've come across to a 1955 Rite, and one to boot on RCA. I'm guessing it was originally pressed in the U.K. by HMV, and I suspect that the actual recording is the 1952 version, 1955 probably being the date of the RCA pressing. What do these eBay sellers know?

Markevitch did make commercial recordings of all three of the works on this disc, in some cases more than

once. In 1954, he recorded the Ravel with the Philharmonia; with the same orchestra he led *The Rite of Spring* twice, in mono in 1952 and in a stereo remake in 1959. Yet another late recording of the Stravinsky with the Suisse Romande Orchestra dates from 1982, one year before the conductor's death. And for Deutsche Grammophon, in 1950s mono, he recorded Honegger's *Symphony No. 5* with the Lamoureux Orchestra. To the best of my knowledge, all of these are now, or at one time have been, available on CD.

Like another, slightly earlier conductor I can think of, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Igor Markevitch is, I believe, vastly underrated. The recording at hand, however, should go several miles toward boosting his reputation. To begin with, whatever audio engineer Ludger Böckenhoff and the Audite team have done to remaster the original source material, it qualifies as a latter-day miracle. The sound on this disc—its dynamic range, frequency response, and depth of stage—is simply phenomenal. At nine seconds into the *Rite of Spring*'s "Dances of the Young Girls," for instance, a cross-rhythm pops out in the bassoon that I don't believe I've ever heard before, even in the latest state-of-the-art SACD recordings.

But let's not shortchange Markevitch's role in this. His take on Stravinsky's still shocking pagan ritual is bracing and determinedly defiant. In his hands, the composer's score is not one for the lithe, acrobatically inclined danseur, but for the toned, hard-bodied gymnast. For Markevitch, it's all about the interplay of complex, unyielding rhythms and sudden, explosive gamma ray bursts. The ear-shattering blast that introduces the "Ritual of Abduction" gave me a real start; it was like a Molotov cocktail being lobbed through a plate glass window. Not for Markevitch the toning down or smoothing out of Stravinsky's heinous hosanna to the cult of ritualistic human sacrifice, a kind of musical prequel, if you will, to Shirley Jackson's 1948 short story *The Lottery*. Interestingly, that story stirred up as much outrage as had Stravinsky's *Rite* 35 years earlier. The music is a study in primitivism; it should, and was meant to, sound barbaric. Too many modern recordings I've heard, like a recent and highly touted one by Jonathan Nott and the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra on Tudor, transform the score into something gentrified, as if it has now earned a place in the orchestral canon alongside Mozart and Haydn. Markevitch had it right, and he delivers the goods on this recording in one of the most heart-pounding performances of *The Rite of Spring* you will ever hear.

Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* too was one of the conductor's specialties, and just as sensationalized as his portrayal of Stravinsky's tribal blood-letting is, with equal artistry does Markevitch sensualize Ravel's French goatherd and shepherdess. No gauzy Impressionistic veil can conceal the amorous passion and sexual tension between the two lovers, whose shyness and innocence are eventually overcome by the chemistry of raging hormones in Markevitch's pitch-perfect performance.

I was rather surprised to find no reviews of Honegger's *Symphony No. 5*, subtitled "Di Tre Re," in the *Fanfare Archive*. It's one of the composer's more widely recorded works, with a number of fine versions available, including classics by Michel Plasson and Charles Munch. The current live recording with Markevitch is in direct competition with the aforementioned slightly later but still mono Markevitch effort with the Lamoureux Orchestra on Deutsche Grammophon. Unfortunately, I do not have that recording for comparison purposes, but I can tell you that the one at hand is every bit as good, performance-wise, interpretively, and sonically as the Munch with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on RCA, which I do have, and better performance-wise and interpretively, if not quite as sonically wide-spectrum, as the Neeme Järvi with the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra on Chandos, which I also have. The piece is worth getting to know, if you don't already know it. It's quite a magnificent score (the "tre re" refers to the three Ds struck on the timpani at the end of each movement), and Markevitch's reading is deeply satisfying.

More often than not, I end up recommending releases of archival recordings such as this mainly to those who have a particular interest in the conductor or featured artist, but this one is different. The performances are fantastic, and the sound is as good as, if not better than, any number of newly minted recordings I've heard. This is an urgent buy recommendation.

[American Record Guide](#) July-August 2010 (David Radcliffe - 2010.07.01)



Igor Markevitch, born in Kiev in 1912, spent his early years in Paris where he became associated with Serge Diaghilev and Nadia Boulanger. As a young man he made a name for himself as a composer, then in the postwar years he remade himself as a conductor. In the 1950s he was a considerable figure among the modernists; and the recordings issued here, made in Berlin in 1952, capture him in congenial repertoire at the peak of his career. They are in the cosmopolitan-modernist mode, with much striving after power and sublimity—an ambition somewhat undermined by the quality of the players at his disposal. The sound is excellent and the documentary value real, though the Ravel and Stravinsky are in no way competitive in a crowded field. By contrast, the Honegger, recorded as it were while the paint was still wet, has a compelling spontaneity to recommend it and pleasingly dissonant sonorities. Markevitch later made a commercial recording, once available on a Decca LP.

