



Edition Wilhelm Furtwängler – The complete RIAS recordings

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[Fanfare](#) (Henry Fogel - 1970.01.01)

The Bartoli/Flórez combination in *La sonnambula* makes for a truly great Bellini recording. You'll want to keep your Callas (especially the live one with Bernstein and Valletti) for her special insights, but this disc defines the term *bel canto*. The Audite set brings us the complete post-war Furtwängler broadcasts from RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) with the Berlin Philharmonic, available for the first time in authorized transfers taken directly from the masters. It is the most important Furtwängler package in years. The disc of songs by the Armenian priest and composer Gomidas (alternatively rendered as Komitas) was my great discovery of the year. This music is ethereally beautiful, and is wonderfully sung by Isabel Bayrakdarian. *Polyptyque* is one of the most beautiful pieces by Frank Martin I've ever encountered. It is based on a set of small panels by Duccio representing episodes of the Passion. The work contains some of Martin's most lyrically beautiful music, along with contrasting episodes with a wide variety of tensions and, to use Martin's own word, frictions. The performance shimmers, and the rest of the disc is on the same exalted level. And finally, if you had the slightest doubt about the talents of young Gustavo Dudamel, the DG Tchaikovsky disc should dispel them. The Francesca da Rimini performance is equaled only, on disc, by Markevitch's classic DG recording from a half century ago, and the Fifth Symphony belongs on any list of the great recordings of that oft-recorded warhorse. It is as if Dudamel and his young Venezuelans are composing the music as they go along, so fresh and committed is the music-making.