Richard Strauss: Macbeth, Don Juan,
Tod und Verklärung & Festmarsch in C

aud 97.755
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BBC Music Magazine (David Nice - 2018.09.01)

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now State Orchestra, a fertile training ground for the young Richard Strauss as
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neighbouring Eisenach (the exception is the Festmarsch from the same time,
dubiously born in his home city of Munich). The problem is bothering with what is
chronologically the first of the tonepoem sequence, Macbeth – brass-heavy (albeit
with the introduction of a bass trumpet), incoherent and very tangential to its
subject-matter. The sophistication of the Weimar players under Kirill Karabits tones
down the worst excesses, and textures are admirably clear, in fine sound, throughout
the recording. But does it deserve yet another recording? I’d say not. The
Festmarsch is similarly banal, a good deal shorter and more of a rarity – very odd to
hear its C major coming out of what here is quite a spiritual transfiguration in Tod und
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Karabits and his orchestra take a long time to flame, namely through three-quarters
of a far from fiery Don Juan, where the crucial oboe solo is outshone by the clarinet
towards the end of that exquisite love-scene. But when the sparks fly, which they do,
fully, for the first time in the sick-bed agonies of the dying man, there’s one
performance here to set up there with the best. The memories of youth are
beautifully gauzy, too. Otherwise not in the same league as the Staatskapelle
Weimar’s other Strauss recordings with Antoni Wit.
R Strauss
Macbeth; Don Juan; Tod und Verklärung; Festmarsch
Staatskapelle Weimar/Kirill Karabits
Audite 97.755 70:35 mins

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PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★