[www.allmusic.com](#) May 2010 (Jim Leonard - 2010.05.01)



In the middle years of the 20th century, the "go-to" conductor for Stravinsky's...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*



## Igor Markevitch conducts Schubert, de Falla, Mussorgsky and Roussel

Franz Schubert | Manuel de Falla | Albert Roussel | Modest Mussorgsky

CD aud 95.631

**Rondo Nr. 589 / 22. - 28.08.2009 (Guido Fischer - 2009.08.26)**



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**Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 25. August 2009 (Jan Brachmann - 2009.08.25)**



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Die Welt 9. September 2009, 04:00 Uhr (Manuel Brug - 2009.09.09)

DIE WELT

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**Audiophile Audition August 30, 2009**  
(Gary Lemco - 2009.08.30)



Attached to the Markevitch intellectual scalpel was a driving, often explosively...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Schwäbische Zeitung 15. September 2009 / Nr. 213 (Reinhold Mann - 2009.09.15)**



**Erinnerung an Igor Markevitch**

Erinnerung an Igor Markevitch

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**Diapason N° 574 Novembre 2009 (François Laurent - 2009.11.01)**



S'affirmant après 1945 comme un chef d'orchestre d'envergure internationale, Igor Markevitch n'oublie pas qu'il a été lancé dans le monde par Diaghilev et s'attache à pérenniser le souvenir des Ballets russes. A ses deux gravures commerciales du Sacre du printemps, l'une (1951) et l'autre (1959) avec le Philharmonia, s'ajoutent plusieurs live. Le nouveau venu, capté à Berlin le 6 mars 1952, précède de peu le témoignage viennois (26 avril) publié par Andante (cf. n° 509). On y retrouve – comme dans un Tricorne en phase avec les décors et les costumes «frappants» conçus par Picasso – la même fougue cubiste, le même tranchant. La partition, qui représentait encore un véritable défi pour tout orchestre, affiche une urgence sans comparaison avec les documents londonien (1962, BBC Legends) et helvétique (1982, Cascavelle), plus tardifs.

Reste que les musiciens de Fricstay semblent parfois pris au dépourvu par la rythmique exacerbée du chef, moins chez Stravinsky et Roussel (qui ne montre pas le konzertmeister à son avantage) que Ravel. Markevitch empoigne la seconde Suite de Daphnis et Chloé avec une violence rare – on est fixé dès le Lever du jour, où les phrasés tendus, l'influx nerveux procédant par à coups, jettent le trouble, au propre et au figuré. La conception ne variera guère dix ans plus tard au pupitre de l'Orchestre de la NDR (Emi, cf. n° 523), où se retrouvent les mêmes crescendos de percussions soulignés jusqu'à la véhémence. Loin de participer à l'éclat d'une volupté dionysiaque, le chœur se fait chez Ravel rumeur inquiète, puis glaçante jusqu'à l'effroi dans la danse conclusive.

On comprendra que le Schubert de la Symphonie n° 3, vif, lumineux et «objectif», divisera la critique en 1953. Cela n'empêchera pas le chef de le fixer dans la cire avec les Berliner Philharmoniker. S'il rechigna à enregistrer ses propres œuvres après avoir renoncé à composer, Markevitch inscrivait volontiers à ses programmes son orchestration de six mélodies de Moussorgski. Le concert berlinois de 1952 en offre le

plus ancien témoignage, par celle qui en donna la première audition, Mascia Prédit. Les live moscovite (Philips) et londonien (BBC Legends) consacreront le trait plus acéré de Galina Vischnievskaïa.

Le chef anime la Symphonie «Di tre re», d'un Honegger hanté par la vision d'une humanité au bord de l'autodestruction, comme s'il y trouvait un écho à ses propres interrogations - il la gravera en 1957 pour DG. Aussi bien dans la noirceur agressive des mouvements extrêmes, où rugit la menace guerrière, que dans les faux espoirs distillés par le volet central, il nous livre une interprétation poignante, où la souffrance partout affleure, cinglant comme des coups de fouet, étouffant toute lueur d'espoir sous son halètement torturé.

