



## P. I. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5 & R. Schumann: Piano Concerto

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The career of Hungarian conductor Ferenc Fricssay was tragically cut short when he died in 1963 at the age of 48. He spent most of his time in Germany at the Bavarian State Opera and with the RIAS Symphony Orchestra, and even had a brief stint as music director of the Houston Symphony in 1954. A valuable addition to his small discography is this Audite issue of live performances of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra recorded January 24, 1957, one of the most exciting you'll ever hear, coupled with Schumann's Piano Concerto in a live performance May 15, 1951 with the RIAS Orchestra and Alfred Cortot as soloist. Habakuk Traber's informative CD notes tell of the pianist's involvement with the Germans during the war and this performance of the Schumann (Cortot's only appearance with the RIAS orchestra) "symbolized the hand of reconciliation held out to a great artist." Cortot's concept of the score is as a "fantasy," more so in this live recording than in his 1927 commercial recording with Sir Landon Ronald and the LSO. In 1951 Cortot was 74. This performance is like no other, free in tempi to the extreme, with many finger slips—but it is important to have it available. The mono sound is adequate to convey the performances. The Tchaikovsky symphony was before an audience, the concerto was not.