



Edition Fischer-Dieskau (II) – H. Wolf: Goethe-Lieder | Spanisches Liederbuch

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German label Audite has been busy issuing radio recordings that Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau made in his early years on German radio. After a first series featuring works by Schubert, Mahler, Brahms and Schumann, they now move to another line entitled Edition Fischer-Dieskau (see review of Volume IV- Beethoven & Brahms). These originate from the 1950s near the start of his career.

The present disc features a selection of songs by Hugo Wolf, one of the composers for whom he had a special affinity. He sang and recorded them often throughout his career. With recordings here from three periods, late-1948, mid-1949 and late-1953, this collection gives a panorama of Fischer-Dieskau's Wolf of the early years.

His voice, in these years, is much more impetuous than in his peak years of the 1960s-1970s. One has a feeling that he's trying to find the right tone, and he hits it often - such as in another Audite recording of Schubert's *Winterreise* in 1952. One also has the feeling that he is learning to sing for the radio as well. In the earliest recordings he seems to hold back a bit, and in the 1953 recordings he occasionally sings too loud, causing minor distortion. Yet these are clear and well-produced, showing an excellent level of attention to the sound by the part of the original radio engineers and by Audite's team. The 1949 recordings sound a bit drier than the others, with the piano a bit distant and the voice at times too present. This is apparent in the loudest parts of *Wer Sich Der Einsamkeit Ergibt*. There's also a little bit of distortion in the loudest sections. Overall, though, the three sessions here sound excellent, given their age.

As for the performances, if you are a fan you will find much to like. These early years show a voice that has not yet found its "center", that is searching for the right balance. At times, this means that he seems to be testing the waters with tone and intensity, which can often lead to very interesting choices.

All in all, DF-D fans will likely scoop up this and the other discs in the series as soon as possible. Any "new" recording of this golden voice is worth hearing. While occasional lieder fans might not see the need for these discs, and stick with the established recordings of the 1960s and 1970s, completists will find these essential listening capturing Fischer-Dieskau in early-blooming maturity.