[Der Kurier](#) 25. September 2009 (Alexander Werner - 2009.09.25)

KURIER

Selbst in Kennerkreisen wird Igor Markevitch heute in seiner ganzen Bedeutung...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[Diverdi Magazin](#) 186/noviembre 2009 (Arturo Reverter - 2009.11.01)

DIVERDI.COM

### Tensión e impulso rítmico

*Don nuevas recuperaciones del arte directorial de Igor Markevitch en Audite*

Igor Markevitch dejó un gran recuerdo en España tras su años como titular de la Orquesta de la RTVE, que nació, en 1965, bajo su autoritaria batuta. Al "Viejo", como lo conocían los músicos de la formación dependiente en aquel momento del Ministerio de Información y Turismo, se le había visto en nuestro país muchos años atrás, a poco de salir de aquel París neoclásico que sucedió a la etapa de Satie, Cocteau y los Seis, un medio en el que había crecido el artista, interesante compositor de obras tan meritorias como El vuelo de Icaro o el oratorio El Paraíso perdido, que contenían la transparencia algo aristada, las rectilíneas texturas de ciertas obras de Roussel y el impacto rítmico y agresivo – algo más dulcificado – de Stravinski.

En su primera aparición en Madrid, allá por septiembre de 1950, frente a la Orquesta Nacional, cuando tenía 38 años, había esgrimido sus credenciales, las características que lo definían como director y que había ido fomentando desde el foso junto a los ballets de Diaghilev y más tarde al lado de Scherchen: técnica espartana y económica, gesto amplio y circular con un original movimiento alternativo de batuta y mano izquierda, curiosamente engarriada; dibujo penetrante de la música buscando siempre los puntos esenciales de cada estructura. Huía de los detalles, de establecer matices delicados, y tiraba por la calle de en medio con una certera visión del meollo, de la esencia de la partitura, que en sus manos sonaba firme, sólida, con acentos primarios y contundentes, alternados por sorprendentes fognazos líricos.

De siempre, dadas sus condiciones, fue un magnífico organizador de los virulentos estratos de los ballets de Stravinski o de las cristalinas y ágiles composiciones de Roussel. Se lo asoció tradicionalmente con La consagración de la primavera del primero, una obra que bordaba y que en su mano sonaba agreste, dura, percusiva, invadida de una urgencia colosal; una visión auténticamente telúrica del gran sacrificio, que ofreció con la ONE en 1953 y que llevaría luego más de una vez a los atriles del conjunto radiotelevisivo, al que el director llegó, esa es la verdad, un tanto mermado de facultades, cuando solamente contaba 53 inviernos. Pero su sordera era ostensible e inevitable, lo que le hacía reforzar el nivel auditivo de los inclementes parches, que en una obra como la citada podía tener su razón de ser; no así en otras: una Primera de Brahms, por ejemplo.

La interpretación que de la partitura stravinskiana había realizado Markevitch en el Titania Palast el 6 de marzo de 1952 ante la audiencia berlinesa respondía a estos parámetros: fustigante, cortante como un cuchillo, de una extraordinaria concentración, de una soterrada energía, que terminaba por estallar violentamente en los constantes y bien controlados cambios de compás. Causó, cuenta el crítico y musicólogo Stuckenschmidt, una impresión formidable en el público, subyugado también por la orgiástica versión de la 2a Suite de Daphnis y Chloé de Ravel (registro en de 18 de septiembre), en este caso con el coro final, y que a nuestro juicio no alcanzó a recrear toda la imaginería sonora del impresionismo más pleno. Es demasiado importante en el concepto y en la ejecución el aspecto rítmico. Una impecable interpretación de la Sinfonía n° 5, "Di Tre Re", de Honegger, cuadrada y aguerrida, tensa y concisa, culmina el compacto.

El segundo combina el vivo con el estudio en grabaciones de 1952 y 1953. La Sinfonía n° 3 de Schubert es de este último año. Una aproximación precisa y vivificante, en el escenario del Titania, bien bailada, pero exenta de espíritu, de sabor vienes. El trazo nos parece en exceso grueso. El mismo año, pero en el estudio levantado en la Iglesia de Jesucristo de la capital alemana, Markevitch grababa una fogosa versión del Tricornio de Falla, vista un poco en blanco y negro, pero dotada de un impulso contagioso, y una soberana recreación de la Suite n° 2 de Bacchus et Ariane de Roussel, una partitura en nueve partes que la batuta desentraña de forma extraordinaria con un vigor, una elocuencia y un sabor danzable fuera de serie. Una interpretación auténticamente demoledora. El disco se cierra con seis canciones de Musorgski, en el arreglo orquestal del propio director, incluidas en el concierto de Le Sacre de marzo de 1952, recogido en el CD anterior. La soprano letona Mascia Predit, de la misma edad que el director, convence por su rico metal spinto, su anchura y su impronta dramática. Creemos recordar estas canciones en Madrid con Markevitch, la RTVE y la soprano polaca Halina Lukomska.

