



Ferenc Fricsay conducts Béla Bartók – The early RIAS recordings

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[Classical Recordings Quarterly](#) (Norbert Hornig - 2011.03.01)

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The Audite label is very busy in releasing new remastered tapes from German broadcast companies, and has enlarged its discography of the great Hungarian conductor Ferenc Fricsay. "Ferenc Fricsay conducts Béla Bartók" is the title of a three CD-set which comprises his complete early Bartók recordings for RIAS Berlin, taped at the Jesus-Christus-Kirche and live at the Titania-Palast between 1950-53. Fricsay was one of the most impressive conductors of Bartók's music, and his DG recordings of it are famous. These RIAS recordings complete the picture of Fricsay as a Bartók interpreter. The edition comprises the Violin Concerto No. 2, Deux Portraits, Op. 5, Cantata profana (with the young Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau), Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, Dance Suite, Divertimento for Strings, Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra and the Piano Concertos No. 2 and No. 3. The soloists are mainly artists from Hungary: violinist Tibor Varga, the pianists Andor Foldes, Geza Anda and Louis Kentner (CD 21.407). [A full review of this issue will appear in the Summer issue. Ed.]

Another release from Audite is very special: a live recording of Stravinsky's rarely performed *Persephone* (a melodrama in three parts for reciter, vocal soloist, double chorus and orchestra). Stravinsky composed *Perséphone* in 1933-34. The performance on Audite took place in 1960 at the Frankfurt Funkhaus, and the tape is from the archives of the Hessischer Rundfunk (Hessian Radio). Dean Dixon conducts the Symphony Orchestra of the Hessischer Rundfunk and, quite sensationally, Fritz Wunderlich sings the tenor role, for only one time in his life. So this live recording is a collector's item for all Wunderlich fans. The actress Doris Schade was perfectly cast as *Perséphone* (CD 95.619).