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The RIAS Amadeus Quartet Schubert Recordings

aud 21.428

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Last June Audite celebrated ist fortieth birthday. Based in Detmold, Germany, this label has built up a remarkable catalogue of carefully remastered historical recordings, especially from German broadcast archives, using radio tapes. The anniversary was an appropriate time for Audite to introduce a new series if historical recordings – The Lucerne Festival Historic Performances, in cooperation with the famous Swiss festival, which was founded in 1938. The series started with three outstanding concert recordings of artists including Clara Haskil, Otto Klemperer, Robert Casadesus, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Isaac Stern, Ernest Ansermet, Lorin Maazel and George Szell. The latest release is dedicated “in memoriam” to Claudio Abbado, who died on 20 January at the age of 80. Abbado was closely connected with the Lucerne Festival for nearly five decades, and he was responsible for the revival of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, which immediately became one of the best symphony orchestras of the world under his baton. Some live performances on DVD are impressive in showing Abbado’s highly sensitive musi making with this orchestra. A new CD from Audite couples Schubert’s Symphony No. 8 “Unfinished”, played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 2 and Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, recorded at the Lucerne Festival of 1978 and 1988. These are impressive live performances that should not be missed by all who admire this great conductor (Φ 95.627).

String Quartet enthusiasts will be interested in Audite’s Volume 2 of RIAS’ recordings of the Amadeus Quartet. The new two-disc set is dedicated to Schubert, the Quartets No. 9 , 10 and 13-15, all recorded at the Siemensvilla in Berlin between 1950 and 1964. Schubert was always at the centre of the Amadeus’s repertoire, and its performances of this composer set a standard for others in those days (two discs; Φ 21.428). Piano enthusiasts will seck a two-disc set profiling the American pianist Julius Katchen. Katchen, who died in 1969 at the early age of 42, was especially known as an interpreter of Brahms and Liszt. These recordings were taped in two sessions in Berlin in 1962 and 1964. They are of special interest because some of the works played are new to the pianist’s discography – Beethoven’s 32 Variations in C minor, WoO80, Chopin’s Ballade, Op. 47, the Nocturenes Op. 9 No. 1 and Op. 27 No. 2 and Berceuse, Op. 57 as well as the Liszt Sonata in B minor, works in which Katchen demonstrates his qualities as a sensitive poet and virtuoso par excellence (two discs; Φ 21.419). […]

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