#### **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.*



International Record Review October 2009 ( -  
2009.10.01)



### Markevitch, Rabin, De Vito, Fricsay and Gulda on Audite

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 (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).

**Fanfare Issue 33:3 (Jan/Feb 2010) (James Miller - 2010.01.01)**

fanfare

Born in 1911 in the Ukraine, Igor Markevitch was truly a citizen of the world, having held conducting positions in France, Spain, Monte Carlo, Italy, Canada, Sweden, and Cuba while appearing as a guest in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Soviet Union, Poland, and elsewhere during his career. He was raised in France and Switzerland. A musical prodigy, he attracted the attention of Serge Diaghilev, who promoted his career as a composer until the ballet impresario's death in 1929. Although he apprenticed with Hermann Scherchen, his primary focus during the 1930s was on composing. For whatever reason, after World War II, he concentrated on conducting, seldom promoting his own music. Deteriorating hearing forced him to curtail his career during the 1970s. He died in 1983.

He's not so easy to pigeonhole. The conductors that I think he most resembled, say, Eugène Goossens, Robert Irving, Efrem Kurtz, and Constant Lambert, have faded into the past along with him; how about Antal Dorati, with a lighter touch? I suppose it is no coincidence that all of those conductors, at least initially, made their mark as ballet maestros. There was a vigorous rhythmic component to Markevitch's style, and ballet music made up a large fraction of his repertoire. To be sure, there are Markevitch recordings that don't fit my characterization (an eccentric Tchaikovsky Fourth on French EMI, for example), but I think I'll stand by my reluctant attempt to classify him. Reviews from his prime years suggest that some listeners found him too lean, too clipped in phrasing, too abrupt, maybe too "streamlined"—*gemütlichkeit* and *angst* were not his thing. He was generally a "fast" conductor.

Markevitch made studio recordings of all the selections on this disc. I never heard his Schubert Third Symphony with the Berlin Philharmonic but I did hear him conduct it in person some 30 years ago. Here, with the RIAS Symphony, he will be vulnerable to complaints that, for all his energy and efficiency, he dispatches the piece in too unsentimental and businesslike a way, but some listeners may find it quite bracing. Around this time, he recorded the Three-Cornered Hat Dances with the Philharmonia Orchestra. Although there is really nothing "wrong" here, that recording is superior to this one in detail and refinement of execution. The other two selections on the disc, however, are right up his alley, really superb performances—if only they could have been done stereophonically! In the Bacchus and Ariadne Suite, his nervous energy and rhythmic drive absolutely animate the piece (not that it needs much help) and, although I have not heard his Lamoureux Orchestra recording in many years, I have a strong suspicion that it doesn't measure up to this one—the Berliners pour it on and even hold their own with the orchestras of Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia (and I admire the Munch, Martinon, and Ormandy recordings). Unlike those of

Munch and Ormandy, this one is uncut.

Mussorgsky has to be one of the great songwriters of the 19th century. Many of his 63 songs resemble folk songs. I like Leonard Altman's explanation in an LP annotation: "Strongly inclined toward building a national style, Mussorgsky's task was that of creating art music for a people whose natural channel of musical communication was the folk-song; the Russians were a people unaccustomed either by nature, tradition, or experience to 'culture-music.' That he succeeded in retaining the color and flavor of the folk idiom, and at the same time created an art music of significance to his own people as well as to the entire world, was his triumph." During the early 1960s, Markevitch recorded his own orchestration of six Mussorgsky songs in Moscow with Galina Vishnevskaya. That performance, a very fine one, has been reissued on a two-CD set devoted to Mussorgsky's music but, as far as I can determine, the first song, Lullabye, is missing from the reissue. In 1962, with Vishnevskaya in even better voice, he led the BBC Symphony in a superb performance that was eventually issued on CD and had better sound and playing ("had," because it seems to have been deleted). Both of the Vishnevskaya recordings were stereophonic. Unlike some modern orchestrators of music of the past, Markevitch seems to have been more interested in serving Mussorgsky, actually enhancing the songs, than showing us how clever he could be. I was skeptical about this 1952 mono broadcast. Who was Mascia Predit? It turns out that she was a 40-year-old Latvian soprano who had at one time studied with Feodor Chaliapin. It also turns out that she had a rich voice of the Slavic type without the unpleasant edge that can seep into the top of the range and she absolutely relishes the text without destroying the melodic line. In a word, she's terrific, and while the dynamic range is a bit more level than that of the other two recordings, the orchestra comes through clearly and plays beautifully. I also wouldn't have minded if she were just a shade further from the mike, but, given the artistry on display here, that is a piddling point. Trivia: she appeared as a Russian tourist in the film, "Death in Venice," under the name "Masha Predit," and sang snatches of the Mussorgsky Lullabye, while sitting in a beach chair. I seldom make assertions of this sort but I think the six Songs may be worth the price of the disc, and you will get one heck of a Bacchus and Ariadne Suite too.

