



Paul Tortelier: RIAS Recordings

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Michael Church listens to live recordings by legendary stars of the last century

Paul Tortelier as a musician and teacher believed that music's vertical and linear dimensions – harmony and counterpoint – should be kept in balance, and regarded his own compositions – a light-hearted example of which is included in Paul Tortelier: RIAS Recordings – as a riposte to Schoenberg's dodecaphony. The recordings, made between 1949 and 1964 at RIAS (Radio In the American Sector) in Berlin, were for a live audience so silent that these could be labelled 'studio' events. And the selection here, released for the first time, testify both to his versatility and his excellence in his favourite repertoire, most notably Bach. Pablo Casals may have been his hero but, in contrast to that cellist's heart-on-sleeve passion, Tortelier's style in Bach was restrained and smooth; legato, he said, should be the key and his tempos were at times daringly slow. What he described as the 'subtle, nervous' bow hand was much more important to him than the left hand. Tortelier's discs are accompanied by an illuminating liner note from Rüdiger Albrecht [...]

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