audite

Edition Ferenc Fricsay (IX) – G. Donizetti: Lucia di Lammermoor

aud 23.412

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[Fanfare](#) (Bob Rose - 2009.09.01)

I have always preferred opera in the original language, but have also enjoyed recordings in other languages, provided that great singers are involved. In this case, as in other Italian operas sung in German, the problem is there is no similarity between the vowel-rich Italian language and the more guttural German.

The cover of the CD features the conductor and is labeled "Edition Ferenc Fricsay Vol. IX." The recording dates from 1953. Fortunately, the conductor had an all-star cast of some of the finest German singers of their era. Fricsay was an artist of that time, and this performance cuts the duet between Lucia and Raimondo in act II, and also the Wolf's Craig scene. The complete recording of the opera as Donizetti wrote it lasts 137 minutes, so that in this version a half-hour of music is not performed. Surprisingly, in the love duet both Stader and Haefliger sing the high E♭ in the final verse, which was usually never sung in those years.

Maria Stader was one of the finest coloratura sopranos of her era. Fischer-Dieskau was a premier baritone, and Ernst Haefliger, who is probably the least known, is the star of this performance. His Edgardo is beautifully sung.

Donizetti wrote music for singers, not conductors. The notes are principally concerned with Fricsay. His conducting is meticulous. There is only a list of the bands. Those who are interested in historical performances, and do not object to the opera in the wrong language may want to investigate this recording, as the sound is excellent. There are many recordings of this opera. The most well regarded Lucias on record are Callas and Sutherland. Recently, a live complete performance of the opera from Buenos Aires was issued on an Argentine label, Piscitelli, starring Beverly Sills and Alfredo Kraus. I strongly recommend it for those who love Donizetti, and want to hear all of the music that he wrote.