[www.ClassicsToday.com](http://www.ClassicsToday.com) (David Hurwitz - 1999.11.30)



Recorded in 1952/53, these performances show Igor Markevitch at his incisive...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[France Musique](#) mercredi 23 septembre 2009 (Christophe Bourseiller - 2009.09.23)



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## Nathan Milstein plays Mendelssohn & Dvorak

Felix Mendelssohn | Antonín Dvořák

CD aud 95.646

[www.pizzicato.lu](http://www.pizzicato.lu) 02/10/2018 (Uwe Krusch - 2018.10.02)

source: <https://www.pizzicato.lu/milstein-mal-dr...>



### Milstein, mal drahtig schlank, mal obsessiv

Im Umfeld von Jascha Heifetz, Fritz Kreisler und Mischa Elman sowie Adolf Busch, Bronislaw Huberman und Joseph Szigeti sowie dem Wunderkind Yehudi Menuhin war es für Nathan Milstein nicht ganz einfach, einen Platz zu finden. Zunächst vor allem als Kammermusiker mit Vladimir Horowitz und Gregor Piatigorsky fand er auch den Weg zu den großen Solokonzerten. Von seinen Auftritten in der Schweiz, so etwas wie seiner zweiten Heimat, können wir nun zwei Werke hören, die sozusagen Teil seines Kernrepertoires waren.

Sein Spiel unterschied sich von dem der anderen dadurch, dass es schlank war und nicht dem sogenannten Stil der russischen Violinschule entsprach. Vielmehr zeichnet sich der zuerst eingespielte Mendelssohn durch flotte Tempi und eine wie durchtrainiert fettfreie wirkende Interpretation aus. Das Konzert von Dvorak war eines seiner oft aufgeführten Paradestücke, dem er anders als viele Kollegen große Aufmerksamkeit widmete. Auch hier kann man vom ersten Ton an seine große Intensität und Präsenz spüren, die seine Auftritte auszeichnete. Seine Version des Dvorak ist eine aufsässige, die das Feuer schürt.

Eine Besonderheit dieser Veröffentlichung ist auch, dass es jeweils die einzige Aufnahme dieser Werke der beiden Dirigenten ist. Während sein ukrainischer Landsmann Igor Markevitch beim Mendelssohn den gleichen musikalischen Ansatz vertritt und damit beide das Werk befördern, mag das nicht unbedingt ein Vorteil bei Dvorak sein. Denn Ernest Ansermet war ein Spezialist für französische Musik, und die slawische war ihm eher fremd. Auch das Orchester spielt unterschiedlich gut.

Two recordings from the Lucerne Festival show a vivid, slender and charming Mendelssohn Concerto as well as highly energetic Dvorak Concerto. As for the conductors it's for both of them their only recording of these works. Markevitch is at ease with the Mendelssohn, while one has the impression that Dvorak was rather alien to Ansermet.

**Tagblatt Online 02.10.2018 (Fritz Schaub - 2018.10.02)**  
 source: <https://www.tagblatt.ch/kultur/er-war-ei...>

TAGBLATT

### Er war ein Wunderkind bis ins hohe Alter

Auf dem jetzt erschienenen Tonträger kann man feststellen, mit welchem vulkanischem Temperament und glühendem Ton er schon beim ersten Einsatz Präsenz markiert, begleitet von einem auffallend kompakt wirkenden Schweizerischen Festspielorchester unter Ernest Ansermet [...] Die entschlackte, sehnige und messerscharf akzentuierte Wiedergabe wirkt noch heute erstaunlich modern.

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**Luzerner Zeitung 02.10.2018 (Fritz Schaub - 2018.10.02)**  
 source: <https://www.luzernerzeitung.ch/kultur/er...>

Luzerner  
Zeitung

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*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

### Audio 11/2018 (Andreas Fritz - 2018.11.01)



Geradlinig, kraftvoll, virtuos, makellos und intensiv – so wurde das Spiel des russischen Geigers Nathan Milstein oft beschrieben. Wie treffend diese Attribute sind, beweisen die hier erstmals veröffentlichten Aufnahmen vom Lucerne Festival der Jahre 1953 und 1955. Milstein spielt die beiden Repertoire-Konzerte mit souveräner Phrasierung, makelloser Intonation und überlegener Bogen- und Grifftechnik. Das Orchester unter Leitung der Dirigenten-Legenden Markevitch und Ansermet begleitet ihn dabei aufmerksam. Sorgfältig restauriert, überzeugt auch der Klang dieser CD. Eine sehr gelungene Fortsetzung der audite-Serie "Lucerne Festival Historie Performances".

**Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk MDR KLASSIK | 11. Oktober 2018 | 10:37 Uhr (- 2018.10.11)**  
 source: <https://www.mdr.de/mdr-klassik-radio/cd-...>



### CD-Empfehlung: Nathan Milstein beim Lucerne Festival

*Ein Violinen-Virtuose am Werk*

Das Label hat die Mitschnitte aus den fünfziger Jahren von originalen Rundfunk-Tonbändern akribisch restauriert, um die gesamte Klangtiefe und Virtuosität des Geigers zur Entfaltung zu bringen.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

ClicMag N° 65 Novembre 2018 (Jean-Charles Hoffelé - 2018.11.01)



**Nathan Milstein joue ...**

Quelle interprétation magique ! [...] Milstein, il chante, éloquent mais stylé, archet tenu, phrasés parfaits, geste un rien hautain.

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[www.artalinna.com](http://www.artalinna.com) 31 October 2018 (Jean-Charles Hoffelé - 2018.10.31)

source: <http://www.artalinna.com/?p=10349>



**Le Concerto de Milstein**

Quelle interprétation magique ! [...] Milstein, il chante, éloquent mais stylé, archet tenu, phrasés parfaits, geste un rien hautain.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Crescendo Magazine Le 2 octobre 2018 (Patrice Lieberman - 2018.10.02)

source: <http://www.crescendo-magazine.be/nathan-...>



**Nathan Milstein souverain au Festival de Lucerne**

Voici un excellent enregistrement qui nous montre un maître du violon au sommet de ses moyens et ce dans un son mono excellent.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[www.klassikerleben.de](http://www.klassikerleben.de) #58 Herbst 2018 ( - 2018.09.01)



**Nathan Milstein**

*Erstveröffentlichungen von*

Der Ton des 1992 verstorbenen Geigers Nathan Milstein war so charakteristisch und eigenwillig, dass man ihn beim reinen Hören sofort diesem Ausnahmesolisten zuordnen konnte. [...] Er fesselte seine Zuhörer mit feurigen Steigerungen und unsentimentalem, geradlinigem Spiel und riss sie förmlich mit. [...] In der schon mehrere CDs umfassenden "Lucerne Festival"-Reihe erscheinen nun bei Audite die zum ersten Mal veröffentlichten Aufnahmen des Violinkonzerts op. 64 von Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy und des Violinkonzerts op. 53 von Antonin Dvorak mit "Nathan dem Großen"

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

This is Volume 8 in Audite's Lucerne Festival Collection and it documents appearances by Nathan Milstein in 1953 and again in 1955 at the Swiss festival, performing the Mendelssohn Concerto with Igor Markevitch and the Dvořák Concerto with Ernest Ansermet, both conductors leading the Swiss Festival Orchestra. This is not the first time that this Milstein/Mendelssohn has been released on CD. In 33:6, Robert Maxham reviewed an Archipel album containing this performance, but it was coupled with a Milstein performance of the Brahms Concerto with the New York Philharmonic, led by Victor de Sabata. The 1955 Milstein/Dvořák with Ansermet on this Audite release, however, may be another story. I can't swear that it has never been available on CD before, but this is the only version of it I've found. In 21:1, Maxham reviewed a four-disc Music & Arts set that contained a Milstein/Dvořák, but that one was from a year later, 1956, with Paul Kletzki conducting the Cologne Gürzenich Orchestra.

No violinist I'm aware of was more closely associated with the Dvořák Concerto than Milstein. It was a staple of his repertoire, and he was recorded playing it, in concert and in studio, a total of six of times that I've been able to document. Here they are:

October 26, 1947 Leopold Stokowski New York Philharmonic

March 4, 1951 Antal Doráti Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra

August 6, 1955 Ernest Ansermet Swiss Festival Orchestra

September 14, 1956 Paul Kletzki Cologne Gürzenich Orchestra

April 16–17, 1957 William Steinberg Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra

June 9–11, 1966 Frühbeck de Burgos New Philharmonia

Some of these may be harder to track down than others, but they have all been issued on CD, including the earliest, with Stokowski and the NY Philharmonic, which was remastered by Pristine and reviewed in three consecutive issues 41:1, 41:2, and 41:3.

The last two listed, with Steinberg and Frühbeck de Burgos, are both studio efforts and the most widely circulated and readily available among the lot. The one with Steinberg, in the opinion of some, including me, may be Milstein's definitive recording of the piece, though I haven't heard all of them, and this is my first time hearing the Ansermet version, which may be the first time anyone has heard it, since, as noted above, I haven't been able to find a previous release of it.

