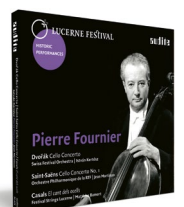
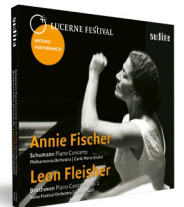
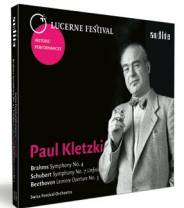
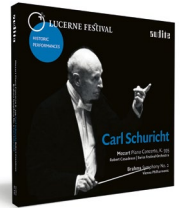
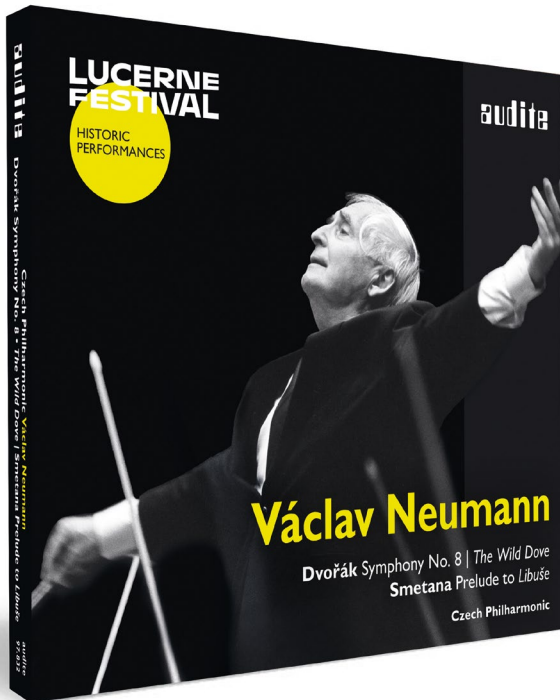


Czech identity

Lucerne Festival • Vol. XX



Antonín Dvořák
Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88
The Wild Dove, Op. 110

Bedřich Smetana
Prelude to the Opera *Libuše*

Czech Philharmonic
Václav Neumann

Live recordings: Kunsthaus Lucerne, 1984 and 1988

previously unreleased

Václav Neumann was one of the most distinguished conductors of the so-called Eastern Bloc. The long-serving chief conductor of the legendary Czech Philharmonic was principally regarded as an accomplished advocate of the music of his homeland, which he interpreted with a strong sense of form, love of detail, and a vocal *espressivo*, eschewing any sentimentality. This is also evident in these live recordings made in Lucerne, now released for the first time.

Three live recordings made in Lucerne, now released for the first time, commemorate Václav Neumann, one of the most distinguished great conductors of the so-called Eastern Bloc. As chief conductor of the legendary Czech Philharmonic for many years, Neumann was principally regarded as an accomplished advocate of the music of his homeland, which he interpreted with strong sense of form, a love of detail, and a vocal *espressivo*, eschewing any sentimentality.

“I’m quintessentially Czech,” Václav Neumann once professed – a subtle indication that, even during the politically turbulent times of the Cold War, he could not imagine any other home than Prague. His Czech identity was also an artistic trademark in the international music world, especially during his tenure as chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic which he held from 1968 until 1990, establishing himself on countless concert tours as a cultural ambassador for his country. The impetus for his international career, however, came from the GDR, where Neumann joined Walter Felsenstein’s Komische Oper in Berlin, later moving to Leipzig where he was appointed general music director and chief conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra – a post steeped in tradition, from which he resigned in 1968 in protest of the events of the “Prague Spring”.

In the summer of 1969, the Czech Philharmonic was the first orchestra from beyond the “Iron Curtain” to perform at the Lucerne Festival – naturally under Neumann’s baton. Four further guest appearances followed between 1984 and 1990, including gripping interpretations of Dvořák’s Eighth Symphony, his late tone poem *The Wild Dove* and the prelude to Smetana’s opera *Libuše*. Neumann never lapses into national emphasis, but instead seeks to achieve a balance between richly nuanced lines – the trained violinist and violist spoke of a “singing orchestra” – strict form and precise realisation of the musical text.

All three live recordings are first releases. The 32-page booklet in three languages contains a portrait of the conductor by Michael Struck-Schloen alongside previously unpublished photos from the festival archive.

In cooperation with audite, Lucerne Festival presents the “Historic Performances” series featuring outstanding concert recordings of artists who have shaped the festival throughout its history. The aim of this CD edition is to rediscover treasures – most of which have not been released previously – from the first six decades of the festival, which was founded in 1938 with a special gala concert conducted by Arturo Toscanini. These recordings have been made available by the archives of SRF Swiss Radio and Television, which has broadcast the Lucerne concerts from the outset. Painstakingly remastered and supplemented with photos and materials from the Lucerne Festival archive, they represent a sonic history of the festival.



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