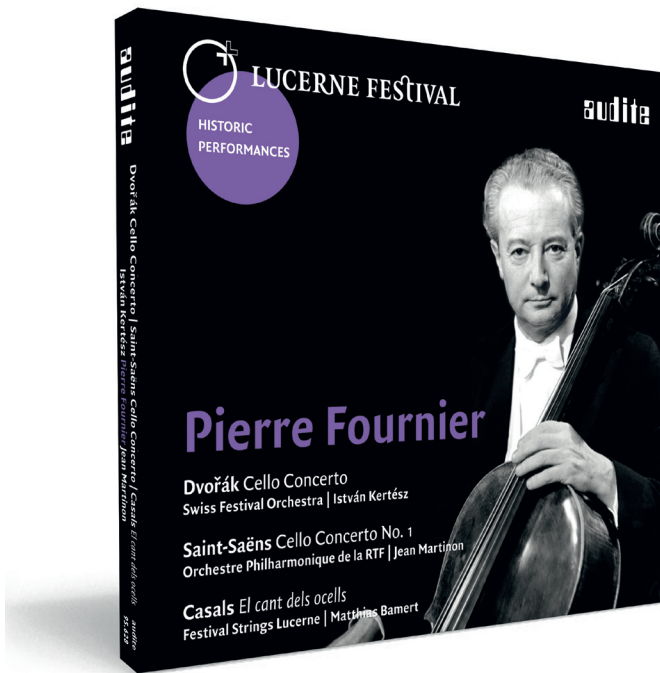


Pierre Fournier • Lucerne Festival Dvořák • Saint-Saëns • Casals



Dvořák: Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104

Swiss Festival Orchestra • István Kertész

Saint-Saëns: Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33

Orchestre Philharmonique de la RTF • Jean Martinon

Casals: *El cant dels ocells*

Festival Strings Lucerne • Matthias Bamert

live recordings: Lucerne, Kunsthau, 1962 - 1976

Pierre Fournier was praised as an “aristocrat of cello playing”: his soulful, singing tone, his uncomplicated elegance and his refined sound can now be heard in these Lucerne live recordings, released for the first time. A particularly noteworthy discovery from the archives: Fournier’s encounter with the great Dvořák conductor István Kertész, whose untimely death had prevented him from recording the composer’s Cello Concerto in the studio.

Pierre Fournier (1906-1986) was one of the most eminent cellists of the generation after Pablo Casals. Praised as an “aristocrat of cello playing”, he was admired for his soulful, singing tone, his uncomplicated elegance and his refined sound. This disc presents three live recordings from this legacy, recorded at LUCERNE FESTIVAL and all of them released for the first time.



Together with István Kertész, Fournier performed a piece of his core repertoire in the summer of 1967: **Antonín Dvořák’s Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104** – a particularly noteworthy archive discovery since the conductor’s tragically early death had prevented him from making a studio recording of the concerto. This live recording preserves the unpredictable emotional value of the concert situation: Fournier and Kertész take many risks, preferring the high definition of separate sounds as well as fresh tempi, without any temptation to fall for folklore frenzy or sentimental melancholy. **Camille Saint-Saëns’ First Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 33** was held in low esteem for decades, despite composers such as Rachmaninov and Shostakovich declaring it “the greatest of all cello concertos”. It was not revived until the Fifties and Sixties – not least thanks to its advocacy by Pierre Fournier. In 1962, alongside Jean Martinon and the Orchestre Philharmonique de la RTF, he presented a passionate reading of the work, permitting a telling comparison to his previous studio recording. A new item in Fournier’s discography, however, is the **Cant dels ocells** which he played in 1976 at a memorial concert on the centenary of Pablo Casals’ birthday – this was also his last appearance at LUCERNE FESTIVAL. Fournier’s brief announcement before this work has been included here: in it he pays tribute both to Pablo Casals – whose cello version of the old Catalan Christmas carol became an obligatory constituent of his concerts and a secret hymn for all refugees and emigrants longing for home – and also to the cellist and composer Enrico Mainardi, who had died only a few months previously, on 10 April 1976.

In cooperation with audite, LUCERNE FESTIVAL presents 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. These recordings have been made available by the archives of SRF Swiss Radio and Television, which has broadcast the Lucerne concerts from the outset. Carefully re-mastered and supplemented with photos and materials from the LUCERNE FESTIVAL archive, they represent a sonic history of the festival.

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