The first thing that struck me about this performance was how little it differs interpretively from the Steinberg of 20 months later. Milstein's readings of a given work had a tendency to speed up with time instead of slowing down, and that can be observed here with Ansermet in 1955, when he took 10:20 to navigate the first movement. By four months short of two years later, with Steinberg, Milstein had sped up, admittedly almost imperceptibly, but by 15 seconds to 10:05. Nine years later, with Frühbeck de Burgos, the speedup is shocking: 8:59. The thing is, though, that Milstein was an obsessive technical perfectionist who seldom, if ever, used his consummate technique to project a flashy, virtuosic personality. As a result—his last Dvořák recording, with Frühbeck de Burgos, being an example—Milstein could convey an impression of a player who was aloof and even almost indifferent.

That is not the impression I get from either his performance with Steinberg or this one with Ansermet. Both give fully characterful representations of the music's Czech core, but in ways that are nuanced and refined. Dvořák's peasants live for the moment as princes. Frankly, the main difference I find between the Steinberg and this Ansermet performance is in the orchestral playing. The Ansermet was taped "live," and the Swiss

Festival players are not quite as disciplined as are the Pittsburgh players for Steinberg under studio conditions. The “live” Swiss recording is also a bit blowsy and congested sounding in heavily dynamic passages.

Milstein’s readings of the Dvořák Concerto may be more interpretively divergent in his earlier recordings with Stokowski and Doráti; I can’t say since I haven’t heard them. But interpretively and performance-wise, this Ansermet version is so close to the Steinberg that I would stick with the latter, especially since the orchestral playing and recording are superior. On the other hand, if you’re a Milstein devotee, you will probably want all of his above-listed recordings of the Dvořák so you can compare their differences, subtle or otherwise, to your heart’s content.

If six Milstein versions of the Dvořák Concerto are a bit much for you, the violinist’s recordings of the Mendelssohn Concerto are of a dizzying number to make your head spin. From March 20, 1936, there are fragments from the second and third movements captured on record with Milstein and the New York Philharmonic under Toscanini, the only time, we’re told, that the violinist and conductor ever collaborated. From there, we move on to no fewer than seven recordings of the complete concerto, if you don’t count a couple of questionable ones noted below.

According to Youngrok Lee’s discography ([lee.classite.com/music/Milstein/discography-milstein.htm#Mendelssohn](http://lee.classite.com/music/Milstein/discography-milstein.htm#Mendelssohn)), there is a recording from the 1940s with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, transferred from 78s to a Pearl CD. He even lists a Pearl catalog number of GEMM 9259, but I have searched high and low and everywhere in between, and cannot find a Pearl CD with that number or any other reference to a Milstein/Ormandy/Philadelphia recording, so I’m not counting that one in the total number, or the next one he lists either, which he dates from February 22, 1942, with the Cleveland Orchestra. He names no conductor, however, and indicates that Columbia never released the recording.

So, now, we get into the documentable versions that do exist and several of which have been previously covered here, including this one on the aforementioned Archipel disc, reviewed by Maxham.

March 16, 1945 Bruno Walter New York Philharmonic

August 12, 1953 Igor Markevitch Swiss Festival Orchestra

November 28, 1953 William Steinberg Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

August 9, 1957 George Szell Berlin Philharmonic

October 1–3, 1959 Leon Barzin Philharmonia Orchestra

March 4, 1962 Walter Hendl Chicago Symphony Orchestra

March 12–13, 1973 Claudio Abbado Vienna Philharmonic Live performance at the Salzburg Festival  
Released only on DVD, as far as I know

Nearly a 30-year span is covered by these seven recordings, all of which have been transferred to and released on digital media. Before becoming acquainted with this Markevitch performance, I was familiar with all but the Szell/Berlin and Hendl/Chicago versions. I was able, however, to view and listen to the Hendl recording on YouTube, so that left only the Szell that I haven’t heard. The amazing thing to me about the Hendl video is being able to watch Milstein up close and personal. He is one cool cucumber, his unchanging expression totally impassive. Yet, close your eyes and listen, and you don’t get the impression that his playing is emotionally cold or distant.

How does this “live” Markevitch performance compare to the others I was previously familiar with? I think I can pretty much say the same thing about it I said about the Dvořák on this release with Ansermet. Milstein’s execution, as always, is impeccably clean and precise, his silvery tone glinting brightly off the



orchestra. Interpretively, I'm stuck by how consistent the violinist's readings of a given work remain over time. It's as if once he has settled on the way he wants to do it, subsequent performances vary by only minor degrees based on his adapting to the conductors and orchestras he's playing with. I know I'll get flack for saying, "If you've heard one, you've heard them all," but in the case of these Milstein Mendelssohns, I'd say that they're really close enough to each other that one could base one's choice on the orchestral contribution and quality of the recording rather than on the violinist.

