



Edition Wilhelm Furtwängler – The complete RIAS recordings

aud 21.403

EAN: 4022143214034



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The Irish Times (Michael Dervan - 2009.08.28)

Wilhelm Furtwängler (1886-1954), Karajan's direct predecessor at the Berlin Philharmonic, was a controversial figure, a musical individualist whose performances provoked sharply divided responses, and a man tainted by remaining in his post under the Nazis, in spite of his having protected Jewish musicians. This set offers clean transfers of the surviving radio archive tapes of his post-war concerts for the broadcaster RIAS Berlin. The repertoire ranges from unfashionably (by 21st-century standards) heavily weighted baroque (Bach and Handel) to contemporary (Hindemith, Blacher, Fortner), with the bulk devoted to 19th-century greats, where Furtwängler's fire-in-the-belly music-making fascinates and thrills.