Some swear by the 1945 recording with Walter and the New York Philharmonic, but my personal choice would be for the Abbado with the Vienna Philharmonic. It's the most recent and best-sounding recording, the Vienna Philharmonic is well, the Vienna Philharmonic, and Abbado and Milstein seem to have a real rapport with each other. I'm not saying that Milstein is my preferred violinist in the Mendelssohn Concerto—he's not. I find all his readings of the piece too fast and facile. I'm just saying that of his several recordings of the Mendelssohn, the one with Abbado would be my first choice.

**[Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik](#) 15. Februar 2019 (Stephan Bultmann - 2019.02.15)**

**source:** <https://www.schallplattenkritik.de/news/...>



**Bestenliste 1-2019**

*Historische Aufnahmen*

Diese in der Edition „Luzerner Festspiele“ glanzvoll tönenden Violinkonzerte stehen in besonderer Verknüpfung mit dem Solisten Nathan Milstein. Dvořák starb 1904, das Jahr, in dem Milstein geboren wurde. Für ihn und seine Zeitgenossen Adolf Busch und Vasa Prihoda war der Einsatz für das Werk noch Pionierarbeit. Das gleiche gilt freilich auch für Milsteins Aufführungen des Mendelssohn Konzertes (ein frühes Zeugnis ist eine Liveaufnahme mit Toscanini; dieser dirigierte auch das Gründungskonzert der Luzerner Festspiele, dem Milstein als Hörer beiwohnte). Hier spielt Milstein beide Violinkonzerte mit der unergründlichen Leichtigkeit eines Virtuosen, der sich in den technisch anspruchsvollen Passagen nicht austobt, sondern souverän dem Hörer einen Blick auf die Musik erlaubt. (Für die Jury: Stephan Bultmann)

**Audiophile Audition Oct 17, 2018 (Gary Lemco - 2018.10.17)**

**source:**

<https://www.audaud.com/mendelssohn-dvora...>



Odessa-born Nathan Milstein (1904-1992) made his debut at the Lucerne Festival...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Diapason N° 682 - Septembre 2019 (Nicolas Derny - 2019.09.01)**

Alors que nous pensions tout connaître des concertos de Mendelssohn et de Dvorak par Nathan Milstein, Audite exhume deux live inédits du Festival de Lucerne. Addendum indispensable aux multiples gravures de studio ? Voire. La faute aux aléas du direct, et à des partenaires pas véritablement à la hauteur.

Fort de son autorité altière mais un rien moins enlevé et infaillible qu'à l'accoutumée, le violoniste parvient plus d'une fois à faire plier Markevitch dans Mendelssohn. Autrement, ce dernier regarderait droit devant, sans se préoccuper de grand-chose (*Allegro molto appassionato*). La noble éloquence du chant touche au cœur dans l'Andante, ici pris comme un Adagio, mais l'archet ne recrée pas l'ivresse virtuose entendue avec Bruno Walter dans le crépitant finale (Diapason d'or, cf. n° 502). Probablement parce que le chef confond cet Opus 64 avec le concerto de Brahms.

Quatre ans après la rencontre légendaire avec Dorati (Diapason d'or, cf. n° 509), Milstein n'a strictement rien changé à sa vision de l'Opus 53 de Dvorak. Menton haut et archet franc, il épate toujours autant dans le premier mouvement. Même loin de leur zone de confort, les troupes d'Ansermet ne se contentent pas de figuration. Cordes et bois amènent vie et couleurs. Le soliste déploie encore ses talents de conteur dans l'Adagio ma non troppo, mais la bande défaille : le son du violon tourne au vinaigre dans les premières mesures, et il a fallu piocher dans l'enregistrement réalisé avec Steinberg en 1956 pour combler quelques lacunes – collages très audible de 7' 14" à 7' 57" et de 7' 27" à 7' 29". La nervosité gagne tout le monde au milieu du finale, où Milstein n'atteint ni la perfection ni le charme qu'on lui connaît dans ses autres témoignages.

**Scherzo 01.12.2019 (Enrique Pérez Adrián - 2019.12.01)**


Procedentes de dos conciertos públicos dados en el Festival de Lucerna en 1953...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**www.amazon.co.uk 4 September 2020 ( - 2020.09.04)**  
**source: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07FF35JTW#c...>**


**Milstein is the master of violin**

The recording is mono, but it is very good and there is no noise and applause. Listen as if you are devising even a little change, such as subtly attaching a small portamento, it is enough to feel the room that completely entered the hand. Markevitch and Ansermet are fine, too. Dvořák is better than Mendelssohn. I think it's a valuable record of performance.

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